

DOKTORI DISSZERTÁCIÓ

THE AESTHETICS OF UNCERTAINTY:
SENSIBILITY AND THE SUPERNATURAL IN ANN RADCLIFFE'S
GOTHIC ROMANCES

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Introduction

My dissertation explores the representation of the supernatural in Ann Radcliffe's works. Radcliffe (1764–1823) made a huge impact on English literature, and features prominently in literary histories even today. My research aims to contribute to the picture criticism paints of her by approaching her portrayal of the supernatural from the perspective of sensibility. Based on her novels, poems, and the important theoretical dialogue *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1826), I argue, more specifically, that she aimed to portray the supernatural with a focus on the sublime. In Radcliffe's oeuvre, it was essential to make an effect on the reader. This effect was carefully arranged to be appreciated by people characterized by sensibility, and was distinguished from the sensationalism of other gothic novels. I call Radcliffe's method the aesthetics of uncertainty as uncertainty is the most striking feature of her supernatural scenes, which seems to form part of a deliberate strategy to create an overall aesthetic effect. This strategy is discussed in the greatest detail in Radcliffe's posthumous dialogue *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1826). Although Radcliffe's works have been widely discussed in literary history, the aesthetic quality of her novels has received little sustained attention. Her person, as well as her literary aims are somewhat of a mystery to scholars, as very little is known of her besides her published works. My dissertation focuses on her craft, especially in the creation of the supernatural scenes, and looks to her own works in the context of 18th-century literary culture as guidance for the analyses.

Radcliffe's works inspired many scholarly discussions. Walter Scott dedicated a chapter to her oeuvre in his *Lives of the Novelists* in 1825. In 20th-century comprehensive histories of the gothic, Radcliffe's fiction became an important stepping stone in the formation of the genre. In Edith Birkhead's *Tale of Terror* (1921), a chapter on Radcliffe is positioned right after "The Beginnings of Gothic Romance" and describes her works based on what the critic found their most striking characteristic: "The Novel of Suspense". Birkhead did not have half a century of literary criticism to rely on, and the chapter consists mostly of the description of her subjective overall opinion. However, identifying suspense as the novels' most prominent feature accords with my own observation, based on close analysis, that suspense was essential to Radcliffe's practice, creating the conditions for the aesthetic portrayal of the supernatural.

The Gothic Quest – A History of the Gothic Novel (1938) by Montague Summers does not feature Radcliffe in a separate chapter (while Matthew Lewis receives separate treatment). But speaking of other topics, Summers constantly refers to her with the highest praise, stating for instance that “Mrs. Radcliffe’s genius is so great that it may be considered to stand above and apart, yet if we must analyse her romances we shall find both terror and a sentimental interest” (30). Similarly to Birkhead, Summers approaches Radcliffe’s novels as an enthusiastic reader and admirer, not as a professional critic. Their remarks are rarely echoed in today’s literary criticism; however, their comprehensive literary histories provided a foundation that proved essential for later, more focused scholarly discussions. Besides these two major works, shorter articles were also published in the first half of the 20th century. Among these, J. R. Foster in his *The Abbé Prévost and the English novel* explores the French writer’s influence on the emergence of the Gothic, especially on Radcliffe. The establishment of this influence is relevant for my analysis because it shows that the device Radcliffe became famous for – the explained supernatural – was already present and popular in Prévost’s *Cleveland* (1734).

Devendra P. Varma’s *The Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England, its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration and Residuary Influences* (1957) dedicates a chapter to Radcliffe in which he reflects on all of her novels, citing their contemporary reception, as well as frequently referring to Radcliffe in his discussion of the various stages of the history of the gothic. He gave Radcliffe’s chapter the title *The Craft of Terror* and draws attention to her technique of raising terror by “suggestions and stray hints” (89). Due to its scope and richness of detail, Varma’s work is an important step in the development of gothic criticism and in the formation of Radcliffe criticism today.

In the 1970s, gothic literature was brought to the centre of attention by feminist literary criticism, and Radcliffe’s name was associated with the *female gothic*. The term was introduced in *Literary Women* (1976) by Ellen Moers, who connected it to the sex of the author, so by “female gothic” she meant the novels which were written by women writers and in the Gothic mode. She states that it was Ann Radcliffe who initiated this tradition, and that its main feature is that the central figure is a young woman who is both a persecuted victim and a courageous heroine at the same time (90-91). This chapter by Moers initiated much scholarly discussion and led to the exploration of gothic novels from the perspective of gender, often including Radcliffe’s novels as the initiator of the tradition.

A significant and widely known work in this area is *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. The critics use psychoanalytic theory to explore

female anxieties about space and authorship, and read clues in novels about how the authors tried to establish themselves as women writers. They find that the common theme of gothic novels is enclosure, which is also prominent in Ann Radcliffe's works. According to their interpretation, this imagery reflects the women writers' own discomfort and sense of powerlessness (83-84).

In the 1990s, the term female gothic became mainstream in literary criticism. Scholars rarely chose psychoanalytical frameworks by this time, but rather focused on socio-cultural readings. Maggie Kilgour showed that in the female gothic plot, the private world is turned temporarily into a house of horrors, represented by the well-known images of the castle in which helpless females are imprisoned by gothic villains. The private world returns to normal by the end of the novels, but it is still dominated by men (38). Robert Miles summarized the female gothic narrative the following way: an orphaned heroine in search of an absent mother, pursued by a feudal (patriarchal) father or his substitute, with the whole affair monitored by an impeccable but ineffectual suitor ("Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis" 96).

In this interpretation the "female gothic" is opposed to another tradition, that of the "male gothic". These two strands of gothic novel writing may also be read as originating in an argument between the two most influential Gothic authors of the late 18th century, Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis. There is both biographical and textual evidence that they were aware of each other's works and they consciously followed different directions in their novels. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) was read by Matthew Lewis, but he found some parts of it boring and this inspired him to write *The Monk* (1796) (Macdonald 110). There are many similarities between *The Italian* (1797) and *The Monk*, which invites the interpretation that Ann Radcliffe wrote *The Italian* as a corrective to *The Monk* and so she had the last word in the debate (Wallace and Smith 19).

As the diversity of early Gothic novels became more and more obvious to critics, the dichotomy of male/female gothic, first identified through the sex of the writer, became more complicated. Alison Milbank demonstrated how male writers also wrote in the female gothic mode to critique the ideologies of capitalism and their connection with those of gender (Wallace and Smith 3). According to Robert Miles, women writers of the late eighteenth century understood themselves to be equal members of the republic of letters, so the category "female gothic" needs to be defined not by the sex of the producer, but by its recurring structures ("Mother Radcliff" 43). Female writers might therefore intervene in male gothic (e.g. Charlotte Dacre) and vice versa (e.g. Francis Lathom and James Boaden) ("Mother Radcliff" 46).

As a result of such important correctives, male and female gothic became distinguished by characteristic plot elements and strategies. The female gothic plot, exemplified by most Radcliffe novels, focused on the imprisoned and pursued heroine threatened by a tyrannical male figure, it explained the supernatural, and ended in the closure of marriage. The male gothic plot, exemplified by Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), is one of masculine transgression of social taboos, characterised by violent rape and/or murder, which tends to resist closure, frequently leaving the supernatural unexplained (Wallace and Smith 3).

In 2017, Ellen Ledoux pointed out that the term *female gothic* became the victim of its own success because it invited a specific kind of interpretation, but women's early gothic writing was much more aesthetically, politically, thematically, and generically diverse than this categorization suggests. This diversity became known to us because of the interest feminist scholars took in Gothic novels. I agree with Ledoux that we must bear in mind that early gothic novels by female authors were much more diverse than to invite only one specific approach. I also believe that the feminist interpretation of the gothic novels and the establishment of the female gothic tradition signals that this approach has been in the centre of critical interest in the last 50 years and it still influences both literature and literary criticism. This is the approach Réka Takács's valuable dissertation follows in which she explores the representation of the body in four female gothic texts. Among others, she analyses Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and shows how the descriptions of the heroine's body and clothing shed light on the oppression of patriarchal society and how the process of her maturation includes her rediscovery of the maternal body.

From the development of literary criticism on Radcliffe, it can be seen that there is no consensus on how to define the female gothic. Different critics have used different approaches, but they all agreed on the emphasis on the helpless woman who is threatened by forces beyond her control. The two most prominent approaches are represented by the feminist interpretations, on the one hand – according to which women writers were using the genre of the gothic novel to express their dissatisfaction with their roles in society – and a descriptive or formalist one, on the other, which establishes a female gothic plot with the help of stock elements. It is not my intention to find a conclusive definition for the term female gothic, merely to show the interest literary criticism took in Radcliffe in the last 50 years. My main concern in the dissertation, however, is one element which is a key point in the male and female gothic distinction: the handling of the supernatural and how the supernatural in Radcliffe's works was received by her readers. In my dissertation, I argue that in Radcliffe's

portrayal of the supernatural the role of the explanation the supernatural event may or may not receive is negligible, so putting her works on one end of the explained—unexplained spectrum overlooks significant characteristics of her romances. In other words, I aim to provide an analysis which supplements the received views of literary criticism concerning Radcliffe. I will argue in the subsequent chapters that the uncertainty created by the supernatural event is a defining feature of the sublime effect that Radcliffe valued and aimed to create in her novels. In her posthumous dialogue, Radcliffe entered the discussion on the sublime, quoting Burke, and showing her interest and awareness on the aesthetic quality of literature. In describing the development of the sublime in the 18th century, Shaw drew attention to the importance of artistry that changes a threatening physical presence into a mental image, present in the works of Dennis and Addison, and less prominent in Burke (38 and 49). Radcliffe was also most interested in the art of the active creation of the sublime in a literary work and attempted to achieve this time and time again in her gothic romances.

Radcliffe's novels were approached for their debt to the sentimental tradition as well, which I argue is crucial to her portrayal of the supernatural. Claudia L. Johnson in her *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s* (1995) examines how female sentimentality influences gender roles in *The Romance of the Forest*. Adela Pinch in her *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotions, Hume to Austen* (1996) focuses on the origin of feelings in the chapter on Radcliffe's *Udolpho*, connecting it to Hume's ideas on the contagious nature of emotions. In *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (2011) Csengei Ildikó explores from a gender perspective the representation of emotions in 18th-century novels. Even though she did not include Radcliffe in her analysis, she examined the sentimental swoon – one of Radcliffe's stock motifs – in novels from the period, for example in *A Simple Story* (1791) by Elizabeth Inchbald. She reads the swoon as a form of resistance to oppression which is available to women. I am indebted to Johnson, Pinch and Csengei for their novel insights on the significance of emotions and how they can be made part of literary analysis. One chapter of my dissertation focuses on the gothic nature of the emotions portrayed in Radcliffe's novels, the implications of their excessive or disproportionate quality, and the aesthetic value associated with experiencing the sublime inspired by the possibility of the supernatural.

Following up on Adela Pinch's connection between Hume's treatise and the representation of emotions in Radcliffe's works, I read excerpts of *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), as well as other 18th-century theorists such as Lord Shaftesbury and Adam Smith to shed light on Radcliffe's handling of emotions. I also read 18th-century medical

treatises on the bodily effects of intense emotions and their influence on overall health. I found William Rowley's *A treatise on female nervous hysterical, hypochondriacal, bilious, convulsive diseases; apoplexy and palsy; with thoughts on madness, suicide etc.* (1788) and William Falconer's *A Dissertation on the Influence of the Passions upon the Disorders of the Body* (1788) extremely useful in understanding how emotions were perceived in the period. Relying on these treatises, I was able to discern how Radcliffe enhanced the power of emotions over the body to create her gothic world.

Besides the focus on emotions, I relied heavily on historical approaches to the gothic novel, which became significant nearing the end of the 20th century. E. J. Clery's *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction* (1995) describes in detail the historical context of the emergence of the gothic novel, detailing important changes in the reading process, as well as the situation of the female author. Clery explores in detail the context of the explained supernatural in Radcliffe's literary career and the number of imitators it inspired. A similar historical interest characterizes Rictor Norton's *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe* (1998). Norton aimed to reconstruct Radcliffe's life, the possible influences of her surroundings, the sources of her works, and even her personal relationships within the family. Robert Miles is more interested in cultural and social changes in the period and their impact on Radcliffe's circumstances, as they are reflected in her novels. In *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (1995) he argues that Radcliffe came from what he calls the "middling classes," and in her novels a new, liberal order is set up against the tyranny of feudalism.

Scott Brewster notes that starting with the second half of the 20th century, gothic criticism has diversified: it now ranges from psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism, gender studies, new historicism, deconstruction, queer theory, post-colonialism to film theory and cultural studies. Maybe one of the most widespread approaches to the gothic focuses on its transgressive nature. David Punter's *The Literature of Terror* (1980) identifies terror as the most defining characteristic of the gothic, and other critics (such as Kenneth W. Graham and Fred Botting) associated it with revolutionary potential (Brewster 312). Punter remarked Radcliffe's debt to the literature of sensibility and what he calls "dreadful pleasure" in her novels. In *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981), Rosemary Jackson also followed up on the association of the gothic with revolution and argued that this genre or mode lay outside the dominant value system and expressed the desire of society for a better reality (4). She presents Radcliffe as part of the process whereby the gothic turned towards the interrogation of social contradictions (97).

The latest literary criticism on the gothic makes no attempt at comprehensiveness, instead it aims to show its diversity by highlighting its various aspects. In *A New Companion to the Gothic* (2012), edited by David Punter, the chapter featuring Radcliffe singles her out together with Matthew Lewis to introduce the decade of the 1790s in the history of gothic novels. The collection *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic* (edited by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright) includes chapters on less-discussed topics such as her travelogue *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* (1795), her poetry and her posthumous works, as well as her reception in the 1790s, and offers new insights into her more often discussed novels, including a textual analysis of femininity in *The Romance of the Forest*.

Radcliffe herself has been introduced to the interested reader in many different ways by literary criticism. In her biography in 1826 she was painted as a respectable gentlewoman, behaving with the utmost propriety in all situations. Admiring readers – and critics – called her an enchantress who puts a spell on her audience by her magic pen. Feminist literary criticism regards her as a radical author, calling attention to the subordinated situation of women in society. In my dissertation, I introduce her as a cultured, intellectual writer, deeply interested in literature and its various literary techniques, who is continuously experimenting and developing as an author, while always striving to achieve what she regarded as the best readerly experience she could give. My approach to Radcliffe is predominantly historical, as I aim to analyse her novels in their original context as much as possible, in order to see how her reliance on the discourse of sensibility and the supernatural enables her to create the aesthetic effects that made her novels so influential.

The foundation of my analysis will be provided by Radcliffe's dialogue *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. I also rely on a range of 18th-century theories (on medicine, dreams, sensibility and the sublime) to support my arguments. I explore the various manifestations of the supernatural in her works and show that they bear the features of Radcliffe's professed ideas on the aesthetics of the supernatural. I structured my dissertation not to discuss the novels one by one, but according to the different ways the supernatural is employed in them, and argue that they reflect a coherent authorial strategy. Consequently, specific scenes are analysed in more than one chapter. I focus predominantly on her novels, as they established Radcliffe's fame, but I also include two of her poems and the contemporary theatrical adaptations to create a more complex overall picture of Radcliffe's literary productions and how they were perceived in the 18th century.

I start my dissertation with Ann Radcliffe's reception, focusing on the problem of the explained supernatural. As we have already seen, this concept is usually associated with the

female gothic and regarded as one of Radcliffe's signature techniques. To give a more nuanced picture, I give an account of how her reputation developed in the last decade of the 18th century and show under which circumstances the explained supernatural came to be used as a frame of reference to discuss her novels. My intention is to show that the explained supernatural was first associated with Radcliffe due to two particular novels featuring it, and therefore it cannot be applied to the whole body of her works. What is more, the technique was not particularly new when she started using it and, I argue, it is not the most decisive characteristic of Radcliffe's supernatural scenes. In this dissertation, I aim to provide a different perspective in approaching Radcliffe's portrayal of the supernatural, based on her own theoretical discussion of the topic, and focusing on the aesthetic aspect of the supernatural scenes.

In the following two chapters, I construct a theoretical background to how the supernatural is perceived in Radcliffe's world. In the chapter *Discussions of the Supernatural in On the Supernatural in Poetry* my focus is more general: I base my observations on the views expressed in the dialogue taken from Radcliffe's posthumous novel. In the dialogue, Mr. W expresses his opinion on the best portrayal of the supernatural in literature, connecting it with the sublime effect, and identifying its value in the emotions it can inspire in the reader of sensibility. I rely on this dialogue to clarify Radcliffe's aesthetic aims, and support my assumptions with corresponding scenes from her other works, as well as the analysis of the poem *The Glow-worm*, taken from Radcliffe's most famous novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

In the chapter *Radcliffe's Aesthetic Ghosts*, I examine the question of the most spectacular supernatural phenomenon, the ghosts. I compare the different opinions present in the 18th century and those expressed by Radcliffe's characters and show that the same ideas are voiced by different characters in different novels. I point out that the ambiguity concerning the existence of ghosts is a constant in Radcliffe's novels (except for the last, posthumous novel *Gaston de Blondville*), and it is kept up by the clashing of two persuasive opinions that she usually associates with reason and the imagination.

In the chapter *Emotions in Ann Radcliffe's Novels* I compare Radcliffe's handling of emotions with the portrayal of emotions in sentimental literature. I argue that for Radcliffe, the sentimental understanding of emotions constitutes the belief system that is necessary for the inclusion of the possibility of the supernatural. Many of her characters are highly susceptible to strong feelings or passions. Nevertheless, Radcliffe exaggerates their power over the body and uses them to incorporate unexplained ghosts into her plots. As we shall see, emotions have a threatening nature in her works, as too intense feelings can lead to bodily

illness and even death. Thus, Radcliffe enhances the dangers her heroines have to face due to their excessive sensibility.

In the chapter on dreams, I look at dream theories of the period and dreams in earlier gothic literature (such as *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Old English Baron*) to explore the nature of the dreams in Radcliffe's novels. I conclude that Radcliffe leaves the origin of the dreams in obscurity, in accordance with her practice in the portrayal of the supernatural, but she also follows earlier gothic novels in giving the dreams a supernatural quality, in which the dreamer is given information on the overarching mystery that dominates the plot.

Apart from the two chapters on Radcliffe's views on the supernatural in literature, I discuss the posthumous works in a separate chapter. Literary criticism regards these as inherently different from Radcliffe's earlier practice, especially in the question of the supernatural, as the novel *Gaston de Blondville* is believed to have Radcliffe's only real ghost. I argue, however, that Radcliffe did not abandon her earlier practice even in this late work, and her intention of portraying the supernatural as sublime and affecting is essentially the same. But this is not the whole story: contrary to her earlier method, she chose this time to put an end to the uncertainty about the existence of the ghost by the end of the novel. I argue that this was motivated by the negative criticism she received after the publication of *The Italian*. In this chapter, I analyse the poem *Salisbury Plains* as well, published in the same posthumous collection as *Gaston de Blondville*. My analysis shows that in the poem dealing with a supernatural topic, Radcliffe employs the same features as in her novels: the poet whose creation has a magical power over his audience and the threatening nature of the emotions personified in the poem.

In the final chapter on the theatrical adaptations, I examine how the scenes dealing with the supernatural were adapted to the stage. I observe that it was impossible to preserve Radcliffe's aesthetics of uncertainty on the stage, as in each scene it had to be decided whether to have a real ghost appear on stage or not. The playwrights treated Radcliffe's novels with liberty, and most often applied the explained supernatural with a comic effect. James Boaden's adaptation of *The Romance of the Forest*, titled *Fontainville Forest*, performed in Covent Garden in 1794 was the only one which aimed to stage the manuscript-scene to the same effect as in Radcliffe's novel.

Through the analysis of the various manifestations of the supernatural present in her novels and poems, I aim to show that Radcliffe's works are actively engaged with this question and find ingenious ways of addressing it for literary effect. Relying on the views expressed by Mr. W in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, I show that there is a conscious

authorial effort to connect the sublime observable in the supernatural scenes with the emotional capacity associated with sensibility. By this connection, Radcliffe creates a gothic aesthetics that was innovative in her time, which is probably the reason she was elevated above her contemporaries.

1. Ann Radcliffe's Reception and the Explained Supernatural

Ann Radcliffe was one of the most popular authors of Gothic fiction in the 1790s. Many others tried to achieve the same success by imitating her style, but most of their efforts are forgotten now (Clery 108). Recognizing her exceptional influence over her contemporaries, Walter Scott called Radcliffe a founder of a school among authors (Ledoux). She published five novels in her lifetime, with her last one *Gaston de Blondville* (1826) published by her husband after her death.

The novels published by Radcliffe herself are: *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *The Italian* (1797). She died in 1823, but did not publish anything after *The Italian*, and as she avoided public notice both before and after this time, and gave no explanation for her silence, people started spreading the rumour that she was either dead or driven insane by her own novels (Norton 203). In 1810, a clergyman, Revd. Wheelwright published a poem titled *Ode to Horror* in which he claimed that Radcliffe died of a mental derangement called 'the horrors.' In the poem, Horror is the goddess of insanity who pursues her victims to the grave (Norton 211). The poem captures a characteristic theme of Radcliffe's novels, the dangers of the intense feeling of fear, as opposed to the aesthetic pleasure inspired by terror. Even before this poem, forged "posthumous" works purportedly by Radcliffe started appearing in England, France, Germany and the Netherlands. The most well-known examples are *Le Tombeau* (1799) and *L'Hermite de la tombe mystérieuse, ou le fantôme du vieux château* (1815), both published in Paris (Norton 204).

After she died in 1823, her husband published a four-volume collection of her unpublished works, introduced by a biography written by Thomas Noon Talfourd. In his monograph, Rictor Norton remarks that Talfourd never met Ann Radcliffe and the information necessary for the biography must have been supplied by William Radcliffe, her husband (193). But Radcliffe's life remained a mystery even after the biography appeared. The posthumous book contained *Gaston de Blondville*, as well as several poetical works, among them *Salisbury Plains*, which presents a strikingly new version of Radcliffe's gothic tropes.

It may be observed that starting with her second published work, Radcliffe identified her novels as romances, either in the title – as in *A Sicilian Romance*, or *The Romance of the Forest* – or in the subtitle, for example in *Udolpho* which is *A Romance, Interspersed with Some Pieces of Poetry*; or by simply putting the expression *A Romance* on the title page of the

book, just below the subtitle, as in her last two novels. The definition of the term *romance* has been widely discussed by literary criticism. Ian Duncan argues that romance was redefined in the 18th century by antiquarian scholars and poets as relics of an ancient culture which was rapidly disintegrating (4). He points out that at the same time, the emerging novel identified itself and gained respectability by claiming to overthrow an inauthentic and obsolete genre, the romance, and was so successful that literary criticism accepted this interpretation as literary history (11). It is not my intention here to present the history of 18th-century narrative genres, only to explore the significance of Radcliffe's consistency in applying the term to her own publications. Duncan goes on to describe how gothic prose fiction identified itself as romance in contradistinction to the novel, which was meant to represent contemporary life (13). As Veronika Ruttkey and Dániel Panka explain, in the 18th-century romance was contrasted with the novel by its declared content: its plot was characterized by improbability and it could contain the supernatural (193). It can be assumed that Radcliffe used the word in this sense to give a generic specification to her works and to provide guidance to her readers in how to relate to the books they were about to read.

Gothic scholarship usually disregards Radcliffe's generic identification and categorises her works as novels. Indeed, in today's literary terminology the term *novel* is much more general than the English novel of the 18th century, and both romance and realist novel may fit into this broader category. Even though it is my aim throughout the dissertation to discover Radcliffe's original concept of the portrayal of the supernatural, and in order to do so, I rely on her own works and those concepts of the period that she could be familiar with, I chose to apply modern terminology in this respect. In the dissertation, I describe Radcliffe's works as both *novels* and *romances* – *novel* referring to a broad genre used by gothic literary criticism, and *romance* as a specific subgenre used by Radcliffe, signalling the literary tradition she claims to follow.

Radcliffe's exceptional standing among the gothic authors of the 1790s is indicated by the fact that her publishers (first G. G. and J. Robinson, later T. Cadell and W. Davies) paid her £500 for *Udolpho* and £800 for *The Italian*. Rictor Norton remarks that no other female author had received such a huge amount of money for a manuscript before and Minerva Press usually paid £10-20 for a three-volume gothic novel (95-97). To offer another comparison, Jane Austen received £10 from the publisher for her novel *Northanger Abbey* (1798/1817) (Birkhead 59). However, the readers did not need to buy the books to read them. A huge contribution to the popularity of gothic novels was the appearance of the circulating library, which made it possible for the majority of the population to have access to the novels. The

average income for the lower middle- and upper-working classes was around £50, which means that they could not afford to buy the books, but they could afford to borrow them from the libraries (Clery, Franklin, Garside 14). According to the *Monthly Magazine* in 1801, a thousand circulating libraries appeared between 1740 and 1800 (Gamer 64). Not only city-dwellers, but countrymen also had the opportunity to borrow books because librarians offered to deliver their wares to the country as well. Sometimes they asked for a deposit as a surety in exchange for the books because the greater the distance, the greater the possibility that the reader fails to return the books and one missing volume could render the other volumes of the novel unborrowable (Skelton-Foord 143). Small, provincial libraries wanted to minimize the financial risks and beside the opportunity to borrow books, they sold various products, such as Bibles, German flutes, umbrellas, lottery tickets, opera and theatre bookings, and even offered to handle funeral services (Skelton-Foord 148).

The libraries often offered different classes of subscriptions, specifying how many volumes could be borrowed at a time, the size of the volumes, for how long the readers could keep the books and whether the subscription included the latest publications or not (Skelton-Foord 138). In 1817, a circulating library offered 22 different kinds of subscriptions (Skelton-Foord 139). In some libraries, there was a subscription for all books and there was another subscription specifically for novels, another – premium – subscription for exclusive, first access to new novels (Skelton-Foord 141-142). Artisans could borrow novels for one penny per night and the wealthy could choose from different services in addition to the borrowing of the books (Skelton-Foord 148). As the prices of books were relatively high (Clery 144) (Radcliffe's *Udolpho* was sold for £14s), circulating libraries made it possible for several social classes to have access to books and significantly contributed to the growth of the fiction industry in the period (Clery, Franklin, Garside 14, Skelton-Foord 143).

Many critics attacked gothic novels, claiming that they could have a harmful influence. Their stereotypical reader at this period was a young woman who needed to be prepared for her future domestic duties, but the world as represented in gothic novels was very far from the everyday of the 1790s. However, library catalogues and lists of subscribers for circulating libraries show that the critics were mistaken in their belief that the vast majority of the readers were women. In fact, both men and women read gothic novels enthusiastically (Clery 98). Angela Wright claims that gothic writings in the 1790s were remarkable for their equality of gender at the level of authorship, themes and reciprocity. She draws this conclusion based on the so-called Northanger Novels, a list of gothic novels appearing in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* when two characters talk about what they are

planning to read. As Wright shows, the only aspect the two characters are considering is whether these novels are “truly horrid” and they do not concern themselves with the sex of the authors (Wright 73).

The concepts of the “reading public” and mass readership appeared around this time, in tandem with the rise of the gothic novel. The estimation of the reading public for the 1790s is between 1.5 and 2 million (Clery, Franklin, Garside 14). The publisher William Lane from the Minerva Press became an example of the growing popularity of reading when he declared that he welcomed gothic novels and even encouraged authors to send him their manuscripts (Wright 65). He paid “£5 per volume for any manuscript regardless of quality so long as it proved to be in keeping with the traditions and conventions of Minerva fiction” (Gamer 66). He aimed at a broad readership and wanted to make as much profit as possible. Minerva Press made it possible for the most sensationalist gothic novels to be published (e.g. *Horrid Mysteries*, 1796) and its name soon became synonymous with ‘trash’ (Clery 137). Lane focused on quantity, not quality, and his example was followed by others, which meant that the reputation of gothic novels went downhill. In 1797, the anonymous author of a letter titled *Terrorist Novel Writing in The Spirit of the Public Journals* criticized the monotony of the gothic stock elements, and composed a mock-recipe for writing gothic novels:

Take -an old castle, half of it ruinous.

A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.

Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.

As many skeletons, in chests and presses.

An old woman hanging by the neck, with her throat cut.

Assassins and desperadoes, quant. suff.

Noises, whispers and groans, threescore at least.

Mix them together, in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of the watering places before going to bed. (229)

English gothic fiction was influenced by French literature and the German Sturm und Drang movement as well. When the reputation of the gothic novel was defined by the sensationalist novels of Minerva Press, critics tended to overemphasize the foreign influence, thus distancing the English literary heritage from the ill-repute of the gothic novels (Summers 123). According to Michael Gamer, this vigilance over the cultural inviolability of England was strengthened by the fears of the military invasion from France in the 1790s (Gamer 148).

Montague Summers describes the German influence as a two-way process: “the German Romance was inspired by Walpole, Richardson, Hervey and Young, and so when England translated Naubert, Wächter, Spiess, Kerndörffer, Zschokke, and the rest, we were merely taking back what we had given” – he writes (123). But the exchange had started earlier in both ways. Matthew Lewis was especially blamed for corrupting English literature with foreign, barbaric elements. He spent some time in Weimar in 1792 and met Goethe, Schiller, Herder and Wieland (Summers 207). When he published *The Monk* (1796), which was extremely shocking to the English readers, he acknowledged the sources of his inspiration, among them the story of the Bleeding Nun, which he claimed to be a tradition in several parts of Germany. Before *The Monk*, two of Schiller’s works were welcomed in England: his novella *Der Geisterseher* (1789), translated as *The Ghost-Seer* (1795) and his play *Die Räuber* (1791), translated as *The Robbers* (1792). Later in the decade, several German gothic novels were translated into English (Birkhead 84), as well as gothic ballads. Among the translators were Matthew Lewis and Walter Scott.

As gothic novels became increasingly popular, the reading habits also changed: people started reading quickly and impatiently, sometimes skipping pages. They read with a skimming and dipping technique, starting with the conclusion and finishing the book in minimum time. They were reading late in the night and even when they were supposed to be doing something else. On the one hand, they had to return the books to the library by the deadline, so they had to hurry (Clery 97); on the other hand, gothic novels tend to keep up the suspense over a long time and thus invite such reading. In Radcliffe’s *The Romance of the Forest*, we can see an example of such a reading practice when the heroine Adeline finds a manuscript and reads it quickly and in secret, completely immersing herself in what she is reading. Another example is from Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* (1817), in which Henry Tilney says that he read *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe (which is well over 700 pages) in two days with his hair “standing on end the whole time.” He started reading it aloud for his sister, but when she was called away for five minutes, instead of waiting for her, Henry Tilney hid with the book – which belonged to his sister – so that he could continue reading. This may be fiction, and Austen was no doubt depicting the readership of gothic fiction with irony; however, the passage had to contain some elements of the actual reading practice to be recognisable.

The rise of the gothic novel is often connected to the French Revolution as well, which took place at this time across the Channel. The unprecedented publishing and selling of popular novels brought to existence a new *republic of letters*, giving voice to people who had

not had the chance before, and by doing so, it threatened social stability, just like the revolution itself (Clery 134). Another connection may be illustrated with a remark made by the Marquis de Sade who wrote somewhat cynically that the latest writers of fiction had to outdo the terrors that had become commonplace reality if they wanted to sell their books (Clery 170-171). Wordsworth also commented in his *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* (1800) that the frequent news from the revolution in France produced “a craving for extraordinary incident”, which the mass media catered to, and instead of the works of Shakespeare and Milton, “frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies” were favoured. The *frantic novels* he refers to are the gothic novels, and one example of the *sickly and stupid German tragedies* is Schiller’s *The Robbers*, which had an enormous influence on both gothic novels and gothic drama.

To distinguish her from other writers of popular fiction, and in praise of her taste in the arrangement of the gothic scenes, Radcliffe was called ‘the Shakespeare of Romance Writers’ by Nathan Drake in his *Literary Hours; Or Sketches Critical, Narrative, and Poetical*, published in 1798 (249). It is also an indicator of her popularity that two prominent literary figures, Jane Austen and Walter Scott both took notice of her. In *Northanger Abbey* (1798/1817), Radcliffe is praised by every character, and Austen makes several references to *The Romance of the Forest*. The main character reads *Udolpho* throughout the novel, and invests herself so much in the story that it affects the way she views her own environment, leading to spectacular errors in her judgement. *Northanger Abbey* is most often interpreted as a satire of gothic novels, most notably Radcliffe. As a satire, it not only criticizes Radcliffe’s works, but also shows Austen’s deep familiarity with the texts which suggests a level of appreciation.

In his book *Lives of the Novelists* (1827), Scott dedicates a chapter to Radcliffe, in the same way as to Fielding, Richardson and Sterne. This chapter is analysed by Ellen Ledoux in her essay *Was There Ever a “Female Gothic”?*, where she points out that Scott presents Radcliffe in a very controversial way. He calls her the founder and best practitioner of the Gothic novel, he praises the way she could affect the mind of the reader, but at the same time his wording makes the praise dubious as well:

She led the way in a peculiar style of composition, affecting powerfully the mind of the reader, which has since been attempted by many, but in which no one has attained or approached the excellencies of the original inventor, unless, perhaps the author of *The Family of Montorio*. (Scott, 211)

Scott's claim that this is only in "a peculiar style", implies that it is doubtful whether Radcliffe was really as great a writer as people think, and even though it is difficult to match her excellence, it has already been achieved. Ledoux concludes that Scott's overall purpose was to canonize the novel as a genre and tried to distance Radcliffe's work from the countless imitations which were considered low quality by many. He created a canon which was dominated by male writers, but exceptions could be made for extraordinary female authors. He ignored the fact the Radcliffe was influenced, among others, by Sophia Lee and Charlotte Smith, and presented her as a special case. Distancing Radcliffe from her contemporaries and praising her as a unique female writer was a strategy not unknown before Scott. The practice already appears in Thomas James Mathias's infamous satire, *The Pursuits of Literature, a Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues* (1798). Mathias criticized the works of other women writers, such as Charlotte Smith and Mrs. Inchbald for being a harmful influence on young girls, but singled out Ann Radcliffe and called her the 'mighty magician of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*' (58).

The reason why Radcliffe was considered special among the many authors of the period may be attributed to the overwhelming success of two of her novels, *The Romance of the Forest* and *Udolpho*, especially the latter which kept up the suspense surrounding the mysteries for four long volumes. After 1794, the reviewers referred to Radcliffe as a standard to which they could compare the latest productions. It is possible that both Mathias and Scott were influenced by the practice of the reviewers when they distinguished Radcliffe from the rest of the gothic novelists. Yet, that did not stop Scott from disapproving of the method of the explained supernatural, which became associated with Radcliffe's name.

The explained supernatural in contemporary reception

Literary criticism regards the explained supernatural as one of the most distinctive features of Radcliffe's works (voiced for example by Nelson C. Smith and Robert J. Mayhew). It entails the prolonged suspense of a seemingly supernatural event for which a natural explanation is provided later in the novel. Maybe the most famous example of it is the rumour of Signora Laurentini's ghost in the castle of Udolpho, which turns out to be unfounded, and Signora Laurentini herself makes an appearance nearing the end of the novel. Maggie Kilgour called this method Radcliffe's "signature" (129), and similarly, Michael Gamer named it "Radcliffe's technique" (72). As we have seen, Robert Miles drew the line between the male and the female gothic based on the opposition of Radcliffe's explained and Lewis's

unexplained supernatural (“Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis” 93). E. J. Clery stated that this device is what Radcliffe became famous for (106). In this subchapter, however, I intend to show that even though the explained supernatural was an existing device which Radcliffe experimented with, her own ideas on the matter were much more complex than that. I will analyse the most influential discussion of the supernatural by Radcliffe’s character Mr. W in the next chapter, here I only aim to show that the association of Radcliffe with the explained supernatural happened sometime in the last years of the 18th century and in the early 19th century, independently of Radcliffe’s own volition.

Literary criticism notes that the explained supernatural was extremely popular during the middle years of the last decade of the 18th century. E. J. Clery states that it became an identifiable school of writing, and lists 11 names of gothic authors who all employed this device in their novels (108). Yet, after a few years, the reception of the explained supernatural changed: it became the subject of harsh criticism (Summers 139, Clery 108), probably because it lost its capacity to surprise the reader, which was essential to its success.

The device of the explained supernatural was used in the 18th century by authors well before Radcliffe. In 1927, James R. Foster published an article which detailed the popularity of the novels by the Abbé Prévost and their influence on Radcliffe (443). He explicitly drew a connection between Prévost’s method of the explained supernatural and Radcliffe’s own practice, specifically a scene in *Cleveland* in which a ghost appears before Fanny Cleveland, causing an emotional scene for her who supposes him to be her dead brother. The ghost is later revealed to be a man in white surgical bandages (447). The novel was translated and published in English many times throughout the 18th century: in 1734, 1736, 1741, 1752 and 1780 (448).

The explained supernatural also dominates a morbidly sentimental scene in Tobias Smollett’s *The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1753), the importance of which for the development of the gothic has been pointed out by Punter (40). Here a young man weeps at his lover’s grave only to perceive her there as an angel, later turning out to be alive. The scene depicts the changing emotions of the protagonist in powerful words, from the deepest despair to happiness in a few paragraphs, providing a model for the use of the explained supernatural to manipulate emotions. In Mrs. Sheridan’s novel *The History of Nourjahad* (1767), a key element of the plot is the natural explanation of a supernatural incident, supplied at the very end of the novel. Similarly, the *Count of Narbonne* (1781), the theatrical adaptation of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) softened Walpole’s extremities into the explained supernatural. *The Old Manor House* by Charlotte Smith, published in 1793, also presents the

reader with the explained supernatural in a memorable scene. The date of the publication coincided with Radcliffe's fame – which began in 1791 with *The Romance of the Forest* –, but it predated *Udolpho* (1794), which connected Radcliffe's name with the device.

The explained supernatural was also made famous in Germany some years before Radcliffe's time. Friedrich Schiller published his unfinished novel *The Ghost-Seer* in 1787 and Karl Friedrich Kahlert his *The Necromancer: or the Tale of the Black Forest* in 1792. In both these works the elaborate descriptions of seemingly supernatural events dominate the plot, only to be explained at the end. Both of these works were popular in the last decade of the 18th century. *The Necromancer* is one of the Northanger Novels, a list of titles compiled by Isabella Thorpe to read in *Northanger Abbey*. Schiller's influence on the gothic was significant, *The Ghost-Seer's* popularity was noted by Montague Summers (130), and themes of his drama *The Robbers* were copied in gothic drama.

In Radcliffe, the explained supernatural features most prominently in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), but it is present to a smaller degree in *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and in *The Italian* (1797) as well. Angela Wright and Dale Townshend summarized the contemporary reception of each of Radcliffe's novels. They pointed out that Radcliffe read the reviews of her works and aimed to answer the criticism she received in the subsequent publications, therefore she was capable of creatively renewing her techniques to cater for what she perceived to be the needs of the public (7). In the reviews, the explained supernatural as a characteristic device appeared only after *Udolpho* was published in 1794, and was specifically connected with Radcliffe's practice after the publication of her next novel, *The Italian* in 1797. The device is absent from her first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), and consequently it is not mentioned in the reviews either. In *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), there are indications and investigations of a possible ghost, which is explained – the matter constitutes an important plotline, but does not overwhelm the novel as much as it does in *Udolpho*. The reviews are relatively short, and they take no notice of the explanation. On the contrary, two reviews advise Radcliffe to exercise restraint in the improbability of the events described. A short remark in *The Town and Country Magazine* sums up the novel the following way: "Rather too complex, and abounding too much with improbabilities, but possesses great merit" (163). A much longer review in *The Critical Review* employs a rather condescending tone in the praise of the novel: "This very interesting novel engages the attention, in defiance of numerous improbabilities and 'hair-breadth scapes' too often repeated. Perhaps, on second reading, these might be still more disgusting" (350). The explained supernatural is not mentioned.

The presence of the unexplained supernatural in Radcliffe's next novel, *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) has been noted by literary criticism, for example by Robert Miles and Holly Hirst. There is an implied review of this novel and a comparison with *Udolpho* in the Preface of the gothic novel *Mysteries Elucidated* (1795) by Anna Maria Mackenzie, which is worth quoting at some length. Mackenzie does not name the author whose works she comments on, but Rictor Norton identifies her as Radcliffe ("Gothic Readings"). Speaking of her last novel, Mackenzie comments:

Let every mystery thicken in the progress of the story, till the whole is elucidated, but let it be without the intervention of the super, or preternatural appearances. Dreams and apparitions favour too much of the superstition which ought never to be encouraged; and indeed I was happy to see, in that author's last voluminous publication, an amendment of this error. (Mackenzie, xi-xii)

The supernatural aspect of the heroine's dreams in *The Romance of the Forest*, which Mackenzie refers to, provides the basis of the analysis in a later chapter of my dissertation. As we can see, Mackenzie praises Radcliffe for abandoning the "real" supernatural and featuring the explained supernatural in *Udolpho*. Her comment implies that at the time of the publication of the novel, in 1795, the explained supernatural was regarded as a commendable change in her practice, not as her signature technique.

The reviews of *The Romance of the Forest* take no notice of the prophetic dreams. Instead, comparing it to Walpole's *Otranto*, they praise Radcliffe's taste in the arrangement of the gothic elements. For example, a reviewer writes in *The Critical Review* in 1792: "We have the ruined abbey, a supposed ghost, the skeleton of a man secretly murdered [...] They are managed, however, with skill, and do not disgust by their improbability: every thing is consistent, and within the verge of rational belief" (458). The choice of words suggests that the supernatural in the novel is explained – however, as my analysis of the manuscript-scene in *The Romance of the Forest* will show, it was important for Radcliffe in this novel to leave the question of the supernatural undecided (the reviewer probably chose to dismiss the ghost of the manuscript-scene). The reviewer praised Radcliffe's skill, so the manuscript-scene presumably made the desired effect in associating the supernatural with the aesthetic. A similar point was made in the *Monthly Review* (1792): "By the aid of an inventive genius, much may still be done, even in this philosophical age, to fill the fancy with marvellous images" (82). In my interpretation, both reviewers praise Radcliffe's taste in portraying the

supernatural with restraint as compared to *The Castle of Otranto*. Maybe it was this commendation of staying “within the verge of rational belief” that inspired Radcliffe to so abundantly employ the explained supernatural in *Udolpho*, published three years later.

A reviewer in *The Monthly Review* in 1794 listed the characteristics of the latest Radcliffe novel, including the explained supernatural as a curiosity which is highly praised:

Without introducing into her narrative any thing really supernatural, Mrs. Radcliffe has contrived to produce as powerful an effect as if the invisible world had been obedient to her magic spell; and the reader experiences in perfection the strange luxury of artificial terror, without being obliged for a moment to hoodwink his reason, or to yield to the weakness of superstitious credulity. [...] within the limits of nature and probability, a story so well contrived to hold curiosity in pleasing suspense, and at the same time to agitate the soul with strong emotions of sympathetic terror, has seldom been produced. (280)

In August in the same year, Coleridge published a review in *The Critical Review*, in which he evaluates Radcliffe’s use of the explained supernatural as well. He praises the suspense, but faults Radcliffe for the inadequacy of the explanations compared to the suspense the mysteries created: “Curiosity is raised oftener than it is gratified; or rather, it is raised so high that no adequate gratification can be given it; the interest is completely dissolved when once the adventure is finished, and the reader, when he is got to the end of the work, looks about in vain for the spell which had bound him so strongly to it” (362). Coleridge received a letter from a reader who complained about his negative criticism (he starts his Addendum in *The Critical Review* in November in the same year with the following words: “we have received a remonstrance on this subject”, 359), and he was obliged to publish another review in November in which he emphasizes the merits of *Udolpho* more.

Michael Gamer noted that it was approximately nine months after the publication of *Udolpho* that many gothic novels featuring the explained supernatural started appearing (72). Based on his list of authors, I collected the following novels inspired by the explained supernatural in *Udolpho*:

- Isabella Kelly: *The Abbey of St. Asaph*, 1795
- Anna Maria Mackenzie: *Mysteries Elucidated*, 1795.
- Elizabeth Bonhote: *Bungay Castle*, 1796

- John Palmer Jr.: *Mystery of the Black Tower*, 1796.
- Eliza Parsons: *The Mysterious Warning*, 1796
- Mrs. Carver: *The Horrors of Oakendale Abbey*, 1797
- Regina Maria Roche: *Clermont. A Tale*, 1798.
- George Moore: *Grassville Abbey*, 1798.
- Francis Lathom: *The Midnight Bell*, 1798.
- Mrs. Patrick: *More Ghosts!*, 1798.
- Mary Julia Young: *Moss Cliff Abbey; or, the Sepulchral Harmonist. A Mysterious Tale*, 1803
- Elizabeth Meeke: *Monkish Mysteries*, 1805

The number of novels using this device published after *Udolpho* signals how much Radcliffe's novel influenced contemporary gothic authors, especially if we compare it with the relatively small number of works featuring the explained supernatural before 1794. Among these, the novels *The Abbey of St. Asaph* and *The Horrors of Oakendale Abbey* were categorized by reviewers as imitations of Radcliffe. "In the humble imitation of the well-known novels of Mrs. Radcliffe" (349) – started the reviewer of *St. Asaph*, while *Oakendale Abbey* received a less polite evaluation: "This work, as an imitation of Ann Radcliffe, is perhaps one of the most despicable performances that ever appeared" (478).

Starting with 1795, reviewers used Radcliffe as a standard to which they compared other gothic novels, usually signalling their inferiority to Radcliffe's talent. "It requires the genius of a Radcliffe to harrow up our souls with these visionary terrors" (480) – stated a reviewer, while writing about *The Haunted Cavern* (1795) by John Palmer. Another gothic author – Sarah Lansdale Tenterden – is called "a disciple of Mrs. Radcliffe" (438). Maybe it was the reviewers' use of Radcliffe as a norm that collected the numerous gothic authors of the period into the group called the "Radcliffe school" by literary criticism.

To my knowledge, it was Mary Wollstonecraft who first called the explained supernatural a distinctively Radcliffean method. In her review of *The Italian* in the *Analytical Review* in 1797 she wrote:

Her mode, it is true, of accounting in a natural manner for supernatural appearances, now the secret has gotten vent, lessens the effect, and the interest of the story is interrupted by the reader's attention to guard against the delusions of the imagination.
(Wollstonecraft, 516)

Wollstonecraft probably referred to the figure of Nicola di Zampari who for most of the novel appeared only in circumstances which suggested that he might be a ghost or a supernatural creature. His aim was to confuse the hero, but nearing the end of the novel, he revealed himself and helped uncover the secrets. His storyline fits the explained supernatural, and Wollstonecraft connected it to the technique already used in *Udolpho*. Nevertheless, in *The Italian*, there are other instances of the supernatural as well, which I will analyse in the chapters on emotions, on dreams and on Radcliffe's ghost-scenes. Similarly to Wollstonecraft, another review in the *English Review* complained that the explained supernatural lost its capacity to surprise: "It was impossible to raise curiosity and expectation to a higher pitch than she has done in her *Mysteries of Udolpho*, yet these mysteries she accounted for in a natural manner. The reader of the *Italian* now before us sets down with this conviction" (574). Both reviews suggest that it was *Udolpho* which made the readers familiar with the explained supernatural, and this familiarity destroyed the effect of surprise in the revelation of Nicola di Zampari's identity in *The Italian*.

It was an anonymous review of another gothic novel in 1810 in *The Quarterly Review* (attributed to Walter Scott by Michael Gamer) that stated that it was Radcliffe who first made use of the explained supernatural in English literature – even though, as I have established in this subchapter, the explained supernatural was already present in English literature as early as 1753 when Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom* was published: "we disapprove of the mode introduced by Mrs. Radcliffe, and followed by Mr. Murphy and her other imitators, of winding up their story with a solution by which all the incidents appearing to partake of the mystic and marvellous are resolved by very simple and natural causes" (Summers 140).

In the same year Anna Letitia Barbauld's *The British Novelists* was published, which included a chapter on Radcliffe. A new edition was printed in 1820, with the following description of Radcliffe's practice: "it is the peculiar management of this author, that though she gives, as it were, a glimpse of the world of terrible shadows, she yet stops short of any thing really supernatural: for all the strange and alarming circumstances brought forward in the narrative are explained in the winding up of the story by natural causes; but in the mean time the reader has felt their full impression" (ii). Barbauld calls the explained supernatural Radcliffe's own peculiar management, implying that it characterizes the whole body of her works.

The same remark is made by Walter Scott in 1825 in his chapter on Radcliffe in the *Lives of the Novelists*: “A principal characteristic of Mrs. Radcliffe’s romances is the rule which the author imposed upon herself, that all the circumstances of her narrative, however mysterious and, apparently superhuman, were to be accounted for on natural principles, at the winding up of the story” (245). Scott describes in detail the effect the explained supernatural makes, echoing Coleridge’s condemnation that the reader finds the natural explanations inadequate to the feelings the mysteries excited in him (245).

The idea that the explained supernatural characterizes the whole of Radcliffe’s work is also present in 20th century literary criticism, starting with Birkhead’s *The Tale of Terror* (1921): “From the very first she explained away her marvels by natural means” (23). This idea was probably based on the reviews of *The Italian*, and Ledoux emphasizes the importance of Walter Scott’s such observation of Radcliffe’s whole practice in forming her later reception. My dissertation, while acknowledging the role the explained supernatural plays in *A Sicilian Romance*, *Udolpho*, and *The Italian*, aims to show that Radcliffe’s portrayal of the supernatural is much more complex, and the explained supernatural was a tool for her to experiment with. In her final, posthumous novel *Gaston de Blondville* (1826) she abandoned the explanations entirely, while keeping the characteristics of her earlier supernatural scenes. Therefore, in the next chapter I am going to explore the ideas on the representation of the supernatural as they appear in Radcliffe’s works, especially in the dialogue *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1826) where it is discussed in the greatest detail.

2. The Discussion of the Supernatural in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*

The supernatural is an essential feature of the gothic novel, and through the explained supernatural, it often surfaces in Radcliffe's reception. By focusing on the dialogue *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, this chapter is aimed to show that the supernatural is introduced by Radcliffe by conscious authorial design in a way that is always associated with aesthetic value. The relevant discussions in her various novels echo these views and often repeat each other, indicating that even though Radcliffe constantly developed her skills as a novelist, in this respect she relied on the same conceptual basis throughout her novels. I finish the chapter with an analysis of the poem *The Glow-worm*, published in *Udolpho*, to show that the concept articulated by Mr. W is already recognisable in a much earlier work.

The supernatural has always been a significant component of literature. Even Aristotle mentions it in his *Poetics*, referring to it as the marvellous, represented by impossibilities: "the marvellous is a source of pleasure [...] such impossibilities may still be justified, if their representation serves the purpose of the art itself—for we must remember what has been said of the end of poetry; that is, they are justified if they give the passage they are in, or some other passage, a more astounding effect" (Sandner 18). In other words, Aristotle regards the supernatural as a possible tool in literature which serves to make an effect on the audience. As we shall see, this concept is very similar to what Radcliffe discusses in her dialogue. A more immediate precursor, Philip Sydney associated the supernatural with the creative imagination and gave it prestige in his *An Apology for Poetry* (1595), claiming that the poet can produce things better than in nature: "Heroes, Demigods, Cyclopes, Chimeras, Furies, and such like" (Sandner 20).

Sarah Tindal Kareem notes that 18th-century fantastic literature was influenced by 17th-century wonder literature as well. Wonder literature was a literary tradition in which marvellous events were narrated in a matter-of-fact style (66). Lord Kames called them "absurd romances" and commented that the more supernatural the related facts were, the more was wonder raised (107). Tindal Kareem points out that the capacity of wonder literature to arrest attention, to delay recognition, and to suspend judgment is in itself an aesthetic end (38). She also touches upon the fact that prodigies were an important element of 17th century mainstream culture. They were considered part of the doctrine of God's providence, serving as interpretable signs of God's will (46). Novelists took advantage of the tradition of "providences" that turned the attention towards the anomalous (54), and by generating a

conflict between rational judgement and fancy, they aimed to elicit the same reader response as did wonder literature with their fiction (66, 69). This undecidedness between the fantastic and the rational can be associated with Todorov's conclusion that hesitation between the natural and the supernatural explanation constitutes the defining feature of the fantastic, yet in the 17th and 18th centuries it was associated with prestige, creativity and aesthetic effects.

Dryden echoed Philip Sydney's connection between fantastic literature and the creative imagination, Pask therefore regards him as the founder of the conceptual basis of fantasy fiction (40). In the 18th century, his term "fairy kind of writing" was coined and made famous by Joseph Addison as the "fairy way of writing." Addison associated Dryden's emphasis on the imagination with English nationality, realized in popular beliefs and folklore. He singled out Shakespeare whose imaginative invention signals his own poetic strength (Pask 68). Addison did not only write about folklore, but also about "Fairies, Witches, Magicians, Demons, and departed Spirits," which "raise a pleasing kind of horror in the mind of the reader", foreshadowing Radcliffe's arguments on terror. He was not the only one contemplating this topic: the supernatural in literature became a major theme in the criticism of the second half of the 18th century. Richard Hurd in his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) connects Addison's fairy way of writing with the sublime and the gothic, although by gothic he means an idealized medieval milieu. He echoes Addison's thoughts when he emphasizes the necessity of a "footing in the popular belief" (Sandner 28). This necessity was reinforced by William Duff in his *Essay on Original Genius* (1767), in which he favours the popular beliefs to reality in portraying ghosts and witches (142).

Anna Laetitia Aikin (later Barbauld) wrote specifically about Gothic literature when she wrote her essay *On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror* (1773), quoting *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* as examples. Aikin praises the capacity of "a strange and unexpected event" to catch one's attention, and among them "the agency of invisible beings" is the most striking. Similarly to Radcliffe later, she details the readers' reaction, elaborating on the emotional effect they experience, turning terror into a pleasurable experience: "Passion and fancy co-operating elevate the soul to its highest pitch; and the pain of terror is lost in amazement."

In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge relied on the tradition of the fairy way of writing in connecting the supernatural to aesthetics and prioritizing the emotional effect on the reader. Concerning the topic of supernatural events in his own poetry, he wrote: "the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real" (Sandner

39). Coleridge's concept of the willing suspension of disbelief articulates the favouring of the emotional effect over the logical or critical reception of a literary work. Similarly to Coleridge, Radcliffe also prioritizes emotional effect over probability.

The context of Radcliffe's theoretical dialogue

On the Supernatural in Poetry is the longest and most detailed discussion of the topic by Radcliffe, and scholarly literature (among others, Dale Townshend and James Watt) considers it as her *ars poetica* in many respects, for example in her differentiation between terror and horror. It was published posthumously in 1826 in *The New Monthly Magazine*. The title was given by the *Magazine*, as it is explained in a footnote:

Having been permitted to extract the above eloquent passages from the manuscripts of the author of the "Mysteries of Udolpho," we have given this title to them, though certainly they were not intended by the writer to be offered as a formal or deliberate essay, under this, or any other denomination. They were, originally, part of an INTRODUCTION to the Romance, or Phantasie, which is about to appear. The discussion is supposed to be carried on by two travellers in Shakspeare's (sic!) native county, Warwickshire. (145)

As the note makes clear, the discussion was originally between the two characters from the frame narrative of *Gaston de Blondville* (1826). According to her biographer Thomas Noon Talfourd, the novel was probably written during the winter of 1802, after Radcliffe's visit to Kenilworth Castle which serves as the location of both the frame narrative and the body of the novel itself (Norton 193). If we accept Talfourd's estimation, that constitutes a 5-year gap between her last published novel *The Italian* (1797) and the composition of *Gaston de Blondville* with the dialogue in its *Introduction*. This gap is longer than Radcliffe's usual maximum of 3 years between publishing her novels, but it still puts her dialogue in a context closer to the novels published in her lifetime, in contrast to the year 1826 in which *Gaston* finally appeared.

The publication including *Gaston* is a lengthy, four-volume collection of Radcliffe's various unpublished works, made available to the public three years after she died. Besides her last novel (which took up two and a half volumes), it contained Radcliffe's biography as an introduction to the collection, her long *poem St. Albans Abbey, A Metrical Tale* which

deals with the topic of the battle of St. Albans during the War of the Roses (roughly one volume), and various miscellaneous poems.

The discussion published in *The New Monthly Magazine* is not repeated in the novel as it was finally published in Radcliffe's posthumous collection. Instead, the following words mark its absence: "Here ensued a conversation on illusions of the imagination and on the various powers of exciting them, shown by English poets, especially by Shakespeare and Milton, which it is unnecessary to repeat in this place" (6). The decision to extract the more theoretical part of the introduction was probably made by Henry Colburn, publisher of *Gaston de Blondville* and co-founder of the *New Monthly Magazine*. The dialogue itself would have constituted an integral part of the novel's *Introduction*, as it introduces the reader to the figure of Willoughton, who plays a key role in the book.

Willoughton receives a manuscript in the *Introduction* which he begins to read and which constitutes the novel itself. He is characterized by literary taste and has definite ideas about how to approach the manuscript. Both his opinion in the removed dialogue and his behaviour illustrate his expertise, which serves as a model for the reader on how to receive the body of the novel. Nevertheless, as it was removed from the narrative, the dialogue is treated as a separate work in Radcliffe's reception. In *Fantastic Literature: A Critical Reader* edited by David Sandner and published in 2004, it is included among such works as *The Fairy Way of Writing* (1712) by Joseph Addison and *On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition* (1827) by Walter Scott. Starting with Aristotle and ending with late 20th theorists such as Brian Attebery and John Clute, in the *Critical Reader* Sander provides a historical overview of the various theoretical concepts behind what we today call fantasy literature. He dedicates a considerable number of pages to 18th- and early 19th-century viewpoints, and includes Radcliffe's dialogue among them. He is not the only one who treats the work as the basis of Radcliffe's theory supporting her novels. Dale Townshend explicates Radcliffe's ideas on Shakespeare based on *On the Supernatural in Poetry* ("Gothic Shakespeare" 43). Similarly, Nelson C. Smith looks to the dialogue as a source to learn more about Radcliffe's attitude towards sensibility (579). Robert Miles calls the dialogue the aesthetic justification of Radcliffe's art, and relies on Mr. W's distinction between terror and horror to differentiate between Radcliffe's and Matthew Lewis's gothic style ("Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress" 46-47). Mydla Jacek even calls Willoughton Radcliffe's alter ego (123).

However, the discussion in *On the Supernatural in Poetry* was not written as a philosophical treatise. It is characterised by a free association of ideas, expressed by Mr. W (in the novel Mr. Willoughton) to his friend. Mr. W has a vast knowledge of literature and

regards himself as an expert on taste, and he talks about English literary figures whose works he admires. He speaks about literature to his friend Mr. S (in the novel *Mr. Simpson*) who is, in contrast, represented as a man who is usually more interested in dinner than in literature. I strongly believe that Mr. W's views are illustrated by the body of the novel, and they show striking similarities with Radcliffe's earlier practice. It is not a coincidence that literary critics such as Dale Townshend, Andrew Smith and Robert Miles echo Mr. W's concepts when they make assumptions about Radcliffe's own views on writing. Nevertheless, even though Mr. W's opinions are compatible with Radcliffe's art, one must not accept them as Radcliffe's own. There might be instances when Radcliffe's practice contradicts Mr. W's principles. I believe that Radcliffe continuously developed as a writer, experimenting with different techniques, and sometimes renewing them. Therefore, it might be asserted that Mr. W's ideas are the most detailed expression of Radcliffe's own opinion on the matter, and they form the basis of an aesthetic which is present in all of her novels, but they do not cover its entirety.

The tendency of literary criticism to treat the dialogue as a philosophical treatise is enabled by the contents of the discussion. Mr. W talks about English literature, mostly about Shakespeare as an example of how the best literature is constructed. Botting and Wilson note that in the 18th century, Shakespeare's name was the focal point of an emerging aesthetic theory which preferred genius and imagination over the representation of everyday life. Edward Young, Horace Walpole and Richard Hurd all established a new aesthetic by expressing their views on Shakespeare (188). Radcliffe's dialogue is similar in nature to their works, and lends itself to theoretical scrutiny, even though it is part of a novel.

The tradition of expressing philosophical ideas in the form of a dialogue goes back to Plato's dialogues, but there are plenty of examples of it in 18th-century England as well. In 1785, Clara Reeve, author of the gothic novel *The Old English Baron*, published *The Progress of Romance, through times, countries, and manners; with remarks on the good and bad effects of it on them respectively; in a course of evening conversations*, in which three women discuss what they call "romance". The three women each have different opinions, so Reeve is able to incorporate different approaches to the various particulars of the history of romance. I believe that Radcliffe draws on the same tradition of conversational philosophy but uses it for her own purposes: the dialogue between Mr. W and Mr. S serves to establish Willoughton's character. Willoughton is the one through whose perspective the reader is offered guidance on how to approach the body of the novel. He thus becomes an ideal reader whose opinion is essential to understanding Radcliffe's art, whereas Simpson disappears shortly after their conversation.

Mr. W uses the word ‘poetry’ in a broader sense than it is used today. He supports his points by referring to Shakespeare’s plays, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, as well as to poems by Dryden, Thomas Gray and William Collins, as examples of “poetry”, while his views serve as an introduction to a novel. The dialogue was titled by the publisher *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, even though Mr. W reflects on a variety of genres. This view was not uncommon in the period, Shelley’s *A Defence of Poetry* (written in 1821) defines poetry as “the expression of the imagination,” and classifies the works of Plato, ancient Greek historians and Shakespeare as poetry. Therefore, Mr. W’s use of this expression refers to a uniform aesthetic experience, invoked by a work of the creative imagination.

Writing about Radcliffe’s aesthetics, literary criticism often quotes the distinction between terror and horror made by Mr. W (for example Miles “Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress” 46-47). This also serves as a basis for Andrew Smith’s analysis in his essay *Radcliffe's Aesthetics: Or, The Problem With Burke And Lewis* (2015). Smith demonstrates that Radcliffe engages with Burke’s concept of terror and obscurity in her novels and later revises her own methods. In Smith’s interpretation, Radcliffe employed terror as a rhetorical construction in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In response to Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* which relied on horror and neglected to employ the Burkean obscurity to soften its effect, Radcliffe re-examined how terror was produced in *Udolpho*, which eventually lead to her differentiation between terror and horror in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. Smith’s analysis shows that Radcliffe was a conscious author who experimented with different methods, and also that she had a similar aim in the two novels: to give the reader an aesthetic experience through the feeling of terror. This chapter aims to investigate the most important points made by Mr. W in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*; and to show that these points can serve to better understand Radcliffe’s novels published in her lifetime. I aim to show that even though – as Andrew Smith argued – Radcliffe actively reinvented her methods in the course of her career, her engagement with the aesthetic through the supernatural was a constant foundation in her works.

The Sublime

Radcliffe was familiar with Edmund Burke’s notion of the sublime and through Mr. W she explicitly refers to his *Philosophical Enquiry* (1757) in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*:

The union of grandeur and obscurity, which Mr. Burke describes as a sort of tranquillity [sic] tinged with terror, and which causes the sublime, is to be found only in *Hamlet*; or in scenes where circumstances of the same kind prevail. (Radcliffe, 149)

Mr. W praises the ghost-scene in *Hamlet* in great length, and highlights grandeur and obscurity as necessary elements of its sublimity. He claims that in order to include the supernatural into a literary work, the author must carefully plan its context and this is best achieved in *Hamlet*. Radcliffe relies on Burke when she associates the obscure with the terrible and the sublime. I believe she found Burke's *Enquiry* incredibly useful because it provided her with an attribution of aesthetic qualities to various objects (Ferguson 315) and in her scenes invoking the sublime, she chose the circumstances based on Burke's guidelines. Burke writes the following:

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. (Burke, 51)

To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary. (Burke, 74)

Burke was not the first in the 18th century to take notice of the power of uncertainty. Hume pointed out in his *Treatise* that it "gives an additional force to the passion" (177) when the imagination has to complete the picture that was given to the reader. Obscurity, terror, and sublimity are connected in Mr. W's reasoning, and these concepts are also characteristic of Radcliffe's own gothic novels. The dialogue shows that Radcliffe did not just rely on her intuition, she was also well-versed in English literature and aesthetic discussions. At the same time, compared to Burke, her ideas are loosely connected and her choice of words is imprecise, she does not echo Burke's treatise, instead she generalizes the reading experience, inspired by Burke.

Talking about the sublime, Mr. W brings up Milton as an example who used terror and obscurity to create a prime example of the sublime in the image of Death. With this, Radcliffe joins in the 18th-century discussion of Milton's sublimity. Joseph Addison published several shorter critical essays in *The Spectator* analysing Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and he also emphasized its sublimity: "Milton's chief Talent, and indeed his distinguishing Excellence, lies in the Sublimity of his Thoughts. There are others of the Moderns who rival him in every other part of Poetry; but in the greatness of his Sentiments, he triumphs over all the Poets both

Modern and Ancient, Homer only excepted” (No 279, p. 74). As Éva Antal pointed out, in his *Enquiry*, Burke also cites numerous examples of the sublime present in *Paradise Lost*, especially the images in the descriptions of Death, Hell and Satan. Samuel Johnson names sublimity as the characteristic quality of Milton’s poem and “the great” as Milton’s element (180). William Hayley called him “the sublimest of poets” (206).

Radcliffe not only echoes Addison when she associates Milton’s image of Death with the sublime, but other essayists as well. In *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (1701), John Dennis stated that the most intense moment of the sublime is achieved when the supernatural is involved, although Dennis primarily meant a confrontation with God, and not a soul returning from death (Mishra 29). Hugh Blair in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) dedicates some passages to the concept of the sublime, and points out that darkness, solitude, and silence greatly assist its achievement, as well as the idea of a superior power (Ashfield, de Bolla 221). Mr. W selects the same features when he argues for the sublimity of the ghost in *Hamlet*. In his reasoning, the moments before the appearance of the ghost of Hamlet’s father are the most powerful in the scene because they encompass all the necessary requirements of the sublime: darkness, obscurity, uncertainty, and the expectation of the appearance of the ghost (147-148). Although Mr. W does not mention it, it is important to note the safe distance from the danger which – according to Burke – turns terror into delight (Fogarasi “Offstage Fright” 127). This distance was provided by the distance between the fictional world and the readers’ everyday reality.

Radcliffe was not the first gothic author to create sublime effects through the supernatural. Erica Roth correlated scenes from Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* with passages from Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry* to show the extent to which Walpole relied on the sublime when writing the novel. Roth explicitly refers to Burke’s passages on obscurity and terror, as well as the sublimity of the emotions experienced by the characters in *Otranto* (61), all of which are characteristic of Radcliffe’s works as well.

Mr. W compares the ghost-scene from *Hamlet* to the one in *Macbeth* to show that in supernatural scenes, the author must follow certain rules – specifically, creating a suitable atmosphere by choosing the attendant circumstances carefully – to achieve the desired effect: “In nothing has Shakespeare been more successful than in this [...] that of selecting circumstances and manners and appearance for his supernatural beings” (147). He concludes that in *Hamlet* the supernatural is more sublime and therefore it is more effective than in *Macbeth*. In the following passage from *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe endeavours to imitate *Hamlet* and to create a sublime effect:

Sometimes, a cloud opened its light upon a distant mountain, and, while the sudden splendour illumined all its recesses of rock and wood, the rest of the scene remained in deep shadow; at others, partial features of the castle were revealed by the glimpse—the ancient arch leading to the east rampart, the turret above, or the fortifications beyond; and then, perhaps, the whole edifice with all its towers, its dark massy walls and pointed casements would appear, and vanish in an instant.

Emily, looking again upon the rampart, perceived the flame she had seen before; it moved onward; and, soon after, she thought she heard a footstep. The light appeared and disappeared frequently, while, as she watched, it glided under her casements, and, at the same instant, she was certain, that a footstep passed, but the darkness did not permit her to distinguish any object except the flame. It moved away, and then, by a gleam of lightning, she perceived some person on the terrace. All the anxieties of the preceding night returned. This person advanced, and the playing flame alternately appeared and vanished. Emily wished to speak, to end her doubts, whether this figure were human or supernatural; but her courage failed as often as she attempted utterance. (Radcliffe, 372-373)

In this passage, Emily is in her room in a turret of the castle of Udolpho, and looking out of her window, she tries to understand the mystery of a strange figure she had seen the previous night. Even though *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was published in 1794, years before Radcliffe wrote *Gaston de Blondville*, this scene can be interpreted as Radcliffe's own attempt at creating a scene based on Mr. W's guidelines. As Maggie Kilgour noticed (120), this scene evokes the ghost-scene in *Hamlet*: we see the wall of the castle at night with ghostly lights and sounds. (The advancing person in the quoted passage turns out to be a guard with whom Emily finally initiates a conversation.) Radcliffe also supplemented the castle with a landscape that would be deemed sublime by Burke: mountains and recesses of rock and wood. The time of the day is night, similarly to the ghost-scene in *Hamlet*, and Radcliffe prolongs the time before the appearance of the man, describing Emily's emotions. Mr. W also praised the powerfulness of the final moments before the appearance of the ghost:

Every minute circumstance of the scene between those watching on the platform, and that of between them and Horatio, preceding the entrance of the apparition, contributes to excite some feeling of dreariness, or melancholy, or solemnity, or expectation, in

unison with, and leading on toward that high curiosity and thrilling awe with which we witness the conclusion of the scene. (Radcliffe, 148)

Radcliffe also subtly introduces the possibility of the supernatural concerning the approaching figure to intensify the overall sublimity of the scene. The passage is an example of what can be called Radcliffe's aesthetics of uncertainty. It is important to note that by this term I mean a concept most clearly articulated in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, but present in all of her novels. This concept was never written down systematically in a treatise, on the contrary, its most detailed description can be found in the form of a dialogue. In it, Radcliffe specifies the conditions in which the supernatural can be portrayed in a way to make an emotional effect on the reader. It could be regarded as a simple set of tools on which all authors can rely, but Mr. W connects it with sensibility and taste, claiming that not everyone is capable of creating literature this way.

Scenes with a similar atmosphere are already present in Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), but they also appear in lyrical form, in the poems interspersed through the prose narrative. The following stanza is from a poem titled *Evening*, which describes the change between the day and the night, establishing a moment of tranquil reflection in the novel. Here, the poem connects the uncertainty created by the coming darkness with a creative mental activity:

Still through the deep'ning gloom of bow'ry shades
 To Fancy's eye fantastic forms appear;
 Low whisp'ring echoes steal along the glades
 And thrill the ear with wildly-pleasing fear. (Radcliffe, 43)

The twilight creates an aesthetically pleasing experience, in which fancy is identified as the source of the supernatural. Charlotte Smith invoked a similar atmosphere in her *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784), for example in *Sonnet XXXII. To Melancholy*. In this poem, the speaker takes on the role of the literary genius and meets the ghost of the poet and dramatist Thomas Otway (Pratt 572). Even though the word sublime does not appear in Radcliffe's poem, its constituents are all there: gloom, fantastic forms, obscurity, "wildly-pleasing fear." The mentioning of fear may bring to mind Collins's *Ode to Fear* as well, in which it is described as "madly wild." The poem was well-known by Radcliffe, as she quoted it as one of her

epigraphs. Her own poem, in turn, shows that she incorporated the sublime associated with the supernatural early on in her career.

The connection between the supernatural and the sublime was also noted in early 18th-century discussions on the fairy way of writing. Joseph Addison in his essays on *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1712) claimed that the fairy way of writing is productive of what he calls “the great,” which was later identified as the sublime by literary criticism (Sandner, “Critical Discourses” 14). In his essay on the fairy way of writing in *The Spectator* (1712) he singled out Shakespeare whose own genius enabled him to include supernatural creatures such as fairies, witches and ghosts in his works. Shakespeare’s genius is revealed not restricting himself only to the sublime effect, but associating these creatures sometimes with playfulness, as in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Sandner calls Addison’s essay crucial in the exploration of the aesthetic effect of the fantastic on the reader (23). Even though she does not use the exact word, in her essay *On Ghosts*, Mary Shelley agrees with Addison by making the sublime effect on the ghost-seer the identifying characteristics of ghosts. By associating the literary supernatural with the sublime and poetic genius, as well as with the emotional effect on the reader Addison and Shelley made a point that was important to Radcliffe as well and is elaborated on by Mr. W. Curiously, Burke puts little emphasis on the supernatural as a possible source of the sublime, which suggests that his *Enquiry* was only one element inspiring Radcliffe’s ideas.

Poetic genius and reader response

Mr. W starts the dialogue by talking about Shakespeare whose special talent raised him above other writers. He links this creative power to the effect the literary work has on people. Mr. W talks as an expert on literary taste and makes a value judgement that prefers Shakespeare’s creativity and his ability to move the audience to all other kinds of literature. He also indicates that through the effect it has on them, people can partake of the grandness of Shakespeare’s creations. At the same time, Mr. W places Shakespeare’s genius firmly in the past, distancing him from the modern reader:

“Where is now the undying spirit,” said he, “that could so exquisitely perceive and feel?—that could inspire itself with the various characters of this world, and create worlds of its own; to which the grand and the beautiful, the gloomy and the sublime of visible Nature, up-called not only corresponding feelings, but passions” (Radcliffe, 145)

Even though Mr. W talks about a literary figure, Shakespeare, he uses the vocabulary of religion to express Shakespeare's superiority over the common people. He talks about Shakespeare's "undying spirit" and he endows him with a creative power similar to that of God. Radcliffe's choice of words when talking about Shakespeare was characteristic of the period, on the whole. Péter Dávidházi in his book on *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare* has shown that the 18th century's reverence for Shakespeare was a quasi-religious adoration. Pope called him 'divine,' and Samuel Johnson used the word 'immortal' (50 and 52). In his *Essay on Sepulchres* (1809), William Godwin also toys with the idea that long dead literary figures such as Shakespeare or Milton are emancipated from mortality (Lynch 40). Mr. W's words reflect this quasi-religious adoration, even more so, as he praises Shakespeare's ability to "create worlds of its own." Interestingly, when Radcliffe was writing the dialogue, she had already been called the "Shakespeare of Romance Writers," by Nathan Drake in his *Literary Hours* (1798). By praising Shakespeare's creative power, after being called a kind of "Shakespeare" herself, Radcliffe may be indirectly talking about her own literary endeavour and aspirations. When she associates Shakespeare's creative power with a supernatural force, I believe she offers her readers a guide to her own novels.

Terry Castle argues for something similar in *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (1995). She claims that in the course of the eighteenth century, ghosts had become internalized: they were absorbed into the world of thought (171). She explains that with the emergence of rationalism and the development of technology, people became more and more sceptical concerning the existence of ghosts (162 and 170). To account for the numerous ghost-sightings by respectable people, psychology and medicine gave a possible explanation: ghosts were mental images which appeared real due to a medical condition (174). Speaking about Radcliffe's most famous novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Castle argues that the supernatural is an essential part of the readerly experience. She draws attention to the emotional power of the novel, and believes that it results in displacing the supernatural into the sphere of everyday life (124-125). In the age of sensibility, the mental image or spiritual essence of a person sometimes becomes more important than the corporeal reality, so both living and dead people can be unchangingly preserved in one's imagination (136). As Castle points out, this way of thinking is conveyed by the very language of Radcliffe's novel (129). I believe that a similar underlying idea is present in the paragraph quoted above with respect to Shakespeare: using the rhetoric of religion, Radcliffe makes a connection between poetic creativity and the supernatural.

Later in the dialogue, Radcliffe makes this connection more explicit: “I am speaking of the only real witch—the witch of the poet; and all our notions and feelings connected with terror accord with his” (147). Here, Mr. W links poetic creativity with the supernatural and also associates the feeling of terror with them. He discusses various examples from English literature to make his point. Concerning the appearance of the witches in stage versions of *Macbeth*, he complains of theatres

making them downright Scotch-women thus not only contradicting the very words of *Macbeth*, but withdrawing from these cruel agents of the passions all that strange and supernatural air which had made them so affecting to the imagination, and which was entirely suitable to the solemn and important events they were foretelling and accomplishing. (Radcliffe, 146)

Here Mr W condemns a theatrical performance of *Macbeth* because the witches were dressed as ordinary Scottish women; instead, he believes that their supernatural aspect should have been emphasized. He justifies his opinion with two different reasons. First, the supernatural is what makes the witches “affecting to the imagination”, in other words, the supernatural can have such an effect on the audience as it was described in the first excerpt: this is what enables ordinary people to fully enjoy Shakespeare’s accomplishments. A similar point was made by Charles Lamb in his *On the tragedies of Shakespeare* (1811) when speaking about *Macbeth*. He too criticized the witches on stage and pointed out that being brought out for all the audience to see, they lost their supernatural appeal and merely looked like old women. When insisting on providing a suitable atmosphere for the witches, both Lamb and Radcliffe might have been influenced by Kemble’s stage adaptation of *Macbeth* which included a comic interlude of 50 singing and dancing witches on the stage, played by comedians (The RSC Shakespeare 123).

Mr. W’s second argument is that the supernatural is “suitable to the [...] events they were foretelling” (146). The witches predict the fates of the kings of Scotland and so Mr. W believes that events of national importance can invite the supernatural. In the posthumous volume both the novel *Gaston de Blondville* and the poem *Salisbury Plains* illustrate his point. The former takes place in England’s past and describes a ghost’s actions to influence King Henry’s decision, and the latter tells the history of the building of Stonehenge as a result of a supernatural conflict between good and evil. In Radcliffe’s earlier novels, the supernatural is less pronounced, and tends to appear not to influence an event of national

importance, but to appear when a life is at stake. For example, in *The Romance of the Forest* Adeline's dream warns her of her danger and in a less well-known section of *Udolpho*, to be analysed in the next chapter, a character suggests that the intention of murder may be enough to justify the presence of a ghost.

Mr. W's emphasizes here what scholarly literature often quotes from this dialogue: the importance of the attendant circumstances in the creation of dramatic scenes. Speaking of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and the storm at midnight which accompany the gathering of the conspirators, he says: "How much does the sublimity of these attendant circumstances heighten our idea of the power of Caesar, of the terrific grandeur of his character, and prepare and interest us for his fate" (145). As Gavin Budge puts it, "the reinforcing effect of physical surroundings merely amplifies the expressive authority of genius" (44). Mr. W values the effect the literary work has on the reader, and to achieve this, the circumstances must be suitable to the events described in the literary work. If the witches are dressed as ordinary Scottish women, the drama will not reach its potential in affecting the audience. Mr. W thus regards not *Macbeth*, but the ghost-scene in *Hamlet* as the best example of the importance of the attendant circumstances:

Above every ideal being is the ghost of Hamlet, with all its attendant incidents of time and place. The dark watch upon the remote platform, the dreary aspect of the night, the very expression of the officer on guard, [...] are all circumstances which excite forlorn, melancholy, and solemn feelings, and dispose us to welcome, with trembling curiosity, the awful being that draws near. (Radcliffe, 147-148)

The example illustrates what Mr. W said earlier: that the effect on the audience is of utmost importance and the supernatural is uniquely suited to achieve the desired effect. The effect here is the feeling of terror which the scene inspires. Mr. W earlier linked terror to poetic creativity and the supernatural. He lists the attendant circumstances which enable the audience to fully experience the play. He also makes a value judgement, favouring this scene over others, claiming that this ghost is "above every ideal being." Although Mr. W talks about the ghost-scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, these characteristics describe gothic literature in general. As my analysis will show, Radcliffe aimed to recreate this effect many times in her novels, using similar methods to the ones described by Mr. W here – for example in the scene between Emily and the guard, as I described earlier in this chapter. Jane Gallagher points out, in connection with Coleridge's ideas on the 'willing suspension of disbelief', that according to

this view, the reality of the written narrative was not questioned, resulting in an emotional investment and a more intense engagement with the fictional work (Gallagher 348). Radcliffe makes full use of this concept, prioritizing the readers' emotional investment and engagement in all her novels.

The often-quoted distinction between terror and horror is also linked to this point of Mr. W's argument. The poet can achieve the effect of terror if he chooses the attendant circumstances well. If the circumstances are not in harmony with the event, instead of the desired effect, the reader experiences horror, which is contrary to the highly valued aesthetic experience that Radcliffe aims to create in her novels: "Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them" (149). If the attendant circumstances are well chosen, the appearance of the supernatural is not a violent intrusion, quite on the contrary: "circumstances [...] dispose us to welcome, with trembling curiosity, the awful being that draws near" (148). She quotes from Burke's *Enquiry* when she claims that obscurity and uncertainty are necessary for creating the conditions in which the supernatural can successfully be portrayed. She also relies on Burke's ideas when she makes the connection between the sublime and terror. Radcliffe's careful distinction between terror and horror signals that even though she wishes to make a profound effect on the reader, she wants to stay within certain boundaries. Some of the definitions of gothic connect it to limits and excess (Gamer 9) and the transgression of taboos (Horner and Zlosnik 321). Radcliffe shows a conscious authorial design in her practice in making a distinction between terror and horror, identifying the first as a deeply emotional experience of the aesthetics, and consistently aiming for it. Her awareness suggests her theoretical interest, and she actively experiments, trying out different ways to achieve her goal: to inspire what she calls terror in the reader.

Even though she does not name any other theorists of terror, her dialogue represents an important stage in the genealogy of terror and horror. Eric Parisot has demonstrated the development of the aesthetics of terror in the 18th century, showing that terror as a discrete emotional and aesthetic experience already appeared in 1704 in the essay *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* by John Dennis (285). Parisot notes that there are hints of differentiating between terror and horror and positing terror as a component of the sublime experience in treatises throughout the century. He states that even though Burke does not make the difference explicit, he consistently uses the word 'terror' in connection with the sublime (289). Bearing this in mind, as György Fogarasi pointed out, there are examples when Burke uses the words 'terror' and 'horror' interchangeably, for instance in the following sentence, in

describing the effects of blackness: “After we have been used to the sight of black objects, the terror abates, and the smoothness and glossiness [...] softens in some measure the horror ” (185). The differentiation between terror and horror was first explicitly articulated by Nathan Drake in his *Literary Hours* (1798), who interestingly refers to Radcliffe’s novels to illustrate his point:

Terror thus produced requires no small degree of skill and arrangement to prevent its operating more pain than pleasure. Unaccompanied by those mysterious incidents which indicate the ministration of things mightier far than we, and which induce that thrilling sensation of mingled astonishment, apprehension and delight so irresistibly captivating to the generality of mankind, it will be apt to create rather horror and disgust than the grateful emotion intended. (Drake, 354)

About Radcliffe’s novels he writes that “the impression of the whole never becomes too strong, never degenerates into horror, but pleasurable emotion is ever the predominating result” (359.) It is uncertain whether Radcliffe and Drake ever exchanged ideas. It is probable, though, that Radcliffe read Drake’s *Literary Hours*, as she was curious about others’ reflections on her work, and she was also interested in the theoretical background of producing terror, as her knowledge of Burke suggests. Nevertheless, Mr. W makes exactly the same points as Drake: he states that careful arrangement is necessary to produce terror instead of horror, and the supernatural helps to create terror.

Mr. W emphasizes that it is difficult to create a scene which produces terror instead of horror in the reader, and not everybody is capable of it:

all these are circumstances which the deepest sensibility only could have suggested, and which, if you read them a thousand times, still continue to affect you almost as much as at first. I thrill with delightful awe, even while I recollect and mention them, as instances of the exquisite art of the poet. (Radcliffe, 148)

Sensibility was a broad term in the 18th century; its meaning included a belief in natural goodness and compassion and was associated with the cult of feeling (Csengei 5). In Radcliffe’s novels, sensibility is closely linked with poetic creativity, especially in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in which the heroine Emily composes many poems, which serve as signs of her sensibility. Mr. W also makes this connection here: the greatness of the ghost-

scene is evidence of Shakespeare's own sensibility, and it is this sensibility which enables him to produce such high quality literature. Sensibility has an emotional aspect as well, through its capacity to form connections with other people, which is also stressed in Mr. W's argument and in Radcliffe's novels.

The sympathetic aspect of the aesthetic experience

Sensibility enables people to establish emotional connections with each other. Mr. W implies that those who possess sensibility can both produce valuable literature and enjoy such literary works, and so they share a valuable aesthetic experience. Mr. W refers to this understanding between poets and readers later as well: when speaking of the importance of the attendant circumstances, he remarks that "this must immediately be understood by those who have bowed the willing soul to the poet" (149). Therefore, it can be assumed that Radcliffe either expected her readers to possess such sensibility to be able to appreciate her works or attempted to develop their sensibility through her novels. A similar view is articulated by Emily in *Udolpho* (Russett 166) when she finds that the emotional distress she experiences in the castle makes her unable to appreciate poetry:

"Are these, indeed, the passages, that have so often given me exquisite delight? Where did the charm exist?—Was it in my mind, or in the imagination of the poet? It lived in each," said she, pausing. "But the fire of the poet is vain, if the mind of his reader is not tempered like his own." (Radcliffe, 383)

Radcliffe's dedication to the aesthetic pleasure of art and the intention of refining her readers' sensibility would fit in the description of her personality that Talfourd gave when he described her as a gentlewoman who is characterized by delicacy and propriety (13). This attitude also constitutes the basis of the female and male gothic distinction in which male gothic is characterized by shameless transgression of taboos and female gothic is characterized by restraint (Wallace and Smith 3).

Through the experience of literature the reader can feel a connection with the author. According to Mr. W, a poet is characterized by "the soul of poetry" (151), which he finds difficult to define, but it entails the ability to have an effect on the reader and to create an aesthetic experience which is regarded as highly valuable, and standing above the everyday experiences. The readers who possess sensibility can fully understand such poets' works, and so they can join them in the aesthetic experience. The supernatural aspect of this inference is

that in the case of poets who are deceased and so can communicate only through their writings (Mr. W lists Shakespeare, Milton, Thomas Gray, William Collins and James Thomson) this connection could only be one-sided, yet Mr. W's use of words (such as "undying spirit") and quasi-religious enthusiasm support the existence of a living connection between author and reader. As we shall see in a later chapter, Mr. W's ideas are echoed in *The Romance of the Forest* in which the heroine Adeline establishes an emotional connection and takes part in sympathy with the deceased author of a manuscript. Mr. W's reasoning here is in stark contrast with Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* which states that the same set of characteristics have the same effect on everybody, regardless of social status or education (Gasché 25), suggesting that Radcliffe relied on Burke only for a set of tools in successfully portraying the sublime, but she did not agree with him in all the principles.

The sympathetic aspect of the appreciation of literature and its importance for Radcliffe has already been noticed by Ingrid Horrocks who argues that in her novels, reading and quoting poetry constitute a form of communication, linking the minds of the reader and the poet (510). This is in line with Mr. W's description of the connection between author and reader. Just like Mr. W, Horrocks also emphasizes the emotional aspect of this connection: in experiencing poetry the reader believed that he or she experienced the same feelings as the poet (519). Horrocks also states that when Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) composes a poem, it is characterized by a lack of agency on her part, instead "her ideas arranged themselves." This indicates a way of thinking in which Emily draws from a shared consciousness she is part of (520).

The sympathetic aspect of the appreciation of art is articulated in the poem *The Glow-worm*, composed by Emily in *Udolpho*. This is the very first of the many poems written by her and inserted into the novel. It is an important step in Emily's development as a poetess, as at this point she is yet unsure of her poetic skills, and she shows the poem to her father, St. Aubert, asking for his opinion.

This is the first time Emily shows somebody a poem and she is anxious for her father's feedback. Before she starts the recital, her father makes the following comment: „let us hear what vagaries fancy has been playing in your mind. If she has given you one of her spells, you need not envy those of the fairies" (16). St. Aubert's comment is meant both as a reassurance and a joke. He encourages Emily not to be afraid to show him her poem and does this by referring to the concept described by Ingrid Horrocks, that in the composition of a poem the role of the poet is negligible. St. Aubert says: "if fancy has given you one of her spells," meaning that if Emily is a true poet, then she does not need to fear criticism because the

poetic inspiration will guarantee the quality of the poem. Moreover, even though he jokes with the fairies – there are no real fairies in the novel, except for the ones in Emily’s poem – the phrasing evokes the supernatural, in accordance with Mr. W’s association between poetic creativity and the preternatural in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. It is worth remembering that the manuscript Mr W is going to be immersed in is also a “book of spells”, which perhaps mirrors Radcliffe’s own “spells” in her novels.

The poem itself is long, and even though it is dominantly lyrical, it narrates the story of the glow-worm and the fairies. The details are rather vague and the focus is on the subjective feelings of the characters and the relationships between them. It builds on the legend that fairies dance their enchanting dance in a ring by the light of a glow-worm. The legend claims that humans can observe the fairies’ dance, and sometimes they can even join them (Rhys). Radcliffe adopts the legend as the basis of her narrative, but presents it with a strong focus on the emotions and on the issue of artistic creativity.

The setting of the poem is the forest, the same place where Emily and her father are at the time of the recital. Landscape painting in Radcliffe’s novels was praised in contemporary reviews and it has been much discussed in literary criticism. The ability to appreciate the natural world often signals one’s sensibility, and in this poem the forest is inhabited by singing and dancing fairies. Although this dissertation focuses on the supernatural associated with the sublime in the body of Radcliffe’s works, in the analysis of this poem it is important to differentiate between the sublime and the picturesque. As György Fogarasi noted analysing William Gilpin’s *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty* (1792), the term *picturesque* entailed characteristics that Burke associated with the sublime, such as brokenness and ruggedness. In Gilpin’s essays, the observer looked at the landscape as if it was an artistic creation (Fogarasi “A “festői” elméletei” 124–125). A similar tendency is present in St. Aubert’s philosophy when he teaches Emily to cultivate her taste by looking at her surroundings and admiring their aesthetic value. He has an argument with his brother-in-law on cutting down trees and thus significantly altering the view on the garden. The argument signals St. Aubert’s superiority in artistic taste – closely connected to the natural world – which he imparts to her daughter as well.

The fairies living in the forest can be interpreted as a community of artists. Just like Mr. W does not differentiate between drama, poetry and novel, here the emphasis is on art itself, not on its various forms. Even though the fairies are not poets or novelists, their existence and mode of life are the embodiment of the aesthetic. Curiously, in William Blake’s poetry too, fairies are associated with poetry, and according to its first plate, the poem *Europe*

a Prophecy (published in 1794, the same year as *Udolpho*) was dictated to the poet by a fairy. In Radcliffe's poem, the fairies are – by dancing together to the same music – receivers of art while they also perform the art of dancing. They share the same feelings inspired by the music, and express themselves by dancing. In the poem, the aesthetic pleasure of observing their dance can be regarded as a realistic option, as they spend their time dancing in the forest, one only needs to find them. At the same time, they hide from humans, so the traveller in the poem has little chance of finding them.

The glow-worm is the narrator who introduces the fairies to the reader. The glow-worm shows the capacity for sympathy and also an affinity for sensibility because it is able to appreciate the fairies' dance. According to the legend, it takes part in the dance of the fairies by giving them their light. The glow-worm confirms the legend by emphasizing how much the fairies need its light when the sky is dark:

When, down among the mountains, sinks the ev'ning star,
And the changing moon forsakes this shadowy sphere,
How cheerless would they be, tho' they fairies are,
If I, with my pale light, came not near! (Radcliffe, 16)

The poem focuses on the disagreement between the fairies and the glow-worm and its emotional consequences for the title character. The glow-worm is an advocate of community and it wants others to share in the experience, and so it leads people to the fairies. In this respect, it can stand for Radcliffe herself who leads the reader into the realm of Fancy. However, the fairies want to hide from the people and to achieve this, they exclude even the glow-worm from their circle. The possibility of people finding the fairies still exists, it just became more difficult. It can be regarded as a test. The fairies hiding from people gives them an opportunity to prove that they are worthy of joining their circle again: only those who pass the test of sensibility will be able to find the fairies and enjoy their dance.

As the glow-worm continued to lead people to the fairies, they put a spell on it to lead people astray instead and the fairy queen also excludes it from their circle. Even if the glow-worm is near the fairies, it will be unable to perceive their music and their dance:

If I creep near yonder oak she will wave her fairy wand,
And to me the dance will cease, and the music all be mute. (Radcliffe, 17)

The glow-worm's feeling of yearning dominates the poem, both for company and for being admitted into the community of artists. Paradise draws a parallel between the glow-worm and Emily: both have innate power which is linked to sympathy. In *Udolpho*, Emily chooses to help her aunt even though she did little to deserve it, and this selfless act of kindness gives Emily character. Similarly, the glow-worm wishes to guide the travellers to the fairies to let them share the experience and suffers the fairy queen's displeasure for it.

The glow-worm can be interpreted as a representation of Emily's poetic ambitions as well. As this is the first poem Emily shows somebody, it can be regarded as an expression of her own wish to join the community of artists. Like the glow-worm yearns for acceptance and inclusion into the fairies' circle, Emily yearns to be accepted as a poetess. She chooses the world of the fairies as a frame in which she can express her wish and her anxieties. Emily can also be identified with a traveller who is looking for the fairies in the forest – if she finds them, she will have shown her sensibility and she can be called a poetess. The difficulty of finding the fairies ensures that if Emily succeeds, her talent will not be questioned.

The fairies need the glow-worm's light for their dance, and the glow-worm wishes to join them by giving them its light. Even though it suffers the fairy queen's injustice, the glow-worm still wishes to ease their sufferings by making it possible for them to dance. It is shown not as an outsider, but as someone who is inherently part of the community of artists and who has the capacity to meaningfully contribute to the art they perform. Similarly, Emily's poetic skills are not questioned in the novel, and they help her endure the hardships of her gothic adventures.

The poem illustrates through the example of supernatural creatures – the fairies – the aspect of community which characterizes poetic genius. It is in line with Mr. W's argument in associating poetic genius and the ability to appreciate art based on one's sensibility, suggesting that the germ of the idea articulated by Mr. W is already present in *Udolpho*, a much earlier novel. The poem unquestionably values the emotions of its characters, be it the pain of loneliness or the joy expressed in the dance. The emphasis on the value of emotions is present not only in the association of the supernatural with poetic creativity, but also in its most spectacular manifestation, the appearance of a ghost, which will be the topic of the next chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the views expressed in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, a dialogue lifted from the frame narrative of Radcliffe's posthumous novel, *Gaston de Blondville*.

Literary criticism often perceives Mr. W's views as Radcliffe's own, and the characteristics of Radcliffe's works published in her lifetime do display the features described by Mr. W, yet we must bear in mind that Mr. W is only one of Radcliffe's characters, one side of a dialogue; moreover, Radcliffe's methods are more complex than Mr. W's description, and throughout her career she also continuously developed as a writer.

Mr. W strongly advocates for the inclusion of the supernatural in literature, and attaches an aesthetic value to it. In this way, Radcliffe joins the theoretical discussion of the fairy way of writing started by Aristotle in ancient times, and by Philip Sydney in his *An Apology for Poetry* (1595). In the early 18th century, Addison voiced the connection between the fairy way of writing, the sublime and poetic genius through the example of Shakespeare. Radcliffe relies on Burke for a set of tools to invoke the sublime. In creating suitable attendant circumstances in the supernatural scenes, she chooses the features which are described by Burke: darkness, greatness, obscurity and uncertainty. This tendency is already present in Radcliffe's second novel *A Sicilian Romance*, for example in the poem *Evening* and in *Udolpho*, for example in the scene with the guard on the castle walls.

Mr. W also connects the supernatural to poetic genius and a sense of community between people with artistic susceptibility, as well as to the effect of art on its receiver. In his belief, people can live "a high degree of life" (149) by connecting with each other through the aesthetic experience of art. Mr. W feels a connection with great literary figures like Shakespeare, Milton and Thomas Gray. He praises their art by referring to them as models on how to successfully portray the supernatural in a literary work. He states that their sensibility enabled them to produce valuable literature, and the sensibility of their readers enables them to appreciate their works. The reaction of the reader is that of terror – terror being a pleasurable emotion, contrasted with horror.

The poem *The Glow-worm* composed by the heroine in *Udolpho* shows that Emily is also characterized by poetic genius. Literary criticism – for example Ingrid Horrocks – pointed out the sympathetic aspect of the composition of a poem. *The Glow-worm* illustrates through the example of the fairies how the sympathetic appreciation of art can help people form emotional connections with each other and illustrates Emily's ambition to be accepted as a poetess. In the poem, Emily's poetic ambition and the reception of art in general are described in the context of supernatural creatures.

Mr. W is the one who expresses his views on the portrayal of the supernatural in the most detail, but as I showed in the chapter, the various ideas articulated by him are already present in Radcliffe's earlier works. Together, they show a complex and sometimes

conflicting design behind the portrayal of the supernatural, with a strong focus on attaching an aesthetic value to it and making an effect on the reader. In the following chapters of my dissertation, I aim to show how this design can be observed in the various instances of the supernatural present in Radcliffe's romances, starting with its most popular manifestation, the ghost.

3. Radcliffe's Aesthetic Ghosts

Ghosts are the most frequently discussed supernatural phenomena in gothic literature. Many of Radcliffe's characters express their opinion about them, assisting or complicating the interpretation of the novels themselves. To be able to put into context the views present in Radcliffe's works, it is worth briefly summarizing what characterized belief in supernatural phenomena in the late 17th and in the 18th century. Sasha Handley in her dissertation *'Visions of an unseen world': the production and consumption of English ghost stories, c. 1660-1800* (2005) finds the middle of the 17th century crucial in influencing later ghost beliefs.

In that period, the civil war and Cromwell's rule was accompanied by the breakdown of ecclesiastical and civil society. After the Restoration, people tried to restore stability to civil and religious life. The Anglican Church tried to fight against a growing atheism. Ghost stories served as a tool for advocating religious faith because the existence of ghosts proved the immortality of the soul and the reality of the afterlife (Handley 35-36).

Both Joseph Glanvil's *Saducismus Triumphatus: or, Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions* (1681) and Richard Baxter's *The Certainty of the World of Spirits. Fully Evinced by Unquestionable Histories of Apparitions and Witchcrafts, etc.* (1691) aim to prove the existence of the spirits as a way to prove the existence of God, the supreme spirit. "There is no one that is not very much a stranger to the World but knows how Atheism and Infidelity have advanced in our days [...] So that I think it will be a considerable and very reasonable service to [...] settle this matter, which I shall endeavour in the following" (1-2) – declared Glanvil in the third edition, in the *Introduction to the Proof of the Existence of Apparitions, Spirits and Witches*, making public service the aim of his book. He approaches the problem with scientific precision, believing that as any other natural phenomena, ghosts also behave according to certain laws (Handley 49).

Both Glanvil and Baxter refer to scenes from the Bible in which angels communicated with men to prove that spirits exist and they are able to communicate with ordinary humans. Glanvil also quotes the story of the Witch of Endor from the *Book of Samuel* in the *Old Testament*: Saul, the king of Israel once visited the Witch of Endor and asked her to summon Samuel's spirit. When the ghost appeared, Saul asked for his help because the Philistines attacked Israel, but Samuel prophesised that Israel would fall to the Philistines and Saul would die. His prophecy came true. This story makes it seem possible to summon the ghosts of deceased people on demand; moreover, it also suggests that the Bible may sanction such a practice. The scene provoked a debate as to the nature of the apparition. Glanvil describes the

various conflicting opinions and also expresses his own belief. He admits that he cannot know who or what the apparition was with absolute certainty, but to him it is the most probable that it was indeed Samuel's ghost. He reasons that as the text of the Bible calls the apparition *Samuel*, it clearly identifies him (37).

Baxter believes that both good and evil spirits exist in the world, but he feels it important to assure the reader that they cannot harm people because they cannot do anything without God's permission. He adds that evil spirits are more frequent than good ones because the souls of wicked men carry with them their vicious habits (222). He also claims that in America it is common to see spirits in various shapes both day and night (107). With this line of argument, he makes ghosts part of the ordinary, everyday world and divests them from some of the terror they usually invoke.

Baxter also used ghost stories to encourage virtuous life and to awaken sinners to the need of repentance. In his examples, the visits of ghosts could be interpreted as a sign that God looked with displeasure on the sinners and they had to reform their behaviour (Handley 60). Both Glanvil and Baxter include several short apparition narratives in their books; in Baxter's case they are often illustrations of how ghosts influenced the sinners to repent. Both Glanvil's and Baxter's narratives list the exact names of the people and the places concerned. They were intended as testimonies to persuade the disbelievers. They are short and characterized by monotony because the sheer number of proven ghost-sightings carried the force of the persuasion (Clery 20). In this respect, they are the opposite of Radcliffe's practice which focus on raising and keeping up the readers' interest and the factual explanations are insufficient and supplied late. They rather served to raise public interest in the question, which manifested itself in various forms throughout the late 17th and in the 18th century.

The *Athenian Mercury* was a periodical that ran in the last decade of the 17th century. It was based on an interactive question and answer format, and the co-editor Samuel Wesley answered the questions raised by the readers which were related to religion, including the questions about ghosts. Protestantism rejected the Catholic doctrine of purgatory and outlawed an extended, active mourning process. As a result, people sought comfort outside the official liturgy and ghosts provided a possibility for fulfilling this need (Handley 87). Wesley received many questions regarding whether the deceased had any knowledge of the affairs of their loved ones and if they could meet their friends in heaven. According to the strict doctrine in the 16th and early 17th centuries, the departed had no awareness of events on earth. Wesley recognised that the questions sent to the *Athenian Mercury* were not an indication of lingering Catholicism, but part of the mourning process that projected aspects of

social life into the afterlife. He answered in the positive, and also gave instances when ghosts appeared to reassure their loved ones that they are happy and in heaven (Handley 88).

An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions was published anonymously in 1727, but scholars usually attribute it to Daniel Defoe. Defoe's target audience was the educated and he made his book acceptable to fashionable opinion (Handley 161). He distinguishes between four different spirits: God, angels, devils, and souls of men (Defoe 15). He claims that the apparitions people see are never the souls of departed men, instead they can only be either angels or devils who both can assume any form they want (55). He consistently calls them spirits, implying that they are of superior nature to men. Defoe also gives practical advice on how to behave when one sees an apparition. His apparitions uphold moral values and expose wrongdoings, making them a useful part of everyday life. As for the Witch of Endor, he believes that she did not really summon Samuel's soul because she could have done it only by praying to God and as God turned away from Saul, he could not sanction the summoning. Instead, the witch must have had a familiar spirit who could assume any shape she wanted (46).

Mary Veal's ghost became the focus of public interest in 1705 when Mrs. Bargrave told her friends and acquaintances that she talked with a ghost. *A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal, the next Day after her Death: to one Mrs. Bargrave at Canterbury. The 8th of September, 1705* was published as a pamphlet in 1706. It was attributed to Daniel Defoe, but his authorship was later called into question. This pamphlet was radically different from earlier apparition narratives in the sense that it was a step away from testimonies and towards literature. With its 14 pages, it was significantly longer than earlier narratives and the author includes a lot of details in setting the scene and describing the ghost. These details were authenticated, approved by Mrs. Bargrave as well. It was also suspenseful and the many editions during the next years suggest that people enjoyed it very much (Handley 151-152). Despite these efforts, the pamphlet was dismissed by many as a publicity stunt to popularize *The Christian's Defence Against the Fears of Death* (1651) by Charles Drelincourt, a religious book with the aim of helping the readers to prepare themselves spiritually for death. This book was highly praised by Mary Veal's ghost and its sales went up beyond expectations when the ghost's recommendation was added to later editions (Handley 154). Bearing this in mind, the pamphlet is not only an example of a trend towards literariness, but also of commercial acumen (Clery 23).

Glanvil, Baxter, Wesley and Defoe all speak from a position of authority and apply their arguments and rhetoric to persuade their readers of the existence of ghosts. They

interpret the Bible in a way which makes ghosts part of the everyday world. They also emphasize that it is for the benefit of both the individual and the society to accept their views. On the other hand, the pamphlet on Mary Veal's ghost turned an actual ghost-sighting into literary fiction and it became popular as such. It signals that the question of the existence of ghosts was capable of raising public interest and it served as a topic for literature. In her novels, Radcliffe capitalized on how much this question was able to arrest her readers' interest, and included many discussions on the topic.

Opinions on the existence of ghosts

Ghosts fascinated people throughout the 18th century. After Mary Veal's ghost, the Cock Lane Ghost became the centre of attention in London in 1762, followed by Lord Lyttelton's ghost in 1779.¹ The famous ghosts in the 18th century provided material for endless discussions on the nature of their existence. However, Terry Castle states that in the second half of the 18th century, it became widely accepted to ridicule superstitious credulity (171), which is common in Radcliffe's novels as well. Mary Weightman published her *The Friendly Monitor: or, dialogues for youth against the Fear of Ghosts, and other Irrational Apprehensions, with Reflections on the Power of the Imagination and the Folly of Superstition* in 1791 (174); and as the title suggests, it aimed to provide a benevolent education against superstition. Ultimately, the question was never resolved, probably because it is impossible either to prove or disprove the existence of something that may or may not appear in extreme circumstances.

As György Fogarasi pointed out in his essay *Kísértet, elmélet: Coleridge és Luther* (2018), it is easy to reduce the question to a binary opposition, but in truth it is much more complex. As Fogarasi argues, if we accept that ghosts exist, then they are part of the natural world, and they cannot represent a frightening deviation from the laws of nature, thus losing their ghostly nature (Fogarasi *Nekromantika* 85). On the other hand, danger becomes much more dangerous if there are no signs of its presence (Fogarasi "Offstage Fright" 129), and making ghosts natural can multiply the danger they present. Radcliffe often stages discussions on the supernatural in her romances, and usually joins the debate present in 18th-century cultural life by debating the laws by which the natural world operates, thus creating existential

¹ The Cock Lane Ghost was a famous hoax in the 18th century. Richard Parsons claimed that his daughter Elizabeth communicated with the ghost of Fanny Lynes who claimed that her lover William Kent had killed her. For months, the people of London visited the ghost's room and communicated with her, the ghost answering their questions by knocking once for yes and twice for no. Finally, a piece of wood was discovered in the ghost's room which had been used for the knocking and the hoax was revealed. Lord Lyttelton was visited in his dream by a lady dressed in white who told him he would die in three days. Despite being in perfect health, Lord Lyttelton died at the exact time the ghost had predicted.

uncertainty in the characters. Nevertheless, while the characters are raising valid points in the discussion, they still remain parts of Radcliffe's fiction, and as such they are safely distanced from the readers' everyday world. Following Coleridge's willing suspension of disbelief, the readers are able to enjoy the various sides of the discussion without being obliged to participate in it themselves.

When such a discussion is presented in the novels, it is often between characters who are portrayed as wise and open-minded and intellectual in their reasoning. In the posthumous dialogue *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, Mr W details his own ideas on the existence of ghosts and the possibility of including the supernatural in a literary work:

“You would believe the immortality of the soul [...] I do not absolutely know that spirits are permitted to become visible to us on earth; yet that they may be permitted to appear for very rare and important purposes, such as could scarcely have been accomplished without an equal suspension, or a momentary change, of the laws prescribed to what we call Nature—that is, without one more exercise of the same CREATIVE Power of which we must acknowledge so many millions of existing instances [...] cannot be impossible and, I think, is probable. Now, probability is enough for the poet's justification, the ghost being supposed to have come for an important purpose. (Radcliffe, 148-149)

Mr. W does not wish to take a stand on the question whether ghosts exist in reality, but he clearly advocates the inclusion of ghosts into literary works. He approaches the question from a religious perspective, and echoes the ideas of Joseph Glanvil and Richard Baxter in that he connects the existence of ghosts with the immortality of the soul. He points out that as the soul exists after death, it may also be possible for it to appear to people as well. He emphasizes that such occasions are rare and must have an important purpose. Writing about the same topic, both William Duff and Clara Reeve insisted that the supernatural in literature should retain a correspondence to some belief system which the readers are familiar with (Sandner 33). Mr. W thus agrees with them stating that the ghost must have an acceptable reason for appearing.

Mr. W also connects belief in the existence of ghosts with belief in God. He states that apparitions are contrary to the laws of nature – and as such they should not exist, even though the soul is immortal, they should not return to the living world after death –, but as God is omnipotent, he can change these laws. Such occasions – besides being extremely rare and

having a suitable reason – are also accompanied by circumstances which signal the grandiosity of this event – these are the attendant circumstances which Mr. W regards as essential to the literary representation of the supernatural. As my analysis will show, besides the numerous examples for the explained supernatural in *Udolpho* – such as the ghost of Signora Laurentini –, there are also examples in her works for an inclusion of the possibility of the supernatural which do not receive an explanation later. In my interpretation, Radcliffe's focus is on the possibility itself and the effect of the sublime it helps create, not on the explanations. I believe that Radcliffe aimed to evoke a distinct kind of emotional experience in the readers, without necessarily excluding the supernatural from her works. While aiming for the emotional experience, she kept the ghosts at a safe distance from the readers, unlike Matthew Lewis who describes in detail the continuing haunting of the Bleeding Nun in *The Monk*.

Mr. W's ideas are already present in an argument put forward by Madame Menon in *The Sicilian Romance* (1790), Radcliffe's second novel. Madame Menon serves as a governess and she is a foster mother figure to the heroine Julia and her sister Emilia. When suspicion arises that the castle may be haunted, the sisters ask Madame Menon's opinion on ghosts.

I will not attempt to persuade you that the existence of such spirits is impossible. Who shall say that any thing is impossible to God? We know that he has made us, who are embodied spirits; he, therefore, can make unembodied spirits. If we cannot understand how such spirits exist, we should consider the limited powers of our minds [...] No one yet knows why the magnetic needle points to the north; yet you, who have never seen a magnet, do not hesitate to believe that it has this tendency [...] Such spirits, if indeed they have ever been seen, can have appeared only by the express permission of God, and for some very singular purposes; be assured that there are no beings who act unseen by him; and that, therefore, there are none from whom innocence can ever suffer harm. (Radcliffe, 36)

Madame Menon makes the same point Mr. W does in affirming that God can do anything and so ghosts may exist if this is God's wish, but this can only happen on extremely rare occasions and for a specific purpose. However, she also disagrees with Mr W because she does not think that a change in the laws of nature is necessary for the appearance of the ghost. Her argument is similar to that of Joseph Glanvil: they both claimed that the behaviour of

ghosts follows certain laws in nature, but we do not know these laws yet. Madame Menon also echoes the ideas of Richard Baxter's *The Certainty of the World of Spirits* (1691) that spirits who appear can only do what God permits them to do and so apparitions should not be feared. Her main concern is to reassure Emilia and Julia that they are in no danger and not to disprove the existence of ghosts. By doing so, she deprives the ghosts of their ghostly nature, yet the sublime effect is indicated in the power of God who can create ghosts, and also in the scenes in which the young heroes and heroines are investigating the forbidden passages of the castle.

This conversation between Madame Menon and the two sisters takes place early in the novel, when they decide that the mysterious nocturnal noises they had heard should be investigated. In the course of the novel the reader is given a possible explanation for the noises, one which includes the supernatural: "He [Ferdinand, Julia's brother] now knew that innocent blood had been shed in the castle, and that the walls were still the haunt of an unquiet spirit, which seemed to call aloud for retribution on the posterity of him who had disturbed its eternal rest." This ghost calls into mind the ghost of Hamlet's father and also Alfonso from *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and conforms to Mr. W's and Madame Menon's conditions for supernatural apparitions. Being the victim of a murder and demanding justice on those who enjoy the spoils of the crime can be a singular and important purpose for haunting the living. Among the supposed ghosts which excited the imagination of the English in the 17th and 18th centuries, such a purpose was not uncommon. Both Ann Walker's ghost described by John Glanvil² and the popular Cock Lane ghost claimed to be victims of murder and demanded that their murderers be punished. Unquiet spirits seeking justice is a different concept than the one articulated by Madame Menon, that of God creating spirits which are part of the natural world. By presenting two different ghost-theories in the same novel, Radcliffe not only debates the question whether ghosts exist or not, but invites the reader to think and reason, keeping the interest alive. At the end of the novel we learn that the noises were not caused by a ghost, but by Julia's mother who was imprisoned by her husband so that he could marry another woman. Nevertheless, the existence of ghosts in general is never refuted in the novel, nor is either ghost-theory disproved. The possibility is presented very early: the ghostly sounds provide the basis of blood-curdling episodes during which they are investigated, and the existence of the supernatural is never entirely dismissed. This

² Ann Walker's ghost appeared to a miller in 1631. She told him who had murdered her and where her body had been hidden, and demanded that the miller informed the local authorities. After the body was found on the exact spot the ghost had said, the person the ghost had named her murderer was arrested and executed.

uncertainty is deliberately used by Radcliffe for an aesthetic purpose: in creating the sublime effect in her scenes.

In *Udolpho*, the heroine Emily's father, St. Aubert is an influential figure: his way of life is presented as ideal and as capable of protecting Emily from the gothic threats that await her. Similarly to Willoughton, he is characterized by taste. Before he dies, he also expresses his opinion on what happens to the soul after death:

I hope we shall be permitted to look down on those we have left on the earth, but I can only hope it. [...] We are not enjoined to believe, that disembodied spirits watch over the friends they have loved, but we may innocently hope it. It is a hope which I will never resign. (Radcliffe, 67-68)

St. Aubert does not mention ghosts, and admits that he does not know it for certain, but strongly advocates the hope that a connection remains with the living after death. This conversation takes place shortly before St. Aubert's death, and the reader learns that it is St. Aubert's intention to continue to watch over Emily even after his death. He does not mention apparitions, only the survival of the emotional connection, which is a concept distinct from those already discussed in this chapter and adds a new perspective. This idea will be echoed by Mr. W's views on the existing link between people of sensibility, which enables readers to connect to already dead authors, discussed in detail in the previous chapter. It can also be associated with the manuscript-scene in *The Romance of the Forest* in which the ghost appears in response to the heroine Adeline's sympathy, to be analysed in the chapter on emotions. It also includes the possibility of the existence of ghosts, the same way Madame Menon did.

St. Aubert's ghost is one of the instances which do not get a rational explanation in *Udolpho*. Shortly after his death, Emily goes to his room to burn some papers as she had promised him before he died. This act is emotionally distressing for her, and when she is in his room, she sees his ghost:

her eyes glancing a second time on the arm-chair, which stood in an obscure part of the closet, the countenance of her dead father appeared there [...] was rising from the floor, when, on looking up, there appeared to her alarmed fancy the same countenance in the chair. (Radcliffe, 102-103)

The text suggests that Emily's imagination is responsible for her seeing her father, but it is neither confirmed nor denied later. This scene is described in the first volume, before Emily is taken to Udolpho, which is said to be haunted by the ghost of Signora Laurentini. The fact that early in the novel the ghost of Emily's father appears in a way that does not contradict his own teachings serves to make the reader unsure about the existence of ghosts so that the later scenes can be more effective. The uncertainty Radcliffe creates early on in her romance helps her present the supernatural according to her own views on its aesthetics, discussed in the previous chapter.

The villain of the novel, Montoni is the absolute ruler of the castle of Udolpho, and he is suggested to have enormous power. In the tradition set by *The Castle of Otranto*, the feudal lord has a conflict with the supernatural forces: here the castle is rumoured to be haunted by the ghost of Signora Laurentini whom Montoni is believed to have murdered. He remains sceptical of the supernatural throughout the plot – all the characters discussed so far in this chapter provided the reader with a possible explanation for the appearance of ghosts, but Montoni refuses to believe in their existence. The novel suggests that even if the ghost of Laurentini turned out to be real, Montoni would be a powerful opponent for her. His conviction of his ability to destroy those who oppose him is connected to his disbelief in the supernatural. Yet there is a scene when even he is affected by it. When he is with his fellow bandits in Udolpho, and they talk about how he came to be in possession of the castle, they suddenly hear a mysterious disembodied voice repeating Montoni's words. This voice has an immediate effect on him:

Notwithstanding his efforts to appear at ease, he was visibly and greatly disordered.

“Why, Signor, you are not superstitious,” cried Verezzi, jeeringly; “you, who have so often laughed at the credulity of others!”

“I am not superstitious,” replied Montoni, regarding him with stern displeasure.

(Radcliffe, 291)

Montoni is a strong authority figure in the novel whose opinion carries weight. As he becomes a parental substitute to Emily, literary criticism has compared him to St. Aubert (Kilgour 118), while his personality is in stark contrast to St. Aubert's. When Montoni is shown to harbour some doubts concerning his earlier conviction that the supernatural does not exist, he sets an example to the reader, and heightens the uncertainty. In *Udolpho*, even

though superstitious beliefs are ridiculed, all of the main characters express an inclination towards belief in it at some point, even Montoni.

There are plenty of examples in the novels when the characters consider a possible supernatural explanation of an event and cannot come to a conclusion. Among Radcliffe's novels *Udolpho* is the one in which seemingly supernatural events receive a natural explanation the most often. The last part of the novel, after Emily's departure from Udolpho is a subject of scholarly debate because instead of a happy resolution, the novel draws on (Castle 122), introducing new characters, and new debates on the supernatural. In *Château-le-Blanc*, the castle Emily arrives in after leaving Udolpho, members of the elegant society discuss the strange events happening in one of the rooms:

this led to the question, Whether the spirit, after it has quitted the body, is ever permitted to revisit the earth; and if it is, whether it was possible for spirits to become visible to the sense. The Baron was of opinion, that the first was probable, and the last was possible, and he endeavoured to justify this opinion by respectable authorities, both ancient and modern, which he quoted. The Count, however, was decidedly against him, and a long conversation ensued [...] The effect of their conversation on their auditors was various. Though the Count had much the superiority of the Baron in point of argument, he had considerably fewer adherents; for that love, so natural to the human mind, of whatever is able to distend its faculties with wonder and astonishment, attached the majority of the company to the side of the Baron. (Radcliffe, 549)

Terry Castle states that Radcliffe endorses the Count's position, referring to the phrase "The Count had much the superiority in argument" (121). I believe, however, that it is difficult to make inferences as to the narrator's own opinion here, and it is even more difficult to guess Radcliffe's own views. Yet the representation of both sides of the argument, both carrying considerable weight, is characteristic of her works in general. The argument between the Count and the Baron is similar to the opposition of reason and imagination, a contrast present in many of Radcliffe's romances.³ The Count represents the voice of reason. The Baron – just like Mr. W, Madame Menon and St. Aubert – founds his belief on religion and respectable authorities when he allows for the existence of ghosts. The majority of the company shares his

³ It can be observed for example in St. Aubert's teachings to Emily (detailed in the chapter Emotions in Ann Radcliffe's novels) when he warns her to exert control over the sensibility in her nature

opinion, and their conviction is supported by their affinity for aesthetic pleasure (“that love, so natural to the human mind [...] to distend its faculties with wonder and astonishment”) that Mr. W admires as well. Neither party manages to convince the other, and so the matter is not decided in this passage. In the 19th century, a very similar opposition is presented by Mary Shelley in her essay *On Ghosts* (1824) when she points out that a person who rationally denies the existence of ghosts by daylight may answer differently when asked this question at midnight when the circumstances can be described as gothic. Considering the fact that the conversation in *Udolpho* takes place after Emily supposedly learned the lesson not to give in to superstitious fears, it can be argued that the novel does not wish to end the uncertainty concerning the ghosts, and this uncertainty is connected to an aesthetic experience.

Even though the Count is not convinced, he is willing to consider the possibility and to investigate the matter to decide it once and for all: “if anything supernatural has appeared, I doubt not it will appear to me, and if any strange event hangs over my house, or if any extraordinary transaction has formerly been connected with it, I shall probably be made acquainted with it” (571). The investigation leads to the conclusion that there are no ghosts in the castle, so the supernatural event is finally explained; however, that does not diminish the aesthetic and emotional value that is attached to the Baron’s side of the argument.

Mr. W, Madame Menon, St. Aubert, and the Baron are all introduced as intelligent and informed characters and their authority gives weight to their reasoning. Their arguments keep the debate open throughout the novels. On the other hand, the text often bestows negative remarks on those who express a strong belief in the existence of ghosts.

Dubious condemnation of superstition

In the novels, there is an open debate on whether the supernatural exists or not. While important characters such as Mr. W and Madame Menon allow for its existence, there is also an opinion that disagrees with them and even condemns such thinking. This attitude is expressed by various characters and the narrators as well.

Emily seeing her father’s ghost is described by the following remarks:

It was lamentable, that her excellent understanding should have yielded, even for a moment, to the reveries of superstition [...] Returning reason soon overcame the dreadful, but pitiable attack of imagination. (Radcliffe, 102)

The passage associates imagination with superstition and contrasts both with reason and understanding. Even though for most of the novel the narrator adopts Emily's point of view, in this instance Radcliffe employs external focalization, denying the reader access to the entirety of Emily's experience. The narrative technique contributes to the uncertainty that the reader is meant to share. It states that reason should control imagination and such a lapse as Emily's is lamentable. When talking about the witches in *Macbeth* in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, Mr. W evaluates people's affinity to art based on their sensibility, and condemns those who do not live up to his standard. The narrator of the above passage condemns Emily's weakness as forcefully as Mr. W does, but for the opposite reason: the scene embodies exactly what Mr. W believes should be the aim of the poets. The coexistence of these two viewpoints in Radcliffe's works (and the presence of the two sides even in the dialogue of *On the Supernatural in Poetry*) serve to constantly remind the reader of the uncertain nature of the existence of the supernatural.

A similar attitude is expressed by the narrator in *A Sicilian Romance*:

a report was soon raised, and believed, that the southern side of the castle was haunted. Madame de Menon, whose mind was superior to the effects of superstition, was yet disturbed and perplexed. (Radcliffe, 10)

The narrator expresses that even though Madame Menon is a figure whose worth should not allow her to believe the rumours, still she was disturbed by them. The excerpt quoted earlier in this chapter shows that she uses her reason when she attempts to solve the question, and even though she is unable to do so, she manages to assume a behaviour which enables her to remain an authority figure. E. J. Clery notes that women writers in the period – Ann Radcliffe included – were required to express moral guidelines in their works (112), and one of these guidelines was not to give in to superstition. Failure to follow this principle is a character flaw in Radcliffe's novels, typical of weak-minded women, children, and the lower classes, and is both condemned and ridiculed. There are countless examples of this attitude in the novels. Perhaps its most expressive articulation is by the villain Schedoni in *The Italian*, the last novel published in Radcliffe's lifetime. Schedoni pays an assassin called Spalatro to murder the heroine, but finds that Spalatro refuses to commit the murder. Spalatro sees a ghost on his way to the heroine, and that makes him change his mind. Schedoni berates him for being superstitious:

I thought I was talking with a man, but find I am speaking only to a baby, possessed with his nurse's dreams. (Radcliffe, 230)

Later, Schedoni repents, and he confesses his crimes and motivations to the hero Vivaldi. He admits that he used Vivaldi's weakness to deceive him.

“And what do you term my prevailing weakness,” said Vivaldi, blushing.

“A susceptibility which renders you especially liable to superstition,” replied Schedoni. (Radcliffe, 397)

Schedoni regards superstition as a weakness, acceptable from a child, but not becoming of a grown-up. His choice of words shows a similarity with Mr. W's and the narrators' from *A Sicilian Romance* and *Udolpho*. He connects susceptibility with superstition. In his argument, Vivaldi's susceptibility makes him capable of perceiving the events around him on a different level than ordinary people, and as a result, he attributes supernatural agency to events that he cannot explain, which Schedoni calls a weakness of character. The question becomes even more intricate if we consider the ambiguity present in Schedoni's admonition of Vivaldi on his weakness:

“The opinions you avowed were rational,” said Schedoni, “but the ardour of your imagination was apparent, and what ardent imagination ever was contented to trust to plain reasoning, or to the evidence of the senses? It may not willingly confine itself to the dull truths of this earth, but, eager to expand its faculties, to fill its capacity, and to experience its own peculiar delights, soars after new wonders into a world of its own!” (Radcliffe, 397-398)

Even though Schedoni's words are intended as a reproof, their content makes them more complex. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the reader is reading a gothic novel which presupposes the supernatural as a topic integral to the genre, so the reader possibly made the same mistake as Vivaldi. Schedoni uses the same words Mr. W had used: “to expand its faculties, to fill its capacity”, “awakens the faculties to a high degree of life.” They are all meant to express that an affinity with poetic genius enables people to experience life on a higher level. Vivaldi also shares this susceptibility, and even though Schedoni terms it a weakness in the passage quoted earlier, it is obvious from his tone that he admires it as well.

Schedoni even contends that Vivaldi is capable of rational thinking, beside his ability to appreciate the sublime, making his reproof even more dubious.

There are plenty of examples in the novels when those who profess themselves free from superstition, find themselves affected by the possibility of the supernatural. Near the ending of *Udolpho*, after Emily learns the natural explanation to many mysteries, she encounters yet another event which suggests that the supernatural may be present. The narrator describes Emily's reaction the following way:

Emily smiled, and, remembering how lately she had suffered herself to be led away by superstition, determined now to resist its contagion; yet, in spite of her efforts, she felt awe mingle with her curiosity, on this subject. (Radcliffe, 490)

Udolpho is often read as Radcliffe's elaborate condemnation of the supernatural, in which the heroine learns from her mistakes and by the end of the novel is cured from her superstition (Smith 583). Yet even after Emily draws the conclusion that is concordant with this interpretation, she is still affected and feels awe at the possibility of the supernatural. I believe this is because she shares the poetic susceptibility with Mr. W and Vivaldi, which is constantly associated with the supernatural, as we have seen. The choice of words in the passage supports this interpretation: "she felt awe mingle with her curiosity."

Emily's inclination towards experiencing the supernatural is a constant in her personality, starting with the composition of the poem *The Glow-worm* in which she writes about the dance of the fairies. Terry Castle points out that at the end of the novel, after all the mysteries are explained, the language remains preternatural, as exemplified by the wedding of Emily and Valancourt which takes place in an "enchanted palace" (122). With this example, Castle supports her argument that Radcliffe supernaturalized everyday life in *Udolpho*. In my opinion, likening the wedding to an event in the supernatural realm, as the servant Annette does in the next sentence ("the fairies themselves, at their nightly revels in this old hall, could display nothing finer", 671) shows a continuing fascination with it as an emotional and aesthetic experience from which they do not need to be cured. The mention of the fairies here is worth noticing, as they featured prominently in Emily's poem *The Glow-worm* in the first chapter of the novel. This suggests that the association of Emily's home La Vallée with the fairies is the result of the inherent characteristics of the place which does not change throughout the novel.

One of the most interesting scenes illustrating the underlying ambiguity of the supernatural is from *Gaston de Blondville*. Mr. Willoughton (who is called Mr W in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*) receives a very old book titled *Boke of Sprites* (Book of Spirits in Radcliffe's quasi-medieval language). He begins to read it:

As he turned over the leaves, curious to see the thralldom of superstition to which the people of a remote age were liable, he often smiled at the artless absurdities he discovered, the clumsy inventions practised upon the fears of the ignorant by the venality of the monks. Yet he sometimes found his attention seized, in spite of himself, by the marvellous narratives before him; till, at length, he began to feel that he was alone, to recollect that it was past midnight, to observe that all around him was still as death; and gradually to think he might as well lay aside the "Boke of Sprites" till day-light should return and the world again sound busily around him. (Radcliffe, 74)

Willoughton, the character from the frame narrative of *Gaston*, who had strongly advocated the inclusion of the supernatural in literary narratives, acts in this passage as a regular character of Radcliffe's novels. His shifting attitude is similar to that of the sceptics like the Count or Schedoni, when he is presented with the "real" supernatural. Similarly to Emily and Montoni, despite his scepticism, he is strongly affected. He also recognizes the circumstances he is in as similar to those he had talked about to his friend and stops reading because he is afraid of the effect the book may have on him. Analysing Radcliffe's *Udolpho*, Lynch came to the conclusion that readers in the novel consistently associate the textual with the spectral, and so reading itself is treated as a source of supernatural effects. Lynch elaborates on the example of Ludovico reading a ghost story in the haunted room: as he becomes engrossed in the book, its ghost assumes a sense of reality. Ludovico serves as an example for the readers themselves who are offered a new reality by the gothic novels (Lynch 30). Similarly, Willoughton is also offered a new reality by the *Boke of Sprites*, but he rejects it by putting the book away, and by doing so, he acknowledges that its contents have power over him.

The authorial strategy of consciously building on and trying to manipulate readers' beliefs is not uncommon in gothic novels. When Horace Walpole published *The Castle of Otranto*, he did not attempt to persuade his readers that the supernatural exists, but by presenting his fiction as an original relic of ancient times, he demonstrated that readers were willing to accept an illusionary framework for the sake of literary enjoyment. I believe that in

her ghost-scenes, Radcliffe similarly expected her readers to accept the illusionary framework for the enjoyment of her novels. In other words, she deliberately placed her works in the realm of the aesthetic, thus distancing them from the readers' own reality, so that paradoxically they could safely immerse themselves in them.

Ghost-scenes in Radcliffe's works

There are countless examples of situations in Radcliffe's novels in which the possibility of a ghostly presence dominates the scene. The most well-known example is the possibility of Signora Laurentini's ghost haunting the castle of Udolpho which is later disproved by the living Laurentini herself. Her supposed demise is told about in great detail to Emily by her servant Annette:

“Holy St. Peter! ma'amselle,” cried Annette, “look at that lamp, see how blue it burns!” She looked fearfully round the chamber. “Ridiculous girl!” said Emily, “why will you indulge those fancies? Pray let me hear the end of your story [...]

“they do say, that the Signora has been seen, several times since, walking in the woods and about the castle in the night: several of the old servants, who remained here some time after, declare they saw her; [...]

“Pr'ythee, Annette, no more of these silly tales,” said Emily [...]

She now retired to her bed, leaving the lamp burning on the table; but its gloomy light, instead of dispelling her fear, assisted it; for, by its uncertain rays, she almost fancied she saw shapes flit past her curtains and glide into the remote obscurity of her chamber. (Radcliffe, 237)

Throughout their conversation, Emily behaves with composure, dismissing Annette's story as “silly” and her behaviour “ridiculous.” She adopts the voice of reason, pointing out the inconsistencies in Annette's narrative, and condemns her superstition, her position being similar to Schedoni's when he berates Vivaldi. The circumstances of the scene are not sublime: Annette's eloquence and her comical manners rather draw the attention to the contents of her narrative, not to the atmosphere. Nevertheless, the scene establishes the possibility of the presence of the ghost which later causes many false alarms – for example the black veil scene or the approaching guard being mistaken for a ghost on the walls of the castle, quoted previously. The ending paragraph of the referenced chapter of *Udolpho* shows how despite dismissing and ridiculing Annette's story, Emily is affected by it, and when the

circumstances become ideal – it is late night, and a lamp dimly lights the room, leaving the greater part of it in obscurity – like Willoughton, Emily also experiences the sublime terror inspired by the possibility of the supernatural. The shapes Emily “almost fancied” she saw are not proper ghosts, yet they are enough to invoke Mr. W’s conditions of the portrayal of the supernatural.

Mr. W’s description of supernatural scenes is recognisable in a prominent scene of *The Italian* as well, which is later explained to be of Schedoni’s design, playing on Vivaldi’s weakness. Vivaldi, on his way to the heroine Ellena’s home, repeatedly encounters a figure under strange circumstances, and decides to investigate with his servant Paulo:

Vivaldi looked onward, and perceived, indistinctly, something as of human form, but motionless and silent. It stood at the dusky extremity of the avenue, near the stair-case. Its garments, if garments they were, were dark; but its whole figure was so faintly traced to the eye, that it was impossible to ascertain whether this was the monk. Vivaldi took the light, and held it forward, endeavouring to distinguish the object before he ventured further; but the enquiry was useless, and, resigning the torch to Paulo, he rushed on. When he reached the head of the stair-case, however, the form, whatever it might be, was gone. Vivaldi had heard no footstep. (Radcliffe, 74)

In this scene, the sublime is not experienced by any of the characters, as Paulo lacks the sensibility to feel it, and Vivaldi is being tormented by his intense emotions (“What motive could any human being have for thus tormenting me”, 75), which does not enable him to appreciate the pleasurable aspect of terror. Yet I believe that the arrangement of the scene is intended to invoke it for the reader – Radcliffe’s characteristic drawn-out suspense and the presence of the attendant circumstances strongly suggest that according to Mr. W’s theory, the sublime is the logical reaction to it.

Vivaldi and Paulo enter the ruins of a Roman fort during the night to investigate the monkish figure Vivaldi met several times there and whom he suspects to be a ghost. The circumstances are chosen by Mr. W’s criteria for a supernatural scene. The stranger has a specific purpose for meeting Vivaldi and delivering him ominous prophecies, although that purpose is unknown to him. The narrator entirely adopts Vivaldi’s point of view and describes in great detail how much information he gathered, serving to show the lack of certainty. The darkness makes it impossible for Vivaldi to determine the nature of the figure (“faintly traced to the eye,” “impossible to ascertain”), and all the clues he manages to gather indicate the

supernatural without enabling him to draw a definite conclusion. The phrasing “its garments, if garments they were” bears a similarity to the description of Death in Milton, with an emphasis on the difficulty of making out the form, quoted by Addison and Burke: “The other shape / If shape it might be called that shape had none.” The uncertainty increases the reader’s suspense and the explanation which diminishes it is supplied only 300 pages later. The unresolvable nature of the question brings to mind Mr. W’s insistence on the intensity of emotions while experiencing the possibility and the expectation of the supernatural.

The fruitless investigation motivated by curiosity to ascertain the truth about a ghostly presence is a recurring theme in Radcliffe’s novels, starting with *A Sicilian Romance* in which the hero Ferdinand investigates the ghostly noises during the night and ends up getting trapped on a staircase and losing his lamp due to a missing step. He is motivated by a similar affinity for the aesthetics of the supernatural (“Ferdinand, whose mind was wholly occupied with wonder, could with difficulty await the return of night”, 39), yet even after repeated nightly investigations he is unable to solve the mystery. It is only at the very end of the novel that the imprisoned Marchioness is discovered.

The portrayal of Vivaldi’s encounter with the monk is similar to the unexplained supernatural scene later in the novel in which Spalatro sees his ghost. The scene describes two villains, Schedoni and Spalatro, conversing on the murder of Ellena. Spalatro, the assassin hired by Schedoni refuses to commit the act because when he starts walking towards Ellena’s room, he sees a ghost blocking the way:

Dotard! what did you see!” enquired the Confessor.

“It came before my eyes in a moment, and shewed itself distinctly and outspread.”

“What shewed itself?” repeated Schedoni.

“And then it beckoned — yes, it beckoned me, with that blood-stained finger! and glided away down the passage, still beckoning — till it was lost in the darkness.”

“This is very frenzy!” said Schedoni, excessively agitated. “Arouse yourself, and be a man!”

“Frenzy! would it were, Signor. I saw that dreadful hand — I see it now — it is there again! — there!”

Schedoni, shocked, embarrassed, and once more infected with the strange emotions of Spalatro, looked forward expecting to discover some terrific object, but still nothing was visible to him. (Radcliffe, 232)

Here, Schedoni assumes the role of the investigator of the ghost, just like Vivaldi and Ferdinand. Although he later rebukes Vivaldi for entertaining the possibility of the supernatural, he behaves in much the same way here (“once more infected with the strange emotions of Spalatro”). Similarly to the ghost-scenes quoted earlier, Radcliffe relies on external focalization so that it becomes impossible for the reader to decide whether Spalatro imagines the ghost or he is really there. The scene described could serve as a prime example for Mr. W’s description in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. The circumstances are sinister: the two villains in the middle of the night in an abandoned house on the seashore are about to murder the heroine. The ghost appearing conforms to an accepted belief system: the murdered man haunting his murderer, moreover, the ghost is successful in deterring the assassin from the murder, so he fulfilled an important purpose of saving the heroine’s life. The obscure nature of the supernatural phenomena strongly suggests the existence of the ghost, but Radcliffe does not enable the reader to draw a definite conclusion. Similarly to Vivaldi’s scene in the ruins, the characters are too agitated and lack the sensibility to experience the sublime, but it can be assumed that Radcliffe aimed for this aesthetic experience for her readers.

Radcliffe’s posthumous novel is regarded by scholarship as the one containing Radcliffe’s only ghost (Punter 55). In light of the previous examples this seems to be a dubious conclusion. I argue, however, that the main difference between the ghost-scene in *Gaston de Blondville* and the previous novels is that here there is no uncertainty regarding the existence of the supernatural:

The tapers were dying away, and the only light, that glimmered strongly on the walls, came from a spot, where stood the armed figure of a knight hospitaller. His shield threw a deeper gloom around it on the tombs and even on the tapers of the monks. He pointed with his sword to the ground he stood on, and exclaimed mournfully, “A murdered knight hospitaller lies below; search for his bones, and save an innocent man from death!”

The figure stood for a moment; and, as it raised its shield, the flame thereon flashed, within the hollow helmet, and showed the stern, yet mournful countenance of the knight, such as it had appeared before the King.

Then sunk the figure with the flame, into the earth. (Radcliffe, 26)

Unlike in the previous passages, the narrator describes the ghost in detail. The reader does not learn the name of Spalatro's ghost, and the name of the author of Adeline's manuscript is revealed much later, whereas in this scene the ghost himself can be identified as the knight Reginald de Folville. In contrast, it is the witnesses to his appearance who are without names: a brethren of monks astonished by the scene. Instead of obscurity and uncertainty, the ghost makes a rather spectacular entrance and exit. However, as I will argue in the chapter on Radcliffe's posthumous works, the ghost is distanced from the reader through a frame narrative. The character Willoughton is presented with a manuscript detailing the supernatural narrative which constitutes the body of the novel. The narrator sometimes questions the credibility of the manuscript, and on the last page Willoughton himself comes to the conclusion that the events told in the manuscript were fiction. Thus, even though the scene itself lacks uncertainty, Radcliffe makes sure that it characterizes the entirety of the supernatural occurrences.

The ghost-scene embodies Mr. W's description of the portrayal of the supernatural. It is the final appearance of the ghost in the novel, and it can be considered as the fulfilment of the earlier suggestions. The attendant circumstances prepare the reader for the scene: during the night in a monastery, before the eyes of the gathering monks. The ghost gives reason for his actions: to save the life of an innocent man about to be executed for his murder. As the Baron suggested in *Udolpho*, when a life is at stake, it gives enough reason for the ghost to appear. Besides saving a life, the ghost also enacts vengeance on his murderers and shows the monks where his body had been buried so that he could be given a proper burial. By doing so, he follows the tradition of avenging ghosts, popular in the late 17th and early 18th century. As Handley details, it was believed that only God had power to give life or take it away, therefore murder was considered a heinous crime. Avenging ghosts exposing their killers fitted with the ideas of providential intervention and social justice (88).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the views available in the 18th century, as well as expressed by various characters in Radcliffe's novels concerning the existence of ghosts. Both Glanvil and Baxter aimed to prove the existence of ghosts to strengthen religious beliefs. Mary Veal's ghost became a cultural phenomenon which manifested itself in literary fiction, too, showing the interest and signalling the conflicting views on the topic, as well as providing an example for the portrayal of a ghost in popular literature.

The matter of the existence of ghosts often appears in Radcliffe's novels, and it remains an open question throughout her works. By introducing various conflicting perspectives on the issue, Radcliffe presents her readers with ambiguity, which serves to keep the debate alive and intensify the suspense. In my opinion, Radcliffe did not intend to end the discussion by disproving the existence of the supernatural, and this view is supported by the debate between the Count and the Baron in *Udolpho*, long after Emily left the supposedly haunted castle, learning that no ghosts lived in it. On the contrary, such a debate is present in nearly all of her works,⁴ and it never reaches a satisfactory conclusion.

The narrators and various characters express admiration for the inclination towards the aesthetic experience associated with the supernatural, as well as a heavy condemnation of superstition. Radcliffe often presents this duality as the opposition between reason and imagination. Willoughton, who is the strongest advocate of the aesthetic experience of the supernatural, also gives voice to the condemnation of superstition nearing the end of *Gaston*, while acknowledging its power over him. Literary criticism often interprets *Udolpho* as Radcliffe's refutation of the supernatural, but the supernatural as an aesthetic experience is present in the novel even after the mysteries are explained, expressed for instance in Annette's association of Emily's wedding with the fairies.

The ghost-scenes analysed from *Udolpho* and *The Italian* could serve as illustrations to Mr. W's exploration of the topic in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. The scenes display the necessary attendant circumstances and present uncertainty regarding the existence of the ghost, regardless of whether the supernatural is later explained or not. In the case of Schedoni, the ambiguity is enhanced when in the ghost-scene he assumes the same superstitious behaviour he later dubiously condemns in Vivaldi. It is characteristic of all the ghost-scenes that the characters experience intense emotions, the consequences of which are worth exploring in a separate chapter.

⁴ Radcliffe's first romance, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) does not present the supernatural this way, but starting with *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), all of her epic works pose this question at some point in their narratives.

4. Emotions in Ann Radcliffe's Novels

As the emotions inspired in the sensitive reader are of utmost importance in Mr. W's reasoning, I believe it is worth exploring them through the characters themselves in the novels. For this, I am going to rely on the most relevant concepts from the 18th century which have demonstrable connection with the gothic and which, I argue, constitute the foundation of Radcliffe's portrayal of emotions. In this chapter and in the whole of the dissertation, I use the word *emotion* instead of *passion* because I intend to follow Radcliffe's own use of the terms. Radcliffe uses 'emotion' (or its plural) over 90 times throughout *Udolpho*, whereas 'passion' is used only around 30 times, and with a marked difference in meaning. *Passion* is often accompanied with words that signal intensity (such as "strong passions," "violent passions," "the frenzy of passion") or appears in the specific sense of the feeling of love ("declared his passion to Emily"). By contrast, in Radcliffe's use, *emotion* appears in contexts with a large variety of feelings and as such it is capable of a fine distinction between its different types (for example "emotions of indescribable awe", "fearful emotions," "a mingled emotion of pity and contempt," "the struggle of contrary emotions" and "an emotion of doubtful joy"). In fact, Radcliffe's usage reflects the change that occurred in the meaning of the word *emotion* during the 18th century. The Oxford English Dictionary notes the first appearance of 'emotion' in 1579 in the meaning of social and political agitation, and its second use in 1603, referring to migratory patterns (Parrott 26). Dixon points out that it was in Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* that the word *emotion* was first used in a way that is similar to today's usage (Dixon 104).

Gothic novels were especially suited to represent and discuss intense emotions. Hume wrote in his *Treatise*:

The mind, when left to itself, immediately languishes; and in order to preserve its ardour, must be every moment supported by a new flow of passion. For the same reason, despair, tho' contrary to security, has a like influence. (Hume, 176)

The gothic novels, and among them Radcliffe's books were popular because they were able to keep the readers' attention by constantly stirring emotions in them. Radcliffe's introduction of dangers and the gradual revelation of mysteries did not allow the reader's mind to "languish." Moreover, the gothic tendency of emotions is connected to the possibility of their threatening

nature. In this period, emotions were very often believed not to be under the direct control of individuals. They were thought to threaten society by encouraging enthusiasm and breaking down social order, and it is through this concept that they can also be connected to gothic novels. This idea is especially emphasized in Radcliffe's novels where giving in to one's passions can lead to moral corruption and even murder. Characters often experience intense emotions and overexcitement. The consequences as she presents them are based on the tropes of sentimental literature (e.g. the works of Richardson and Henry Fielding) and also on medical works of the time – for example, as I am going to show, on the works of William Falconer and Alexander Crichton. Radcliffe, however, takes them to the extreme, and introduces effects which could not be justified simply by the intensity of the emotions. In the world of her novels, emotions have the ability to alter perceptions and cause bodily harm to the characters who experience them. Sometimes their power is bordering on the supernatural. In line with this, the importance of controlling one's emotions is emphasized. I believe that the medical views and the sentimental tradition together constitute the belief system that Mr. W found important for the introduction of the possibility of the supernatural, but even so, the power of feelings is exaggerated. The instances of the exaggerated effects of emotions – such as seeing ghosts – are assumed to be merely the result of the characters' overactive imagination, not to be perceived as instances of the "real supernatural." But equipping emotions with such power enables Radcliffe to incorporate the indication of the supernatural in such circumstances which otherwise would not allow it.

The importance of controlling one's emotions

Adela Pinch explores 18th-century concepts of emotions in her book to which she gave a quotation by Wordsworth as a title: *Strange fits of passion*. She dedicates a chapter to the representation of emotions in *Udolpho* with a view on the explained supernatural. She writes that in Radcliffe's novel there are, ultimately, standards of suitable emotional response to various events. However, the emotional response of various characters is often disproportionate to the natural explanation of the events. In Pinch's interpretation, the didactic message of the novel is that the supernatural does not exist, and the heroine, Emily needs to learn how to discipline her emotions so as not to get frightened over everyday occurrences (Pinch 111, 113). I disagree with Pinch concerning her conclusions on the role of the supernatural in *Udolpho*, but I support her claims on the excessive nature of the emotional reactions of the various characters, and its consequence, the need for controlling emotions in Radcliffe's fictional world.

The necessity of controlling one's own emotions was given a new emphasis in the 18th century. Malebranche's philosophy stated that after the Fall, people found themselves at the mercy of their passions. To counter this, they should fight this influence because passions lead to intellectual error. Passions do not obey the rational will, and there is an inner delight that accompanies their operation, which makes it especially difficult to fight against them (Schmitter). Although for different reasons, the third Earl of Shaftesbury also found emotional control important. Summarizing his views on the topic, Sias draws attention to the fact that Shaftesbury's philosophy focused on the development of the self, and not on uncovering the fundamental nature of reality (142). In his *Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit* Shaftesbury claims that without some sort of order, people are governed by their mental states which are disorganised and chaotic. He calls the state in which one's emotions and mental states are coherent *entire affection*. He believes that this can be achieved through long and honest introspection, and it also enables people to become more virtuous (143). Malebranche and Shaftesbury agree that it is necessary for people to learn to control their emotions and indicate that if they fail to do this, it can result in dire consequences. Radcliffe's novels illustrate such negative consequences many times, most famously by the example of Signora Laurentini who spends her life repenting crimes which her passions motivated her to commit.

In comparison with Malebranche and Shaftesbury's insistence on the necessity of gaining mastery over one's emotions, Hutcheson stated that people do not have much control over them. He still recommended that people should make an effort to exert the control they do have. He did not warn about the dangers of emotions, but rather stated that learning to control them is an important step in the pursuit of one's own happiness (Schmitter). His views are echoed by St. Aubert who teaches her daughter to control her emotions, as this is the only way to ensure that she will be happy in life.

Pinch elaborates on David Hume's views as well, which are especially relevant for the analysis of Radcliffe's works, and have a connection with Mr. W's opinion. In Pinch's interpretation, Hume found it especially important for people to learn the management of the emotions. Speaking of emotional extravagancies, he differentiated between what he called the delicacy of passions and the delicacy of taste. People characterized by the delicacy of passions respond with the strongest feelings to all the incidents of life. People characterized by the delicacy of taste are able to "feel with a heightened sensitivity not the accidents of life, but the beauties of art and manners" (Pinch 51). Hume prefers delicacy of taste to delicacy of passions: "I believe, however, every one will agree with me, that, notwithstanding this resemblance, delicacy of taste is as much to be desired and cultivated as delicacy of passion is

to be lamented, and to be remedied, if possible” (4). In Hume’s reasoning, instead of responding to outside events, delicacy of taste enables people to exert control over their emotions by directing them towards aesthetic objects (Pinch 51). Mr. W’s praise of literature can be regarded as a conscious effort to direct his emotions towards the aesthetic appreciation of art, made possible by his delicacy of taste.

The idea that governing one’s emotions is connected to virtue is present not only in 18th-century philosophical treatises, but in sentimental novels as well. Literary criticism notes that sentimental literature heavily influenced Radcliffe’s works (Baker 196). In Richardson’s extremely influential novel *Pamela* one of the characters is casually described as follows: “Lady Davers, when a maiden, was always vastly passionate; but a very good lady when her passion was over”. Lady Davers is presented as a complex character who has to overcome her anger and animosity towards Pamela, and make peace with her marriage to Mr. B. Her passionate nature is described as a flaw in her character, but one which she can correct. In *Clarissa*, the heroine writes to her brother the following: “the principal end of a young man’s education at the university, is, to learn him to reason justly, and to subdue the violence of his passions.” In Rabkin’s interpretation, the novel is about finding the balance between animal nature and the external regulations of society. In *Clarissa* the social conventions are so much internalized and embodied that they are more important to her than her life. Lovelace, on the other hand, stands for uncontrolled passions, disregarding order in society, and committing vicious acts (205). Following this interpretation, the novel seems to say that learning to control one’s emotions is a necessity without which one cannot live in society. In other parts of the novel it is emphasized that Clarissa’s brother failed to learn the lesson, and therefore he is not respected in society.

As these examples suggest, strong passions could afflict men as well as women in sentimental literature. In *Emmeline, The Orphan of the Castle* (1788) by Charlotte Smith, which also influenced Radcliffe according to Ledoux, the heroine Emmeline’s suitor is faulted for not being able to control his emotions: “she saw, with pain, that the ungovernable violence of his temper frequently obscured all his good qualities, and gave his character an appearance of ferocity, which offered no very flattering prospect to whosoever should be his wife.” His inability to control his emotions persuades him to take part in a duel which ends with his death, thus his passionate nature eventually costs him his life. In general, it is safe to conclude that in the novels of both Richardson and Charlotte Smith, it is acknowledged that emotions pose a threat to other people and ultimately to the self as well.

The idea that the inability to control one's emotions is a character fault and can lead to error in judgement is present in all of Radcliffe's novels. Even when presenting historical subjects, she is interested in displaying how character may be distorted by strong passions. This was not uncommon in the period – Hume deals with similar issues in his *History of England* (1754). In *Gaston De Blondville* (1826), the narrator remarks speaking of Henry III: "Many, who knew, that the King's heart was good, in many respects, lamented his weaknesses, and that his passions too often carried him away" (18). In *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), Pierre de la Motte is introduced as follows: "He was a man whose passions often overcame his reason, and, for a time, silenced his conscience [...] 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" (2). In calling the consequences of emotions vicious, Radcliffe follows the ideas explored by Malebranche and Shaftesbury which are also present in sentimental novels.

In Radcliffe's most famous novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) this necessity of governing one's emotions becomes extremely important for the heroine. It forms the basis of the teachings Emily receives from her father, St. Aubert at the beginning of the novel: "He endeavoured, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings [...] and to acquire that steady dignity of mind, that can alone counterbalance the passions" (5). Her experience in the course of the novel confirms the usefulness of his teachings.

Although not so explicitly, but the concept is present in *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) as well. When Radcliffe introduces the two sisters, she describes them the following way: "Emilia, the elder [...] had a mild and sweet temper, united with a clear and comprehensive mind. Her younger sister, Julia, was of a more lively cast. An extreme sensibility subjected her to frequent uneasiness. [...] Her imagination was ardent, and her mind early exhibited symptoms of genius" (4). Of the two sisters Emilia has a better control of her emotions, and Julia is more characterized by imagination and sensibility, which is associated with uneasiness. Radcliffe's choice of words in describing Julia's character echoes Hume's ideas:

'Tis remarkable, that lively passions commonly attend a lively imagination. In this respect, as well as others, the force of the passion depends as much on the temper of the person, as the nature or situation of the object. (Hume, 183)

It is Julia – whose personality falls rather short of St. Aubert’s ideal – who turns out to be the protagonist of the novel. Radcliffe’s choice may seem surprising in singling out the more fallible sister, but this contradiction is not unusual in her practice: it is present throughout *Udolpho* as well. Ian Duncan points out that even though St. Aubert warns Emily against the excess of emotions, Emily fails to follow his teachings, and her excessive fearfulness is the reason for the experiences which constitute the plot of the novel (130). This ambivalence is similar to the one present in the simultaneous glorification of the aesthetics of the supernatural and the condemnation of superstition. By commanding their emotions, Radcliffe’s heroines could have avoided all the dangers I am going to elaborate on in the remaining part of this chapter, but if that happened, the novels could not have been written. Margaret Russett found the same inherent contradiction in how reading is presented in *Udolpho* – St. Aubert recommended Emily many books to instruct her, yet most of the instances of reading in the novel describe the failure of following the advice of self-command, such as Ludovico’s absorption of a ghost-story, and Blanche’s love of what the narrator calls “reliques of romantic fiction” (Russett 166).

Nelson C. Smith explains the similarity between the sentimental novels and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by claiming that Radcliffe uses the conventions of the gothic novel to show the defects of the heroines of sentimental novels and therefore *The Mysteries of Udolpho* stands as an attack on the cult of sensibility (Smith 577). He interprets St. Aubert’s teaching on the need to restrain one’s sensibility as a criticism of the excesses of the sentimental novels of the time, advocating a return to common sense (Smith 587). I agree with Smith that Radcliffe exaggerated the influence emotions held over the individual in sentimental novels, but I disagree with him about Radcliffe’s intention of criticism. In the rest of the chapter I am going to argue that these exaggerated effects are the condition of possibility for the supernatural, and Radcliffe used this as a means of creating a gothic atmosphere and a constant sense of danger her characters had to face.

Medical views on emotions in the 18th century

Emotions played a central role not only in philosophical and literary discussion, but they appeared in the medical discourse of the period as well. Studying medical treatises may give us further important clues about the workings of emotion in Radcliffe’s novels. Another reason for introducing this perspective is that Radcliffe had plenty of contact with physicians, for example she spent some time with her grand uncle Dr. John Jebb as a child (Budge 29). Philosophies provided a general framework for thinking about emotion in the 18th century, but

medical texts could have a more immediate influence on how she handles them in the novels. The recognition that the emotional state can affect the body is not unique to the 18th century (see for example the discussions on the effects of stress in the 21st century), but I chose to look into 18th-century medicine to better be able to see the context in which Radcliffe wrote her novels.

William Falconer, an English physician and a member of the Medical Society of London wrote his work *A Dissertation on the Influence of the Passions upon the Disorders of the Body* in 1788, one year before Radcliffe published her first novel. Falconer was awarded the Fothergillian gold medal for this work, a prize that was given annually at the time to the author of the best essay on the subject of medicine or natural history. The award and the fact that the essay was published the third time in 1796 shows that it was both professional and fairly popular at the time. In his book, Falconer claims that emotions have a direct effect on our health; according to the introduction of the third edition, “at least half of the diseases, to which we are prone, originate from the influence of the passions on the human system” (17).

Falconer takes the different kinds of emotions one by one and gives a detailed medical description of their possible effects on a person’s health. Concerning joy, he writes the following: “If this passion be in excess, and especially if it takes place on any sudden occasion, it has produced fevers, deprivation of understanding, fainting, and even sudden death” (41).⁵ Falconer often refers to other opinions in his footnotes and when he writes about death as a possible consequence of excessive joy, he cites two other medical works and quotes the story of the Spartan mother who was so happy to see her son come home alive from the battle that she died in his arms. Dying of sudden joy today seems unbelievable and even Falconer felt the need to refer to authority other than his medical view. I believe these references in the footnote indicate that this was an accepted opinion in the medical discourse of the time, but with very little actual proof.

Another influential physician of the period was Alexander Crichton. In *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Origin of Mental Derangement* (1798), he follows the concept of overstimulation in Brunonian medicine. Brunonian medicine was a widely spread theory of medicine outlined by John Brown in his *Elementa Medicinae* (1780) (Allard 30). Brown’s concept of overstimulation stated that the body has a limited supply of vital energy and if an organ was overstimulated, it needed more energy and the body entered a vicious circle in

⁵ I chose joy as an example specifically because it does not describe the gothic. 18th century doctors wrote about the effect of emotions over the body in general, and their conclusion applies of course to emotions often inspired by the gothic, such as fear and excitement.

which the overexcited organ rendered itself more and more ill and the rest of the body was starved of vitality. According to Crichton, every action of the mental faculties needs an amount of blood greater than the usual, and the unusual exertion of the mind could result in a sense of fullness, giddiness, headache and a redness of the face and the eyes. He claimed that keeping the brain in a constant state of tension could result in delirium. The mind of the person could become entirely occupied by a certain class of notions, which acquire a degree of vividness so strong that they obstruct the usual impressions derived from external objects and so the person could see hallucinations (Budge 31–32). Even though not a doctor, Coleridge expressed a similar view. He maintained that if the mind is occupied by an object, and what the person actually sees has a visual similarity to the object present in the mind, then the person is liable to perceive the external object as the one that occupies his thoughts (“Kísértetek és jelenések” 89). Similarly, Thomas Wedgwood, photographer and inventor stated that if some ideas are especially deeply rooted in the mind, then external impressions can awaken them via association, and can fool one’s own mind. His example is about ghosts – a cow or a stone can be perceived as a lady dressed in white if the person’s mind is full of gothic ideas (97). I am going to show that characters in Radcliffe’s novels experience intense emotions and overexcitement and the consequences as she presents them are based on the medical works of the time – for example the works of William Falconer and Alexander Crichton. Radcliffe, however, takes them to the extreme, and describes consequences which cannot be explained by contemporary medical opinions. This method contributes in important ways to producing the specifically gothic threat her characters face.

The ability of emotions to alter perceptions

When critics such as Wallace, Smith and Ian Watt defined the gothic novel, they emphasized that fear is among its most important characteristics and that it is meant to create a feeling of thrilling suspense in the reader (Wallace and Smith 1, quoted in Kilgour 6). One way of achieving this is by presenting the surroundings as threatening to the characters of the novel. In his medical essay, Alexander Crichton stated that strong emotions can result in seeing hallucinations. The same concept had been articulated by Shaftesbury in his *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1708) when he wrote: “the caves, [...] raised such a horror in the enemy that, in this state, their imagination helped them to hear voices and doubtless to see forms too, which were more than human.” This idea is present in a number of sentimental novels and is also used by Radcliffe to create gothic threats.

In Richardson's *Pamela*, there is a scene in which Pamela tries to escape Mr. B's house, but is stopped by what she believes to be two supernaturally frightening bulls:

There is witchcraft in this house; and I believe Lucifer is bribed, [...] and is got into the shape of that nasty grim bull to watch me! [...] that horrid bull, staring me full in the face, with fiery saucer eyes [...] I ventured to look back, to see if these supposed bulls were coming; and I saw they were only two poor cows, a grazing in distant places, that my fears had made all this rout about. (Richardson)

When Pamela is frightened, the cows seem terrifying, to the point of being like creatures from Hell, and when she gives up trying to escape, she sees only peaceful, ordinary cows. There is irony in this scene, and Pamela even looks ridiculous with her jitters, which may be connected to the belief that the ability to control one's emotions is a virtue. This scene may be an example of Pamela failing to do so, and as a result, her fear makes her perceive something common as extremely threatening. But by the end of the scene her fear passes, and she immediately sees the cows as what they really are; she realizes her mistake and even feels ashamed.

Radcliffe's *Udolpho* is famous for the numerous occasions when Emily suffers from imaginary terrors (Birkhead 25; Watt 105; Miles, "Ann Radcliffe: the Great Enchantress" 2). For example, she is mistaken when she assumes that her aunt is dead when she sees blood on the floor or when she believes that the present owner of Udolpho inherited the castle by murdering the previous owner. The most well-known example of this phenomenon is the episode of the black veil which is also mentioned in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817):

in a chamber of Udolpho, hung a black veil, whose singular situation had excited Emily's curiosity, and which afterwards disclosed an object, that had overwhelmed her with horror [...] Emily, it may be recollected, had, after the first glance, let the veil drop, and her terror had prevented her from ever after provoking a renewal of such suffering, as she had then experienced. Had she dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together, and she would have perceived, that the figure before her was not human [...] a waxen image, made to resemble a human body in the state, to which it is reduced after death. (Radcliffe, 662)

When Emily lifts the black veil, she faints and the reader does not learn what is behind it. It is implied that it is either a skeleton or the remains of the dead body of the previous owner of the castle, murdered by the villain of the novel. Both Emily and the reader are haunted by this episode for several hundred pages; it is referred to as the ultimate cause for terror without specifying what it really is. At the very end of the novel, however, we learn that Emily made a mistake, as the object under the black veil is not threatening at all. It was Emily's fear that made it seem more significant than it actually was and so the waxen figure became a constant reminder of the threatening atmosphere in which Emily lived in Udolpho. For the reader, the black veil functions as a constant reminder of the unexplained mysteries, heightening the suspense and the interest in the outcome of the plot.

Comparing this with the scene from *Pamela*, we can see that in both cases the heroine's intense feeling of fear made them react in a way that was not justified by their circumstances. But whereas all Pamela does is give up her attempted escape and after that she realizes her mistake, Emily's reaction is irrationally exaggerated. She immediately swoons and that prevents her from learning that she has no cause for alarm. For the rest of the novel, she refuses to investigate it any further or even to think about it because she does not want to relive that extreme fear and so she never actually learns that she was wrong. The narrator gives the explanation only to the reader and only on the last pages of the novel, exploiting the suspense gained from this scene as much as possible.

This was probably one of the episodes Walter Scott had in mind when he wrote that the readers felt cheated by Radcliffe's bathetic explanations (Kilgour 129). The object behind the black veil is a waxen image of a decaying dead body, made on the order of a previous owner of the castle to constantly remind him of what happens after death and to teach him humility. It was covered with a black veil because it was so ugly. This is not something that people expect others to have at home and it has no connection with the plot of the novel. The readers rightly felt cheated because based on Emily's reaction they expected something far more terrible, and the prolonged suspense heightened their expectations even more. The explanation made it obvious that in the novel there is a dissonance between reality and the heroine's perception altered by fear. It also became obvious that Radcliffe only used this scene to create a gothic atmosphere and the feeling of suspense by hinting at dark secrets in the past, but she failed to give a sufficient reason for these impressions. As the novel is almost exclusively narrated from Emily's point of view, the readers only learned about Emily's perception of the events and they surely were not happy when they realized that they had been wrong.

William Rowley claimed in *A treatise on female nervous hysterical, hypochondriacal, bilious, convulsive diseases; apoplexy and palsy; with thoughts on madness, suicide etc.* (1788) that the delicacy of body and susceptibility of mind can be principal causes of disorders (101). Sentimental heroines were described as especially delicate. Claudia L. Johnson states that in sentimental literature man often took over once-feminine attributes, for example Werther became the culture's paragon of feeling. Consequently, women had to be represented as even more emotional, which led to them being excessively delicate and morbidly oversensitive (12). Their excessively delicate constitution could explain why their health is so much affected by what they experience. Thus, Emily's heightened emotional state could be responsible for her experiencing hallucinations, even if it seems unfounded for the 21st century reader. The uncertainty surrounding Emily's experience is characteristic of Radcliffe's portrayal of the supernatural. In Todorov's terms, the psychological explanation would render the scene uncanny, and the supernatural explanation would make it marvellous, but Radcliffe exploits the hesitation between the two.

This theme of emotion altering perception is most prominent in *Udolpho*, but it is present in other novels as well. In *The Romance of the Forest*, the servant Peter feels afraid when he explores the abandoned abbey:

Peter soon after appeared, breathless, and pale with fear. [...] "I've done for them, I believe, but I've had a hard bout. I thought I was fighting with the devil."— "What are you speaking of?" said La Motte.

"They were nothing but owls and rooks after all," continued Peter; "but the light brought them all about my ears, and they made such a confounded clapping with their wings, that I thought at first I had been beset with a legion of devils. (Radcliffe, 19)

The period of suspense is much shorter here than in the black veil episode. Servants in Radcliffe's novels are often represented as comical, superstitious and talkative, in the manner of Walpole's *Otranto*, and Peter's fright is a manifestation of these traits. Yet even though the comical aspect is present, just like in *Pamela*, Peter tricks his interlocutor by first presenting his fear and only later supplying the information that it was unjustified, ridiculing his own first reaction.

In Radcliffe's novels, a heightened emotional state makes the senses unreliable. Radcliffe relies on this approved tradition of the sentimental novels to connect to a generally accepted belief system and, as I am going to argue next, uses it to include unexplained ghosts

in her novels as well. Characteristically, she uses external focalization in such scenes to limit the readers' access to information and to keep up the suspense.

The appearance of unexplained ghosts

In Radcliffe's novels, there are apparitions which are not explained later, save for the assumption that the characters must have imagined them. These ghosts always appear when the characters are in an extreme emotional state, and so their perceptions are altered. These episodes play a central part in providing the gothic atmosphere for the novels. In the previous section, it was fear that altered perceptions; however, when we look at the appearance of ghosts, we find that it can be accompanied by other emotions as well, such as grief. For example, in the scene already quoted earlier, with an allusion to *Hamlet*, Emily's grief makes her see her father's ghost.

Another example is from Radcliffe's last novel published in her lifetime, *The Italian* and it features a murderer called Spalatro who is haunted by the ghosts of the people he killed (the scene was already quoted in the chapter *Radcliffe's Aesthetic Ghosts*):

I have never been at peace since. The bloody hand is always before me! and often of a night, when the sea roars, and storms shake the house, they have come, all gashed as I left them, and stood before my bed! I have got up and ran out upon the shore for safety! (Radcliffe, 230)

Here, Spalatro explains that he is regularly visited by these ghosts and the reader infers that it is his guilty conscience that makes him see the people he murdered. Ghosts demanding justice for their deaths was a familiar concept in the 18th century (Handley 88). Spalatro's haunting can be explained by an existing belief system, yet there is also a strong indication of enormous guilt felt by Spalatro which, according to 18th-century medicine, may be responsible for hallucinating ghosts.⁶ Moreover, images of the dead conjured up by guilty conscience is a trope present in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and even in the literature of the period. In the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1803), collected by Walter Scott, there is an untitled ballad of a mother who sees his child after she had murdered him (259). In later 19th century publications the poem was titled *Cruel Mother*. These visions are common in

⁶ Although guilt is not included as a distinct passion in Falconer's work, he identifies *shame* as "that penitent passion of conscious guilt" (14) and later describes the effects of shame over the body

Spalatro's life, and appear again at a crucial point of the narrative, when he is instructed by the villain Schedoni to murder the heroine Ellena:

Spalatro, instead of obeying, now grasped the arm of the Confessor, who, [...] was still more surprised to observe the paleness and horror of his countenance. His starting eyes seemed to follow some object along the passage, and Schedoni, who began to partake of his feelings, looked forward to discover what occasioned this dismay, but could not perceive any thing that justified it. [...]

“I saw that dreadful hand — I see it now — it is there again! — there” (Radcliffe, 231-232)

Spalatro refuses Schedoni's request of murder because he sees the apparition on the way to the heroine's room. Schedoni does not see the ghost, implying that it is only Spalatro's mind that plays this trick on him. Schedoni is described throughout the novel as a person who is always in control of himself; he is less susceptible to the exaggerated effects of emotions and he does not possess the poetic genius that Mr. W admires. This may be a sign of an unusual strength of mind, but it could also signal the complete lack of sensibility.

Spalatro is less in control of his emotions; he feels guilty, and as a consequence, he often sees the ghosts of those he murdered. The feeling of guilt is brought to mind by the term Confessor which refers to Schedoni, even though he appears here as the instigator of violence, not as a confessor giving absolution. As the scene is generally presented from Schedoni's point of view, the reader only learns two significant details of the apparitions that Spalatro feels important to emphasize: that there are many of them as they stand before his bed and they wear the scars he left on them. Both reflect Spalatro's sense of guilt. He mentions the “bloody hand” twice (the second time as “dreadful hand”), which is somewhat confusing because it is usually the murderer's hand that is bloody, not the victim's, and he does not elaborate. As he sees the hand far away (“I see it now — it is there again! — there”) it would seem that it is not his own hand. The scene may have been influenced by Macbeth hallucinating a bloody dagger before murdering King Duncan and by Lady Macbeth seeing blood on her own hands and washing it obsessively, further emphasizing the indication of guilty conscience.

It is obvious from this scene that when he is on his way to murder the heroine, Spalatro is in a heightened emotional state and he sees something which is not there. After seeing the apparition, he refuses to commit the murder. The scene also hints that there may be

Providence at work protecting the heroine, but this assumption is never confirmed. On one level of interpretation, Spalatro simply imagined the ghosts. On another level, the ghosts came for an important purpose – earlier to influence Spalatro’s conscience, and on this occasion to prevent the murder of the heroine. In any case, their existence is characterized by uncertainty, thus fulfilling the conditions set in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*.

There is another example in Radcliffe’s novels of guilt causing a character to see ghosts. In *Udolpho* Signora Laurentini caused the death of the Marchioness of Villeroi and destroyed the happiness of the Marquis. To atone for her crimes, she retires to a monastery, but is constantly haunted by the past:

“My head burns, I believe I am not well. O! could I strike from my memory all former scenes—the figures, that rise up, like furies, to torment me!—I see them, when I sleep, and, when I am awake, they are still before my eyes! I see them now—now!”

She stood in a fixed attitude of horror, her straining eyes moving slowly round the room, as if they followed something. (Radcliffe, 575)

Here, just like in the case of Spalatro, Signora Laurentini’s guilty conscience causes an emotional state which results in her seeing apparitions. Her guilt makes her see her victims. Signora Laurentini’s case is explicitly associated with bodily illness and madness. The scene is described from Emily’s point of view, and as she does not see the ghosts, it is implied that Signora Laurentini was driven mad by guilt and is seeing hallucinations. Unlike Spalatro’s ghosts who influence his actions to prevent a murder, Signora Laurentini’s apparitions do not exert their influence to alter her actions. They appear to remind her of her crime.

Signora Laurentini is described as a person who did not attempt to control her passions and who lacks sensibility. Her experience with the supernatural is not the kind that Mr. W praised in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, and instead of experiencing “a high degree of life,” she is tormented by the guilt she feels when she sees the ghosts. The narrator uses the word *horror* which brings into mind Mr. W’s differentiation between terror and horror. Signora Laurentini’s reaction is that of horror, whereas the reader is distanced from her experience and is able to experience terror. The scene fulfils Mr. W’s conditions of uncertainty and the necessary belief system, so it can be regarded as the aesthetic depiction of the possibility of the supernatural for the reader.

On another occasion, Signora Laurentini mistakes Emily for the ghost of the Marchioness de Villeroi (the Marchioness is Emily's aunt and Emily resembles her), and the fright she experiences makes her see the ghost of the Marquis as well:

turning her heavy eyes, she fixed them, in wild horror, upon Emily, and, screaming, exclaimed, "Ah! that vision comes upon me in my dying hours!" [...] What would you have—what is it you came to demand—Retribution?—It will soon be yours—it is yours already. How many years have passed, since last I saw you! My crime is but as yesterday. [...] What are years of prayers and repentance? they cannot wash out the foulness of murder!—Yes, murder! Where is he—where is he?—Look there—look there!—see where he stalks along the room! Why do you come to torment me now?" continued Agnes, while her straining eyes were bent on air, "why was not I punished before?—O! do not frown so sternly! Hah! there again! (Radcliffe, 643-644)

In this scene, Signora Laurentini expects to see ghosts and her hallucination is brought on by Emily's likeness to the late Marchioness and the intense emotions her sight evokes. Signora Laurentini's ghosts are in accordance with the belief that ghosts return for retribution and to haunt and torment their murderer and Signora Laurentini spectacularly illustrates the torment of guilty conscience. Radcliffe's inspiration for the scene – with its theatrical gestures and broken sentences – may have been Lady Macbeth's madness. The possible existence of the ghosts also serves to increase the suspense near the end of the novel because the fate of the Marchioness de Villeroi and her connection to Emily is one of the many mysteries of the plot, and Signora Laurentini's incoherent speech addressed to them provides enough information to the reader to awaken their curiosity, but also to keep the facts obscure so as not to fully gratify it.

Signora Laurentini's behaviour is extreme and it suggests madness brought on by guilty conscience and her intense emotions connected with it. However, there are examples in the novel when people whose mental state is not as unstable as Signora Laurentini's also see such apparitions. Emily, upon returning home after her father's death sees him many times: "wandering through this lonely mansion in the evening twilight, she had been alarmed by appearances, which would have been unseen in her more cheerful days" (102). In this scene, simple grief is enough to make Emily see her father's ghost. The narrator uses the plural for "appearances", indicating that there were more such occasions, not only the one that was quoted in detail in the chapter on Radcliffe's views on the supernatural.

A different example of apparitions is Emily seeing her suitor in the garden of the house she is staying at: “Sometimes, indeed, she thought, that her fancy, which had been occupied by the idea of him, had suggested his image to her uncertain sight” (586). Unlike his father’s appearances, these are explained later – Valancourt really entered the garden and was seen by Emily. Yet Emily believes for a while that just as she saw her father and Signora Laurentini saw the Marquis and the Marchioness, she saw an apparition, rather than the real Valancourt. Emily is often blamed for her failure to control her emotions (Smith 583), yet on these occasions it was some ordinary, everyday emotion like love, grief or sorrow which made her see ghosts – and her self-consciousness even made her mistake a real person for an apparition. She does not dispute the fact that emotions have the capacity to make people see apparitions, and so this ‘supernatural’ capacity is part of the everyday world of Radcliffe’s novels.

The ghost of Adeline’s father

It has been noted by literary criticism that the supernatural is more explicit in *The Romance of the Forest* than in Radcliffe’s other novels (Miles, “Ann Radcliffe. The Great Enchantress” 129). Her contemporary Anna Maria Mackenzie faulted Radcliffe for the supernatural present in this novel, especially the “dreams and apparitions” (xi-xii), so I believe it is worth exploring this aspect of the novel in more detail, especially as the apparition in this novel is the result of an emotional effect. Through most of the story, the novel’s heroine, Adeline is trying to uncover the mysteries of an abandoned abbey in the forest – which turn out to be closely connected to herself as well – while being persecuted by the gothic villain. The possibility of the supernatural is present from the beginning of Adeline’s investigation and seems to be linked to a mysterious stranger who had been imprisoned there:

All the circumstances that seemed to corroborate the fate of this unhappy man, crowded upon her mind. [...] Such a combination of circumstances she believed could only be produced by some supernatural power, operating for the retribution of the guilty. These reflections filled her mind with a degree of awe, which the loneliness of the large old chamber in which she sat, and the hour of the night, soon heightened into terror. [...] Her imagination, wrought upon by these reflections, again became sensible to every impression, she feared to look round, lest she should again see some dreadful phantom, and she almost fancied she heard voices swell in the storm, which now shook the fabric. (Radcliffe, 141)

This excerpt offers a perfect illustration of what Radcliffe stated in her theoretical work. In *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, she argues that the supernatural must be probable – or based on some accepted belief system – so that the poet has enough justification for introducing it. This section offers a concept already familiar to the reader. The idea of supernatural retribution is also similar to what Horace Walpole employed in *The Castle of Otranto*, in which a vengeful prophecy was fulfilled and divine wrath was unleashed on the villain's family (Geary 25). Clara Reeve also relied on the concept of supernatural retribution in *The Old English Baron* (1777), in which the ghosts of a murdered aristocratic couple set in motion a series of events which resulted in the punishment of the guilty and the restoration of their lost heir. It also brings to mind the concept of divine judgement, with the difference that instead of God's benevolence a terrifying supernatural force is the one at work, making it a potential subject for the sublime.

In her theoretical work, Radcliffe emphasized the importance of the attendant circumstances which must accompany the break in the laws of nature. Here, she lists the circumstances of the heroine's situation: she is in a lonely old chamber in the abbey at night, and there is a heavy storm outside, which shakes the curtains. These circumstances ensure the gothic atmosphere in which she can achieve maximum effect for the supernatural, in the same way as Shakespeare achieved the desired effect in the ghost-scene in *Hamlet*, according to Mr W. Adeline's reaction is "awe" which is "heightened into terror" – terror being an experience which "expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life", as it is explained in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. Her active imagination "became sensible to every impression," so she can experience the world more fully than in ordinary circumstances. All in all, Adeline illustrates how people experience the sublime, as it is described in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, providing aesthetic pleasure for the reader.

Another defining characteristic of Radcliffe's terror is the uncertainty which is also a determining factor here. Adeline is pondering the possibility of supernatural retribution, but does not know it for certain. Also, the feeling of terror has an effect on her, which offers the possibility of other supernatural phenomena – seeing a ghost and hearing voices – but these only remain a possibility. Radcliffe distances them from the reader so that their existence remains uncertain: "she feared to look round, lest she should again see" and "she almost fancied she heard." Just like Mr. W recommends, the uncertainty creates an aesthetic effect. Radcliffe's masterful use of the point of view technique and the way free indirect discourse

can blur the difference between external and internal reality – only to make it more apparent later – adds to the overall effect.

One of the most memorable sections of the novel is the manuscript-scene which had a huge impact on Radcliffe's readers. As we shall see, James Boaden aimed to recreate it to achieve the same effect in his theatrical adaptation, while Jane Austen mocked this scene in *Northanger Abbey*, and its ironic reconstruction is also present in the movie adaptation of Austen's novel, produced in 2007. The scene describes Adeline reading a manuscript she found in the abbey. The text (copied verbatim, in the manner of epistolary novels) openly appeals to the sympathy of its imagined reader:

it imparts some comfort to believe it possible that what I now write may one day meet the eye of a fellow creature; that the words, which tell my sufferings, may one day draw pity from the feeling heart. (Radcliffe, 128)

The manuscript details the sufferings of its author and declares that his aim is to inspire pity in the reader. Sharing one's sufferings with others and being able to participate imaginatively in another's sufferings, are central themes of 18th-century moral philosophy. By the second half of the 18th century, sentimental reading practice was extremely widespread in Britain. People were trained to read emotionally and crying over Henry MacKenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) was the test of one's sensibility and sympathy (Csengei 121–122).

The manuscript in *The Romance of the Forest* repeatedly asks for posthumous sympathy and details the sufferings of the prisoner of the abbey: "O! ye, who may hereafter read what I now write, give a tear to my sufferings: I have wept often for the distresses of my fellow creatures!" (132). It also attributes special importance to sympathy, when the author debates whether he really should reach out to the reader: "It is weakness to wish for compassion which cannot be felt till I shall sink in the repose of death, and taste, I hope, the happiness of eternity!" (128). Here, the author attaches a value to the feeling of compassion: he debates whether it is selfish of him to ask for it if he will not be able to profit by it as he will have died by the time the manuscript will be read. He also relies on the religious concept that the soul lives on after death and hopes that he will be in Heaven.

Sympathy had a special importance in the 18th-century culture of sensibility. Hutcheson and Hume stated that reacting sympathetically to others' sufferings is the sign of innate benevolence (Csengei 56). Sympathy thus became associated with morality, and in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, it forms the basis of moral behaviour, replacing

any pre-established codes of moral conduct. It also played an important role in early aesthetic thinking. In his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Burke writes the following: “I am convinced we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others [...] Our delight in cases of this kind, is very greatly heightened, if the sufferer be some excellent person who sinks under an unworthy fortune” (58). In accordance with this, the author of the manuscript in Radcliffe’s novel is shown to possess superior morality because he has shown sympathy several times in his life. As a consequence, just as Burke states, the delight accompanying the sympathy is heightened because the sufferer is a worthy person who met misfortune.

Adeline reacts sympathetically to the man’s sufferings, realizing what he had proleptically described. She acts similarly to the poet in György Fogarasi’s interpretation of Thomas Gray’s *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), on the basis of sympathy and grief explored in Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). Adeline pays sympathy to the deceased author of the manuscript, and by doing so, she imagines herself to be in the man’s situation, giving up her own happiness in favour of melancholy. This act of hers ensures that in the future she will be given the same attention by the living (Fogarasi 99-101). Moreover, the place where Adeline is reading the manuscript is the same where the manuscript was written, so even though there is a distance between them in time, the space remains constant and may carry traces of the past:

these lines, from which he then derived a comfort in believing they would hereafter be read by some pitying eye: this time is now come. Your miseries, O injured being! are lamented, where they were endured. Here, where you suffered, I weep for your sufferings! (Radcliffe, 132)

Adeline reads the story of the suffering man and feels for him, providing the sympathy that was also the basis of his writing. Ildikó Csengei noted that sympathy was supposed to have a therapeutic nature, especially when the knowledge of the sad events was imparted in the form of a story, either through speaking and hearing or through writing and reading. It was believed that the narrative of suffering inspires the sympathetic emotional response, which brings pleasure to the recipient of the story and a healing consolation to the sufferer (58). It was noted in medicine as well that mental perturbation was relieved “by a compassionate and sincere sympathy in affliction” (Rowley 118). What makes Radcliffe’s scene of sympathy gothic is the fact that the sufferer is dead by the time somebody responds to his narrative of

suffering. Yet his extreme suffering and the way he presents it in writing, together with Adeline's moral sensitivity, makes it possible for sympathy to come into existence: "by a strong illusion of fancy, it seemed as if his past sufferings were at this moment present" (132). Radcliffe's use of free indirect discourse and the phrase "this moment" bridges the gap not only between Adeline and the sufferer's "present", but also between her experience and the narrator's account of it. In his treatise, Burke claimed that sympathy may be inspired by words, or "those modes of speech that mark a strong and lively feeling." Relying on classical rhetorical doctrine, he also asserts that strong feelings can travel from one person to another with the help of language: "Then, by the contagion of our passions, we catch a fire already kindled in another" (217). Adeline responds to the words on the page by lamenting and weeping for the unknown man, fully in accordance with such ideas.

As the scene describes Adeline reading and responding sympathetically, she also serves as a model for the reader, illustrating the sentimental reading practice. According to Radcliffe's *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, the reaction of sublime terror – which Adeline experiences – is close to the aesthetic experience of the reader when reading literature featuring the supernatural. This connection between the experiences of Adeline and the reader probably contributed to the popularity of the novel. Building on the effects of sympathy, Radcliffe gradually introduces the supernatural:

Her imagination was now strongly impressed, and to her distempered senses the suggestions of a bewildered mind appeared with the force of reality. Again she started and listened, and thought she heard "Here" distinctly repeated by a whisper immediately behind her. [...]

A hollow sigh seemed to pass near her. "Holy Virgin, protect me!" cried she, and threw a fearful glance round the room; "this is surely something more than fancy." [...] As she listened to the wind, that murmured at the casements of her lonely chamber, she again thought she heard a sigh. Her imagination refused any longer the controul of reason, and, turning her eyes, a figure, whose exact form she could not distinguish, appeared to pass along an obscure part of the chamber: a dreadful chillness came over her, and she sat fixed in her chair. At length a deep sigh somewhat relieved her oppressed spirits, and her senses seemed to return. (Radcliffe, 132-134.)

Adeline's sympathy with the murdered man brings about supernatural phenomena that remain unexplained in any other way. The supernatural is presented similarly to the previous excerpt

and how Radcliffe described it in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. Its existence is defined by uncertainty: “suggestions of a bewildered mind,” “thought she heard,” “seemed to pass,” “whose exact form she could not distinguish.” In medicine, William Rowley stated that sympathy can be especially dangerous for women with great sensibility: “their tender frame is agitated by the merest trifles of sympathy [...] the most amiable and philanthropic minds, shocking to reflect! are most punished through life” (119). As this suggests, Adeline experiencing a hallucination is at least a possible interpretation of the scene.

Whether Adeline really heard and saw the ghost of the murdered man is neither confirmed nor denied later in the novel; what produces the desired effect in Adeline and in the reader is the possibility of the supernatural. The scene is also characterized by Burkean obscurity, as we not only remain ignorant of the ghost’s real nature, but also of the details surrounding it. At the very end of the novel, the reader learns that the murdered man is, in fact, Adeline’s father, so there is a special connection between the two people participating in the sympathetic exchange, but at this point this knowledge is not necessary for the scene to be effective. Ghosts usually appear either before the guilty (as in *Macbeth*) or before the one tasked with revenge (as in *Hamlet*). Adeline encountering the ghost suggests that she herself has some connection with the violent event, yet it is not verbalized here, and both she and the reader learn much later that her own father was murdered in the abbey.

It was also important for Radcliffe that the introduction of the supernatural should adhere to some kind of belief system that the reader is familiar with, so the ghost has to have a probable reason for returning. Here, he appears to fulfil his role as the receiver of Adeline’s sympathy and to experience the healing consolation that characterizes therapeutic sympathy. His existence is justified by the importance of feelings that characterized sentimentalism; it indicates that the power of feeling can transcend death and sympathy can call back the soul from the otherworld to participate in the exchange of feelings. Such a connection might seem unusual, but it appears in other works from the period. Lamb points out that in *Orra* (1798) by the playwright Joanna Baillie the heroine has a presentiment of a sympathetic exchange between the living and the dead and calls it ‘horrid sympathy’ (114). The fact that it is the act of reading that brings about the ‘horrid sympathy’ between Adeline and the dead man suggests that the text of the novel itself may be capable of inducing such sympathetic exchange. Mr. W talked about communication with dead authors like Shakespeare through their works. Being presented with a text which includes a text initiating an encounter with a ghost might have given a special frisson to the act of reading.

Dangerous emotions – suspense as a threat

In sentimental novels as in Radcliffe's works, emotions not only alter perceptions and cause hallucinations, but they may even pose a threat to the people experiencing them. Suspense is perceived as particularly harmful. In the first volume of Richardson's *Clarissa*, Clarissa comments while waiting for an important decision concerning her future: "What a cruel thing is suspense!" Being kept in suspense means being subordinated to someone else's power, which might lead to various forms of torment. Another time her sister gives the following reason why Clarissa should marry Mr. Solmes: "Your father therefore, my Clary, cannot, either for your sake, or his own, labour under a suspense so affecting to his repose." She asks Clarissa to agree to the marriage because this prolonged suspense is harmful to their father. At the same time, narrative suspense is one of the chief sources of power in Richardson's fiction, which is used by Radcliffe perhaps even more successfully.

In Radcliffe's first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) she takes this effect a step further. Suspense is in the centre of the villain's musings:

He racked imagination for the invention of tortures equal to the force of his feelings; and he at length discovered that the sufferings of suspense are superior to those of the most terrible evils. [...]

The dreadful energy of these sensations exasperated his brain almost to madness [...] he was on the point of resigning his virtue and his life, by means of a short dagger, which he wore concealed under his vest (Radcliffe)

The first paragraph here features the point of view of the villain, after he imprisoned the hero. He suffers from his own feelings greatly and is looking for a way of torture to inflict as much pain on the hero as he himself experiences. He finds that "the sufferings of suspense are superior to those of the most terrible evils", and decides that he will torture the hero by keeping him in suspense concerning his fate. This kind of torture fits Radcliffe's renown for writing tame gothic novels and restraint from describing violence. Yet in the world of the novel this kind of torture is rather effective. The second paragraph is from the point of view of the hero, who is being kept in suspense. As a consequence, he is almost driven insane and decides to commit suicide, and he is only prevented from doing so in the last second.

In the later novels, suspense is often put in a context which emphasizes its threatening nature: “relieve me from this dreadful suspense” (*A Sicilian Romance*), “terrible suspense”, “terrors of suspense” and “tortures of suspense” (*The Romance of the Forest*), “period of torturing suspense”, “intolerable suspense”, “be spared the further torture of suspense” (*Udolpho*), “anxious suspense” and “suspense to me is the purgatory of this world” (*The Italian*). It is worth contemplating that suspense was also the reader’s own state when rushing through the novel (Clery 97). Radcliffe has been called the “mistress of suspense” (Kilgour 32) and her novels are “novels of suspense” (Birkhead 22). Suspense is what Radcliffe relies on to keep the readers’ interest, and she achieves it by carefully supplying information on the past mysteries while keeping the explanation uncertain.

As Adela Pinch pointed out, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* suggests that there are standards of suitable emotional response, yet Radcliffe glorifies and cultivates excessive feeling in both her characters and her readers (Pinch 111). This ambiguity – that emotions are ultimately threatening and desirable at the same time – may be considered a sign of subversion and a juxtaposition of incompatible elements, a characteristic which Rosemary Jackson attributed to the genre (15). Terry Castle connects this ambiguity to the distinction between horror and terror and argues that whereas Emily feels horror on seeing the figure behind the black veil, for the reader the scene imparts terror. Emily sees the horrifying object, but it is distanced from the reader by the narrator’s mediation which leaves much to the imagination (91). Similarly, the distance between the reader and the character’s experience may turn the tortures of suspense, which drive the hero almost to madness, into an exciting reading experience.

Dangerous emotions – swoon and fatal illness

William Falconer wrote in his *Dissertation on the Influence of the Passions upon the Disorders of the Body* (1788) that excessive emotions affect people’s health and claimed in his footnotes that this can even cause death. There are plenty of literary examples of powerful emotions resulting in feeling unwell and leading to swoons, and there are also examples of dying of strong feelings in both sentimental novels and in Radcliffe’s romances.

In *Pamela* (1740), Mr. B writes to Pamela: “Now all my care in this case is for your aged parents, lest they should be touched with too fatal a grief.” Here both Pamela and Mr. B agree that it is a possibility that anxiety and grief for their daughter could cause a fatal illness for Pamela’s parents, even more so because they are elderly, but this possibility is never realized. In *The Old Manor House* (1793) by Charlotte Smith the hero Orlando conceals his

marriage from his mother because he fears that the shock of the news might be fatal for the elderly woman who has suffered a lot lately. Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), on the other hand, ends with the main character Harley dying when he learns that the woman he loves returns his feelings. When they confess their feelings for each other, their emotions overwhelm them so much that they both swoon and this is fatal for Harley.

The threatening feature of emotions is common in Radcliffe's novels. In *A Sicilian Romance*, the villain, the Duke de Luovo is introduced the following way: "He had been twice married, and the unfortunate women subjected to his power had fallen victims to the slow but corroding hand of sorrow." The villain wants to marry the heroine Julia and becomes a threat not by having the habit of actually murdering his wives (Bluebeard's story was well-known in Radcliffe's time, see Casie Hermansson's article on the subject), but by making them so unhappy that their sorrow kills them.

The most radical example of the fatal consequences of emotions is the death of Madame Montoni in *Udolpho*. She refuses to sign a document in which she would give all her wealth to her husband, so Montoni – who is also the villain in the novel – locks her in a tower, but otherwise does not harm her. After some time, Madame Montoni falls ill, and dies. The following excerpt is from the scene when the heroine Emily finds Madame Montoni, shortly before her death:

The voice spoke again; and, then, thinking that it resembled that of Madame Montoni, Emily's spirits were instantly roused; she rushed towards a bed, that stood in a remote part of the room, and drew aside the curtains. Within, appeared a pale and emaciated face. [...] It was that of Madame Montoni, though so changed by illness, that the resemblance of what it had been, could scarcely be traced in what it now appeared. She was still alive, and, raising her heavy eyes, she turned them on her niece.

'Where have you been so long?' said she, in the same tone, 'I thought you had forsaken me.' (Radcliffe, 364)

Madame Montoni's suffering is described in great detail in previous sections of the novel. Here, the emphasis is more on the atmosphere and the feelings of Emily and Madame Montoni than her actual medical condition. However, we learn that illness changed her so much that she is barely recognisable. We learn that she lost a significant amount of weight in a short time, which shows on her face and on her hands. It is a surprise that she is still alive. The first thing she says to Emily conveys her suffering because she has been left alone. Even

her bed was in “a remote part of the room.” These circumstances do not constitute a sufficient reason for her death, not even for 18th-century medicine. As we have seen, William Falconer stated that emotions can cause death if they are in excess and especially on a sudden occasion. Madame Montoni’s fear of her husband is excessive, and her decline is rapid, but gradual; there is no suddenness in the excerpt describing Madame Montoni’s condition. Radcliffe, then, used the popular medical concept of the effects of emotion on the individual’s health in a slightly altered fashion to suit her needs in the novel.

It is a tendency in Radcliffe’s novels that she subordinates credibility and logic to plot and atmosphere. As Kilgour points out, the sentinels of Udolpho behave as befits sentinels who are thoroughly familiar with *Hamlet* and not as sentinels who are on duty in Udolpho (Kilgour 120). In *The Romance of the Forest* one of the minor characters disappears halfway through the book and she is neither mentioned nor missed later, not even by her husband. With regards to the dangerous effect of emotions, it can be said that it is taken for granted by all the characters in the world of the novels, and therefore it becomes the norm, but the extent of this effect depends on the needs of the plot. The wives of the Duke de Luovo and Madame Montoni died chiefly because their deaths were necessary to emphasize the danger to the heroines. The employment of the dangerous effect of emotions lacks consistency and it is not readily applicable to the world of the reader.

Other times strong emotions cause sickness, but they do not lead to death. In *The Romance of the Forest*, the heroine Adeline enters the story in rather mysterious circumstances, and when she is asked by her travelling companion La Motte to explain these circumstances, the painful memories make her ill:

Adeline appeared more tranquil than she had yet been, and La Motte now asked for an explanation [...] with tears she entreated for the present to be spared on the subject [...] for the greater part of the day she seemed to remember it in melancholy and dejection. [...] Adeline endeavoured to smile, but the languor of grief was now heightened by indisposition. The violent agitation of mind, and fatigue of body, which she had suffered for the last twenty-four hours, had overpowered her strength, and, when La Motte led her back to the carriage, her whole frame trembled with illness [...] He sent immediately for a physician, who pronounced her to be in a high fever, and said, a removal in her present state must be fatal. [...] the physician appeared in the morning, he gave orders that she should be indulged with whatever she liked, and

answered the inquiries of La Motte with a frankness that left him nothing to hope.
(Radcliffe, 10-13)

As in the previous excerpt, the seriousness of Adeline's condition is emphasized without giving a credible medical reason for it; we only learn that "the violent agitation of mind" and the fatigues of long travel together are responsible for her condition.⁷ Instead of listing the symptoms as in the case of Madame Montoni, the narrator elaborates on the gradual development of the illness – which is once again contrary to Falconer's emphasis on the suddenness of the intense emotions – and a physician appears who declares that Adeline has small chance of survival. After establishing the gravity of the situation, in the next paragraph Adeline recovers enough to be able to travel and by the end of the first chapter she arrives at the abbey which will be her home for most of the novel, but it is only in the third chapter that she is well enough to relive her painful memories and answer La Motte's original question about the mysterious way in which she first appeared. It is clear from this example that emotions in Radcliffe's fiction have much greater influence over the characters and their decisions than other external circumstances. Introducing Adeline this way establishes the power of emotions over the individual in the world of the novel and Adeline's susceptibility to it. After this, experiencing a series of (mis)adventures is much more dangerous for Adeline and the evil acts of the villain seem even more cruel.

There are instances in Radcliffe's other novels too when a similar reaction constitutes an important part of the plot. *Gaston de Blondville* starts with a merchant recognizing Gaston as a murderer and this realization makes him swoon: he "lay there, seeming without life." In *The Italian*, great emphasis is given to a confessional which made the confessor ill. What was confessed was "something so very strange and horrible, that the grand penitentiary suddenly quitted the chair, and before he reached the cloisters he fell into strong convulsions."

The descriptions of these sicknesses build on the contemporary medical view (for example Falconer's) that emotions in excess can be harmful to one's health and can even lead to death, but Radcliffe's novels do not give an accurate representation of the medical opinion of the time. Instead, she uses this accepted view on the effects of emotions to create a gothic atmosphere and increase suspense, emphasising the dangers the heroines have to face.

⁷ In comparison, in *Udolpho*, the heroine Emily travels much longer distances through France and all the while she is in excellent health.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that in Radcliffe's novels, the effects emotions have on people are exaggerated compared to the practice of sentimental novels and the viewpoint of medical treatises of the time. In introducing the effects of intense emotions, Radcliffe builds on the existing belief in their dangerous nature, but uses them to approximate the supernatural, such as the possibility of seeing ghosts, and in this way creates the aesthetic experience for the reader, as Mr. W suggests in the posthumous dialogue.

The threatening nature of the power of emotions is emphasized by the recurring insistence in the novels that they need to be controlled. This attitude is most prominent in *Udolpho* in which it constitutes one of the teachings of St. Aubert to Emily. Those who are able to control their emotions live a peaceful and happy life, whereas those who indulge their passions like Signora Laurentini, are subject to a decline in their morality and are tormented by guilt for the rest of their lives. At the same time, the most dangerous gothic villains tend to be unfeeling: they lack the sensibility to sympathise with others, and are less affected by ghostly visions than the heroines characterized by sensibility. Radcliffe's heroines and heroes face many challenges in controlling their emotions due to their gothic adventures and the numerous possibilities of supernatural events they experience, and in the romances, this poses an additional threat to them.

In excess, emotions can alter perceptions and lead to seeing apparitions which are not explained later, like Spalatro's or Signora Laurentini's ghosts or the ghost of Adeline's father. Emotions are also harmful to one's health and can cause deadly illness or even death, as in the case of Madame Montoni. This concept is popular in the literature of the period, even though it is not justified by 18th-century medicine. The consequences of strong emotions in Radcliffe's fiction follow no internal logic, but serve the atmosphere and the needs of the plot in her novels, to increase their suspense. Keeping the readers in uncertainty and surprising them with sudden outbursts of feeling allows Radcliffe to use narrative sleights of hand such as dropping a character in the middle of the novel or leaving an apparition or two unexplained.

5. Dreams in Radcliffe's novels

Another opportunity for introducing the supernatural in Radcliffe's novels is through dreams. Dreams have always been regarded as an inexplicable part of our everyday lives and many people have sought to find meaning in them. Mary Shelley famously stated that she "never saw a ghost except once in a dream." Unfortunately, she does not elaborate on her dream, the only thing she mentions is the intense fear she felt even after waking up. As the chapter will show, the various discussions on dreams and the existing practice in gothic novels – exemplified by Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1777) – supplied Radcliffe with the belief system she deemed necessary for the introduction of the supernatural.

In literature, dreams are often used as a device for warning of future events, this is what happens in Homer's, Chaucer's and Milton's works as well. Norman N. Holland stated that in a literary world everything points toward a purpose – bearing in mind that the purpose may be to show that there is no purpose. So, dreams must be included in that purposiveness and they must have something significant to say in the fictional world (Holland xviii). Dreams can be used to convey meaning on a different level, so they can reveal deeper layers in the personalities of the characters, and they can even be used to introduce a supernatural force (Porter 38). Dreams provide an opportunity to include something meaningful in the literary work without the need to explain it fully in terms of cause and effect. In this sense, they are similar to the lyrical pieces interspersed in Radcliffe's prose. As Radcliffe liked to delay the explanations to the mysteries in her novels, this technique is easily integrated into her methods. She included dreams in two of her novels: *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Italian*.

In this chapter, I am going to briefly discuss the dream theories available to Radcliffe in the 18th century, with a special emphasis on the biblical tradition of prophetic dreams. After surveying the characteristic earlier practice of gothic novels, I will analyze the dreams in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Italian* (1797), with a perspective on their supernatural nature and how they can be interpreted relying on Radcliffe's own views on the supernatural sublime.

Dream theories from the Middle Ages to the 18th century

Medieval treatises tended to look to Christian theology for guidance on how to interpret dreams. There are many examples of meaningful dreams in the Bible, maybe the most famous

being the Pharaoh's dream in the *Genesis*. His dream is interpreted by Joseph and it serves as a warning that it is God's will that seven years of abundance will be followed by seven years of famine, so he should economize and store enough food for his people to survive. The Pharaoh follows Joseph's advice and Egypt survives the lean years. Clearly, the Pharaoh's dream was prophetic in nature, it communicated God's will and helped the Pharaoh prepare for the difficulties. At the same time, the correct interpretation set Joseph free and made him one of the Pharaoh's right-hand men. In the New Testament, dreams are also a way for angels to communicate with people. Joseph – the legal father of Jesus – had four significant dreams in which angels spoke to him; in the first they informed him that Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit. This possibility of communication is present in Islam as well, as Prophet Mohammed was visited by the Angel Gabriel in his dream and the Koran is the collection of the revelations he received from the angel.

Religious faith therefore maintained that dreams could have a supernatural nature. In the Middle Ages, Saint Augustine wrote extensively on the nature of dreams. He emphasized that not only God, but Satan too has the power to communicate with people in their dreams, and to interpret the message, it is important to first ascertain its origin. To be able to do this, the effects of the dream must be considered since Satan wishes to make people do wicked deeds (Rees 32). In the 17th century, the French Huguenot Moses Amyraldus considered the question in detail in *A discourse concerning the divine dreams mention'd in Scripture together with the marks and characters by which they might be distinguish'd from vain delusions: in a letter to Monsieur Gaches*. He stated that certain practices, such as going to sleep in a holy place after fasting and prayer could increase the likelihood that the dream had a divine, and not a demonic origin (Schreier Rupprecht 127). He also claimed that if the message of the dream was in line with the teachings of God, then it could be trusted, but dreams which tempted the dreamer to do something against God's teachings had come from Satan (Craig 155).

According to scholarly consensus, the Enlightenment favored rational thinking and people tended to dismiss the supernatural explanations of dreams (Kramer 3). At the same time, the supernatural influence was not entirely discarded, especially in popular publications; many cheap fortune-telling tracts included dream divination along with astrology and moleosophy, which tells one's personality and future from the birthmarks they have on their bodies (Rivière 3). According to a survey conducted in 2015, many adult people even today believe that their dreams can tell the future (Valášek and Watt 65). In his youth, Coleridge shared this belief, too (Ford 142).

Thomas Tryon's *A treatise of dreams & visions* was first published in 1689, which was followed by two more editions. With the new title *Nocturnal revels* it was published many times in the 18th century, even as late as 1789. He claimed that dreams can have a supernatural cause, but they can be influenced by natural causes as well, such as one's thoughts during the day, the humors (the medieval concept of the four humors which determine a person's temperament), and he also included the position of the planets as a natural influence on one's dreams (Rivière 30). In the same period, it was believed that other natural causes can influence dreams as well, such as noise, the position of the bed, the temperature in the room and also the position in which somebody sleeps (Rivière 50). In medicine, the concept that dreams were dependent on excitement or stimulation of the nervous system became widespread (Ford 30), especially as a result of the popularity of Brunonian theories.

As for the supernatural influence, it was also believed that in sleep people are vulnerable to attacks of evil spirits. According to Andrew Baxter's *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul; Wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is Evinced From the Principles of Reason and Philosophy* (1733), visions experienced in a dream are offered to the soul by external beings or spirits (Ford 18). Dreams came to be regarded as a form of possession, and examples of this idea are present even in Shelley's and Byron's poems (Ford 21). The concept of the nightmare was also much more complex than today – based on John Bond's *An essay on the incubus, or night-mare* (1753), the 18th-century understanding of nightmare was closer to today's concept of sleep paralysis. People felt as if somebody – or a monster – was sitting on their chest and suffocating them (Rivière 158), and many believed that this was the result of witchcraft – even as late as 1875 people were accused of sending others nightmares (Rivière 166). In Fuseli's famous painting *The Nightmare* (1781) a grotesque creature is sitting on a sleeping woman's chest and the colours emphasize the threatening nature of the dream (Ford 26). The creature may be a "mara," a spirit sent to torment and suffocate sleepers. The painting depicts both the helpless sleeping woman and the contents of her nightmare.

It was also believed that in sleep the soul is freed and can function independently of the body, which was seen as evidence of the immateriality and immortality of the soul. This view was supported by Charles Drelincourt's wildly popular *The Christian's Consolation Against the Fears of Death* (1641), and Andrew Baxter's *An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul* (1733). Tryon also stated that it is possible for the soul after death to communicate with other people through their dreams (Hirst "The Theology of Gothic

Dreams”). The communicative aspect of the dream was not restricted to souls: Daniel Defoe emphasized the possibility of the devil speaking with people in their dreams, and he even stated that this was the primary means for him to interact with humans (Carter 327). He also explored the possibility of angels communicating with people in their dreams (Hirst “The Theology of Gothic Dreams”). In her essay *The Theology of Radcliffe’s Dreams*, Holly Hirst describes in detail the ideas of Reverend Adam Friedrich Wilhelm Saalfeld, translated and published in English in 1764 with the title *A Philosophical Discourse on the Nature of Dreams*. Saalfeld categorized dreams as either natural or supernatural, and for him, as angels and demons were integral parts of the natural world, dreams with angelic or demonic influence were considered natural (94-95). He believed that truly supernatural dreams were rare, and they contained what he called “absent objects”: things that have not been seen or thought of during the day and information previously unknown (96). In contrast, Kant stated in his *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* (1766) that the origin of dreams is one’s own fancy which in sleep can be mistakenly believed to be an outside force (75–76).

John Bond’s, Thomas Tryon’s and Daniel Defoe’s works all suggest that even though the Enlightenment advocated rationalism, supernatural belief concerning dreams coexisted with the rational explanations. Later in 18th- and early 19th-century literature, the prophetic tendency of the dream was often represented, but not always accepted. For example, Jennifer Ford shows that in *The Eve of St. Agnes* (1820) by Keats the supernatural aspect of dreams is treated with irony and skepticism, while it is still maintained that dreams could have a prophetic nature (Ford 13).

Dreams in Early Gothic Literature

Dreams presented an opportunity to include the supernatural in gothic novels, and the authors frequently made use of this device. In a letter, Horace Walpole famously claimed that his inspiration for writing *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) originated in a dream:

I waked one morning in the beginning of last June from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story) and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. (Riely 2)

In his letter, by locating the origin of the story in a dream, Walpole could create an illusion that he was only a mediator and the source was something greater than himself, adding a new aspect to the overwhelming nature of the force of the prophecy in the story. According to an old prophecy cited on the first page of the novel, “the Castle and Lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it”. At first this does not seem to make sense, but as the identity of the “real owner” is gradually revealed through ghostly visitations and fragments of a giant armour, it becomes literally true. Ian Duncan has noted the contrast between the giant helmet and the puny boy imprisoned under it in the first incident of the book (29), recalling the “gigantic hand in armour” in Walpole’s dream. By locating the source of his inspiration in a dream, Walpole could produce a context in which he himself was the recipient of supernatural inspiration and acted as a mere amanuensis, writing “without knowing in the least what [he] intended to say or relate”. The story could thus be perceived as a dream-text, which might appear incoherent on the surface, but which also offers clues for its right interpretation by the adept reader.

The prophecy that plays such a key role in the novel is delivered to the villain’s ancestor in a dream. The prophecy itself is a riddle, an incoherent text which needs to be interpreted, just like the Pharaoh’s dream in the Old Testament. Walpole was also interested in ancient tragedy, and he might have been influenced by the similar process of the prophecy slowly unfolding in *Oedipus Rex*. As we learn by the end of the novel, the ancestor Ricardo murdered his lord and forged a will that made him the new lord of Otranto:

Haunted by his guilt he vowed to St. Nicholas to found a church and two convents, if he lived to reach Otranto. The sacrifice was accepted: the saint appeared to him in a dream, and promised that Ricardo’s posterity should reign in Otranto until the rightful owner should be grown too large to inhabit the castle, and as long as issue male from Ricardo’s loins should remain to enjoy it. (Walpole)

Ricardo’s dream follows the biblical tradition in two respects. First, it tells a prophecy that comes true in the course of the novel (like the Pharaoh’s dream that came true in the Bible). Secondly, the dream made it possible for Ricardo to communicate with Saint Nicholas and the saint promised him that Ricardo’s descendants would remain Otranto’s owners for a time. As we have seen, Saint Augustine wrote about divine and demonic dreams, and following his distinction, Ricardo’s dream has to be interpreted as a divine one because he was visited by a saint and not by Satan. On the other hand, Saint Nicholas accepted Ricardo’s murder of his

lord and unleashed vengeance on his descendants irrespective of whether they were conscious of Ricardo's crime or not. The conflicts between Catholics and Protestants were often represented in gothic novels by connecting Catholicism with superstition and fear and Protestantism with Enlightenment thinking. In *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole describes medieval Catholicism as numinous where instead of a benevolent providence guarding the innocent, divine wrath punishes the descendants of the guilty (Geary 30). This terrifying aspect of the religion in the story is one of the features that make it gothic, as Walpole's second Preface makes it clear.

Communication with a supernatural being is also a theme in the Oriental tale *The History of Nourjahad* (1767), written by Frances Sheridan a few years after Walpole's gothic story. The novel is considered to be an important text in the 18th-century development of Irish Orientalist discourse (Lawrenson 25). Even though Sheridan relies on the explained supernatural, for the most part of the novel Nourjahad – and the reader as well – believes that he made an agreement with an immortal spirit in his dream. This possibility of communicating with an angel is part of the Biblical tradition and is in line with the ideas of Saint Augustine and Moses Amyraldus. The novel was so popular that it was adapted to the theatre and performed at Drury Lane in 1813 (Romantic Circles).

In the *Preface to The Old English Baron* (1777) Clara Reeve called her novel a literary offspring of *The Castle of Otranto*. Nevertheless, she faulted Walpole for his too violent supernatural machinery and she herself refrained from Walpole's excesses and was much more conservative in the supernatural scenes. Literary criticism often blames *The Old English Baron* for being too tame for a gothic novel. Contrary to many other gothic works which feature exotic settings, it is set in England, and Reeve may have had some reservations about introducing terror in such a familiar setting. Yet the dreams in *The Old English Baron* can be regarded as more radical than the ones in *The Castle of Otranto*. The following dream is experienced by a friend of a murdered aristocrat:

He thought he received a message from his friend Lord Lovel, to come to him at the castle; that he stood at the gate and received him [...] he bid Sir Philip follow him; he led him through many rooms, till at last he sunk down, and Sir Philip thought he still followed him, till he came into a dark and frightful cave, where he disappeared, and in his stead he beheld a complete suit of armour stained with blood, which belonged to his friend, and he thought he heard dismal groans from beneath. (Reeve)

The dream describes the ghost of Lord Lovel as he communicates with his friend through a dream. His aim is to reveal the truth so that his heir can receive his rightful inheritance. This intention and active agency of the ghost resembles the ghost of Hamlet's father, not the Biblical tradition that Walpole followed. According to the Protestant doctrine, people could not communicate with the living after they died. The dream theories of the time stated that people could be contacted by supernatural beings, such as angels or devils, but not by other people. By having the ghost impart details of his murder to his living friend, Clara Reeve followed the Shakespearean tradition rather than the contemporary dream theories, thus offering an example for later gothic writers in giving the ghost agency.

Dreams in Radcliffe's novels

There are examples of extraordinary dreams in two of Radcliffe's novels: in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and in *The Italian* (1797). The supernatural aspect of the dreams in *The Romance of the Forest* has been pointed out by Holly Hirst and Robert Miles (112). It was also emphasised by the Minerva Press author Anna Maria Mackenzie in the Preface to her novel *Mysteries Elucidated* (1795) when she wrote about Radcliffe: "Dreams and apparitions favour too much of the superstition which ought never to be encouraged" (xi-xii). *Mysteries Elucidated* is one of the first gothic novels featuring the explained supernatural directly influenced by Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Mackenzie supported her four children by writing gothic novels to the Minerva Press and she imitated Radcliffe in an attempt to increase the sales of her work (Norton). She believed that the "real" supernatural should not be represented in novels, and praises Radcliffe's decision to abandon the prophetic dream in *The Romance of the Forest* in favour of the explained supernatural in *Udolpho*.

In contemporary medicine, it was believed that nervous people were more likely to experience vivid dreams. Rowley writes the following about nightmares: "the most common cause of disturbed sleep amongst the nervous is a quick perceptibility of mind [...] therefore love, hope, fear, suspense, vexation, grief, or even the contemplation of past pleasures or sufferings, will easily disturb sleep, and occasion horrid or frightful dreams" (214, 217-8). The "quick perceptibility of mind" is characteristic of Radcliffe's heroine, Adeline as well. Nagel states that the potential of Radcliffe's protagonists for affective sensitivity is almost supernatural, and this potential is heightened when they are dreaming (2013, 61 and 80). Rowley's medical explanation makes it plausible for Radcliffe's characters to experience nightmares in extraordinary situations. Radcliffe could rely on this medical explanation as the most likely, scientifically accepted theory of how the mind works to introduce the

supernatural. Coleridge shared a view similar to that present in Radcliffe's work in connecting the supernatural with poetry and with dreams. He describes a state of mind in which people think they see ghosts as a specific kind of dream. In this state, images and sounds from one's own mind are blended with the perception of the environment. Apparently the inspiration for *Kubla Khan* (1797) came from such a state of mind (Ford 93–94).

In *The Romance of the Forest*, Adeline experiences four dreams, three of which reveal the fate of her father who was imprisoned and murdered in the abbey. The first one warns her of the danger she faces in the house where her father's murderers wanted to kill her as well:

gloomy unpleasing images flitted before my fancy, and I fell into a sort of waking dream: I thought that I was in a lonely forest with my father [...] while he spoke, drew from his pocket a mirror, which he held before my face; I looked in it and saw, (my blood now thrills as I repeat it) I saw myself wounded, and bleeding profusely. Then I thought myself in the house again; and suddenly heard these words [...] 'Depart this house, destruction hovers here.' (Radcliffe, 41)

The expression “waking dream” was used by Lord Kames to describe the illusion inspired by the reading experience (Panka, Ruttkay 199). Radcliffe's use of the same words strengthens the association between dreams and narrative illusion. The man Adeline believes to be her father is later revealed to be a criminal who was hired to murder her. Her dream tells her in advance that this man wants to harm her and urges her to escape the house. It is not clear who is speaking in the dream – the novel does not analyse it applying Saint Augustine's or Moses Amyraldus's method. It is implied that a supernatural force – Providence – is at work, helping Adeline, but not one specific angel or saint: “Such a combination of circumstances she believed could only be produced by some supernatural power, operating for the retribution of the guilty” (141). Adeline's dream therefore suggests the existence of a supernatural power in Radcliffe's fictional world. Robert J. Mayhew also argues for the presence of Providence in Radcliffe's novels, which ensures that virtue is rewarded, although he connects it to Latitudinarian theology and argues for the absence of the supernatural in the novels, since Latitudinarian theology saw God in nature and the natural laws of the world and was sceptical about the supernatural (Mayhew 294). I believe, however, that Radcliffe relied on Rowley's medical explanation of the dreams experienced by nervous people and used Adeline's dream to invoke the *possibility* of the supernatural. Instead of giving a definite source of the warning, she employed obscurity which is a necessary condition for her gothic aesthetics.

Adeline's other dreams show her the way to the secret chamber of the ruinous abbey where she finds evidence of the murder, a bloody dagger and the manuscript:

she heard a low voice call her, and, looking towards the place whence it came, she perceived by the dim light of a lamp a figure stretched on a bed that lay on the floor. The voice called again, and, approaching the bed, she distinctly saw the features of a man who appeared to be dying. (Radcliffe, 108)

She now thought herself in a large old gallery, and saw at one end of it a chamber door standing a little open and a light within: she went towards it, and perceived the man she had before seen, [...] beckoning her towards him [...] followed him into a suite of very ancient apartments, hung with black, and lighted up as if for a funeral [...] she found herself in the same chamber she remembered to have seen in her former dream: a coffin, covered with a pall, stood at the farther end of the room. (Radcliffe, 109)

The dreams tell Adeline that a man was murdered in the abbey by making her walk through the building and finding a chamber with a dying man in the dream. The sequence of experiences is characterized by Adeline's agency motivated by her curiosity, similarly to her actions when she is awake. The features of her dream bear a striking similarity to Radcliffe's narration of Adeline's experiences when awake, suggesting a close connection between dream and fiction.

The suggestions of Adeline's dream are later confirmed by the contents of the manuscript and the confession of the villain at the end of the novel. The sequence of the events in the novel are partially the consequence of Adeline's curiosity in uncovering the mysteries, making the novel a precursor to detective fiction (cf. Kilgour 4). Diane Long Hoeveler praises Adeline's ability to read her dreams and emphasizes how much it helps her to uncover the truth (104), whereas Hirst identifies Hoeveler's framework as psychoanalytical and points out that approaching the dreams on the basis of 18th-century dream theory can give us more insights into understanding the novel ("The Theology of Radcliffe's Dreams" 93). I find Hirst's approach more congenial and therefore in my analysis I rely on the dreams in the gothic tradition and on Hirst's research .

Radcliffe follows Clara Reeve in giving the dream a revelatory, supernatural aspect. It is because of this aspect of Adeline's dreams that I chose not to employ Freudian dream interpretation in my analysis. Freud claims that for the correct interpretation of the dream, one

must regard one's own mind as a source, yet in her dreams Adeline is given information she was not aware of before. This instance of the supernatural is not explained in the novel, as it was noted by Robert Miles in his scholarly work on Radcliffe (112), while Holly Hirst categorizes the dreams as either angelically natural or supernatural, according to Saalfeld's framework.

In the scenes describing Adeline's dreams and her finding the chamber and the manuscript, Radcliffe employs obscurity, and it is only at the very end of the novel that the reader learns that the victim is Adeline's father. In the dream, it is the murdered man who leads Adeline to the secret chamber. Unlike in the previous dream, here Radcliffe follows Clara Reeve not only in making the ghost able to communicate through dreams, but in relying on the tradition of *Hamlet* as well, in which the ghost of the murdered father reveals the truth to his child. As it was detailed when analysing the manuscript-scene, Adeline's father wants revenge for his death and wants other people's sympathy with his sufferings.

It is instructive to compare the two theatrical adaptations at this point, both of which include Adeline's dreams about the murder, but they focus on different aspects. In James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* (1794), Adeline experiences a bond with her father without knowing who he is, and she finds the chamber and the manuscript on her own, even before her dream. This adaptation focuses on the emotional aspect of the scene and follows Radcliffe's strategy in first presenting the close connection between Adeline and her father and giving the explanation only later. In William Dunlap's *Fontainville Abbey* (1795), the dream explicitly leads Adeline to the chamber, even showing her which part of the abbey she should be heading. Dunlap emphasizes Adeline's active agency in investigating the secret ("I am the instrument in God's high hand / To drag from darkness deeds which gloom the day", 177), and completely excludes the sympathy between Adeline and the victim from the play. In this version, the supernatural is present not only in the dream, but on waking up, Adeline experiences all the gothic stock elements of a ghost-scene: groans and sighs, and the hanging on the wall which conceals a door waving to and fro. The aim behind all these supernatural occurrences is to help Adeline gain knowledge to uncover the secrets.

Helping the dreamer understand obscure circumstances is a key feature of the dream in *The Italian* as well. Here the hero Vivaldi is haunted by a strange figure whom circumstances suggest to be a ghost. Vivaldi always fails to see his face and he suspects him to be the villain Schedoni. Nearing the end of the novel, Vivaldi has the following dream:

The monk, whose face was still shrowded, he thought advanced, till, having come within a few paces of Vivaldi, he paused, and, lifting the awful cowl that had hitherto concealed him, disclosed — not the countenance of Schedoni, but one which Vivaldi did not recollect ever having seen before [...] something of that strange and indescribable air, which we attach to the idea of a supernatural being, prevailed over the features; and the intense and fiery eyes resembled those of an evil spirit, rather than of a human character. He drew a poniard from beneath a fold of his garment, and, as he displayed it, pointed with a stern frown to the spots which discoloured the blade; Vivaldi perceived they were of blood! [...]

A groan awakened him, but what were his feelings, when, on looking up, he perceived the same figure standing before him (Radcliffe, 318)

What makes the dream supernatural is that what Vivaldi perceives in it is followed by the same sequence of events right after he wakes up. He sees the stranger's face first in his dream and then he is able to recognize it when the stranger finally shows his face to him in real life. The stranger also shows him a bloody knife with which a murder was committed – first in his dream, and later in the reality of the novel as well. The monk's face and the bloody dagger are 'absent objects', according to Saalfeld's categorization of dreams, and therefore suggest the supernatural nature of the dream.

Similarly to the dreams in *The Romance of the Forest*, this dream is also revelatory to the dreamer: it shows him details of the mystery that he was not conscious of before (this aspect of the dream excludes Freudian interpretation from my analysis). It is another similarity between the two novels that these details do not provide Adeline, Vivaldi and the reader with a full explanation, they merely serve to increase the suspense and point the way forward. In analysing this dream, Hirst argues for a natural dream with demonic influence. In her interpretation, the devil used truths yet unknown to Vivaldi to cause spiritual harm and to "plunge him into the whirlpool of terror and superstition." Hirst quotes Vivaldi's reaction, which is dread suspending his judgement, to support her interpretation. Consequently, the devil may have confused Vivaldi with half-truths ("The Theology of Radcliffe's Dreams" 98-99), and Radcliffe may have used this confusion of bits of information to increase the suspense surrounding the mystery of the monk.

The source of the dream is even more obscure in *The Italian* than in *The Romance of the Forest*. In *The Romance of the Forest*, it was Adeline's dead father who communicated with her in her dream, and she also received a providential warning of her danger. In *The*

Italian, the person who appears to Vivaldi in his dream is alive, he has no supernatural abilities and is unaware of the nature of Vivaldi's dream. He is a villainous figure who follows his own agenda when he shows Vivaldi the bloody knife, and is not consciously involved in any way in the contents of Vivaldi's dream. Yet in the dream he reminds Vivaldi of an evil spirit, and a supernatural aura surrounds him. This dream does not fit such a well-established belief system as the tradition of the ghost of Hamlet's father or the belief that angels could communicate with people through their dreams. It could be similar to Adeline's first dream in the sense that it warns Vivaldi of the villainous character of the stranger, but the message is much more obscure. What Radcliffe does here is to make uncommon, but human circumstances supernatural to capitalize on the effect.

Conclusion

In the 18th century both natural and supernatural explanations for dreams coexisted. Gothic novels used dreams to include the supernatural in the story, and this is also true of authors who were considered conservative in the use of the supernatural, such as Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe. Dreams gave authors opportunity to provide the reader and characters with clues about the narrative without the need to explain them, and this fit with Radcliffe's usual technique of suggestions and obscurity.

Ann Radcliffe followed Clara Reeve's example in including revelatory dreams in the story and also capitalized on the effect the supernatural dream had. Adeline's dreams in *The Romance of the Forest* are portrayed as having a supernatural quality, as noticed by Holly Hirst and Robert Miles as well. In Radcliffe's time, these dreams were most probably received as supernatural, as it was remarked by Maria Anna Mackenzie in the *Preface* to her novel, and the supernatural nature of the dreams was preserved by the two authors of the dramatic adaptations as well. In the novel, the first dream suggests the presence of Providence and invokes the sublime. The other dreams give an opportunity for Adeline's father to reach out to her daughter, in a similar manner as Lord Lovel does in Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*. Boaden's adaptation focuses on the emotional connection between Adeline and her father, whereas Dunlap's version emphasises Adeline's agency in uncovering the mysteries. In *The Italian*, Vivaldi's dream cannot be analysed on the basis of 18th-century dream theories – Hirst interprets it as an attempt on Satan's part to confuse Vivaldi –, as Radcliffe presented an ordinary person and his actions as supernatural to create the conditions in which she could achieve her aesthetic ends. Hints and suggestions characterize Radcliffe's dreams,

successfully creating the conditions in which the effect of the possibility of the supernatural can be fully exploited.

Dreams were often perceived as analogous to fiction – in Walpole’s novel, the unfolding of the plot goes hand in hand with solving the riddle of a prophetic dream. “Waking dream” was a term used by Lord Kames to describe the illusion inspired by a reading experience. Radcliffe’s use of the same term and reliance on dream scenes suggest a similar connection: the reader immersed in the novel experiences a “waking dream” full of perplexing detail, which can only be explained once the full story is known. This is another instance of her mirroring the scene of reading, that is, reflecting on the process by which her novel is being read, similarly to the manuscript scene in *The Romance of the Forest*. In both cases, the possibility of the supernatural enables Radcliffe to create an aesthetic effect, which distinguishes her world of fiction from ordinary reality. As we shall see, the association between aesthetic effect, creative fiction, poetic genius and the supernatural is even more directly articulated in Radcliffe’s posthumously published works.

6. The Supernatural in Radcliffe's Posthumous Narrative Works: *Salisbury Plains* and *Gaston de Blondville* (1826)

In this chapter, I am going to examine the representation of the supernatural in two works from Radcliffe's posthumous collection: *Salisbury Plains* and *Gaston de Blondville* (1826). These works have received much less critical attention than the novels published in Radcliffe's lifetime, and in the few papers discussing them scholars have emphasized their difference from the body of Radcliffe's works (e.g. Leuner, Bobbitt, Johnson, Watt). As opposed to this view, I am going to argue that in many ways Radcliffe still relied on her earlier ideas and methods in the creation of these two works, especially with regard to the nature of the supernatural presented. However, as I am also going to show, in these later works the focus of the portrayal of the supernatural shifts from suggestions to a more explicit treatment, which was arguably Radcliffe's response to the criticism she received.

The title of the publication in which Radcliffe's posthumous works appeared is worth citing in full: *Gaston de Blondville, or The court of Henry III. keeping festival in Ardenne, a romance, St. Alban's abbey, a metrical tale; with some poetical pieces*. It was published by Henry Colburn in 1826, and included Radcliffe's last novel along with a selection of her unpublished poetry. Similarly to the novels published in Radcliffe's lifetime, we know little of the authorial intentions behind the publication. The literary works were accompanied by an anonymous biography whose author was later identified as Thomas Noon Talfourd, a well-respected dramatist and friend of Charles Dickens. As the biography includes excerpts from Radcliffe's travel journals and describes how she showed her husband in the evening what she had written that day, Talfourd must have been informed by Radcliffe's husband, William. However, I cannot quite agree with Robert Miles who stated that the biography was "carefully structured by William Radcliffe and Thomas Noon Talfourd" (*The Great Enchantress* 28). The biography ends with an unbiased review of Radcliffe's novels and besides highly praising her work, in some places it voices open criticism as well, which could not have come from William: "terrific incidents [...] are not introduced with sufficient earnestness, and lose all claim to belief, by the utter incredibility of the incidents," and "the effort to produce a great theatrical effect is very imperfectly concealed" (123). Talfourd also calls the explained supernatural "an error" (116), and makes no remark on the supernatural present in *Gaston de Blondville* or its discussion in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, which makes it doubtful whether he had read *Gaston* before writing the review. I believe that this shows a marketing

strategy behind the publication, which is characterized by building on Radcliffe's already existing fame and not on the characteristics and merits of the new publication.

As I detailed in a previous chapter, part of the frame narrative was removed from the novel and published earlier in 1826 in the *New Monthly Magazine*, with the title *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, to advertise the upcoming publication. Despite this advertisement and Radcliffe's popularity, the four-volume publication did not receive favourable reviews. Reviewers generally complained that it deviated from the quality of her earlier works (Watt 126). A possible reason for this lack of success might be that the suspense in *Gaston* is less intense than in Radcliffe's other novels, and so it probably failed to engage the readers' attention. What is more, the lengthy discussion *On the Supernatural in Poetry* is a theoretically oriented section, which shows Radcliffe's appreciation and thoughts about various English literary figures, but employs none of her techniques to raise the curiosity of the readers. Her poems exhibit the characteristics that she valued in poetry, but they fail to convey what the readers came to expect of her – to invoke the pleasing dread in the reader – and so they made little impact on the readership of her novels.

Nevertheless, her poems had been appreciated by a different readership. Anna Laetitia Barbauld voiced the opinion that they should be published separately, which happened in 1816, when the poems from her novels were organized into a separate volume (Stabler 187). This collection avoided the mistake of raising readerly expectations without gratifying them with an exciting gothic novel. In contrast, the advertising strategy of *Gaston* built on Radcliffe's well-established fame, but failed to recognise the disparity between the expectations of the reading public and the characteristics of the posthumous publication. In this chapter, I am going to examine two works from the collection. Besides Radcliffe's last novel *Gaston*, I will examine her narrative poem *Salisbury Plains* because it displays Radcliffe's usual employment of the supernatural in a different environment, making some of its features more directly perceptible.

***Salisbury Plains* (1826)**

Gothic scholarship has largely ignored the poems published in the posthumous volumes. While the novel *Gaston* is sometimes mentioned as an exception or as a sign of the change in Radcliffe's late literary production, the long poem *Salisbury Plains* has received very little critical attention: it is included in a collection of Norse Romanticism by the Romantic Circles, Professor Kirstyn Leuner delivered a paper on its historical references, and Sydney Lines submitted a thesis on Norse mythology in 18th-century English literature which includes a

discussion of it. One reason for its critical neglect must be that the poem's most striking features radically differ from what was perceived as the usual Radcliffean gothic: it is written in verse and requires a different kind of attention from its reader. The poem builds on the genre of *topographical poem* which was popular in the 18th century. Poems in this genre usually described a place which also gave the title of the poem and which had some kind of importance from a cultural or geographical point of view. They usually included the history of the place and also reflections on various topics inspired by it (Pálincás 88). Charlotte Smith – whose works are regarded as influential on Radcliffe's productions by scholars such as Robert Miles ("Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis" 97) and Ellen Ledoux – published her topographical poem *Beachy Head* in 1807. *Salisbury Plains* also includes the place in the title, and it details the geographical characteristics of Stonehenge, but focuses on the narrative of its mythical origins. Another possible poetical tradition which could have inspired Radcliffe was narrative poetry which described exotic cultures, such as Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801). In this epic poem, Middle Eastern legends are woven into the story of evil sorcerers, destroyed by the titular hero. In *Salisbury Plains*, Radcliffe narrated the mythical past of Stonehenge, made exotic by the distance in time, and relied on Norse mythology.

Poetry had always been valued by Radcliffe and it was generally seen as superior to prose fiction by her contemporaries. In accordance with Mr. W's views expressed in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, poetic genius is held in high regard in the worlds of Radcliffe's fiction. In *Udolpho*, Emily composes many poems which are included in the novel, along with those composed by her suitor Valancourt, and during their travels they spend much time reading poetry together. In *The Romance of the Forest*, Adeline catches the eye of her future suitor Theodore when she is reciting poetry and Theodore makes a favourable impression on Adeline by appreciating the poem. The poems composed by Radcliffe's characters are her own works, and as we have seen, they were published independently as well in 1816 (Stabler 187). Importantly, her poems often feature the supernatural by invoking a similar atmosphere to what Mr. W values most. The following stanza is from *A Sicilian Romance*, from a poem titled *Evening*, already quoted in the chapter on Mr. W's ideas, which describes the change between the day and the night:

Still through the deep'ning gloom of bow'ry shades
 To Fancy's eye fantastic forms appear;
 Low whisp'ring echoes steal along the glades
 And thrill the ear with wildly-pleasing fear. (Radcliffe, 43)

Here, the twilight creates an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere, in which fancy is identified as the source of the supernatural. *Salisbury Plains* makes this association more explicit. One of the authors who influenced Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith invoked a similar mood in her *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784), for example in *Sonnet XXXII. To Melancholy*. In this poem, the speaker takes on the role of the literary genius and meets the ghost of the poet and dramatist Thomas Otway (Pratt 572). Radcliffe invoked a similarly suggestive twilight atmosphere in many of the poems present in her gothic novels. Her long narrative poem, however, has more complex intentions.

According to Kirstyn Leuner, *Salisbury Plains* was composed between 1802 and 1811. It is the product of Radcliffe's poetic endeavours which had started early in her career, but which – as I have noted in the introduction – lacked the suspense that made her novels popular, and therefore made less impact on her readership. The title of the poem brings to mind Wordsworth's *Salisbury Plain* (1794). Even though Radcliffe probably did not know the poem as it was first published only in 1842, there are some notable similarities between the two works: most importantly, both associate the historical site with the past and the supernatural. In Wordsworth's poem, an "antique castle" which is described as sublime, is a place of supernatural rituals and horror at night. In spite of Wordsworth's later image as a poet who rejects sensationalism, these horrors are more explicit than the supernatural elements in Radcliffe's fiction, as Stonehenge, for him, represents human cruelty in ancient times (Hill 79). Duggett believes that Wordsworth's imagery of horror was a reaction to the horrors of the French Revolution he experienced first-hand, and by comparing past and present horrors, he comes to the conclusion that no progress was made during the Enlightenment (72).

Rather than contemplating such questions of history and philosophy, *Salisbury Plains* tells the mythical origin story of Stonehenge. Radcliffe was famous for choosing foreign places as settings for her novels (Duncan 24), such as France or Italy, so focusing on a British location seemed uncharacteristic of her methods. In fact, her turn to the national past may well have been a reaction to the criticism she had received, according to which she does not represent the foreign countries credibly. Radcliffe's handling of history and local colour could be quite superficial. Kirstyn Leuner quotes Rictor Norton stating that "[h]istory held relatively little importance for Ann Radcliffe. [she] valued primarily the splendour and mystery of an idealized late-medieval transitional period when she could commingle high passions with

exquisite taste” (72). Some of her contemporaries saw this as a serious fault. Robert Miles and E. J. Clery quote a review from the period which ridicules Radcliffe’s mistakes:

The *system of terror* which she has adopted is not the only reproach to which she is liable. Besides the tedious monotony of her descriptions, she affects in the most disgusting manner a knowledge of languages, countries, customs, and objects of art of which she is lamentably ignorant [...] She covers the kingdom of Naples with India figs because *St Pierre* has introduced these tropical plants in his tales, of which the scene is laid in Italy – and she makes a convent of monks a necessary appendage to a monastery of nuns. (Townshend and Wright 11)

Dale Townshend and Angela Wright have both concluded that Radcliffe read the reviews of her works and aimed to answer the criticism in her subsequent publications (7 and 11). I believe that she decided to locate her new novel and poem in Britain’s past to please the reading public and to obtain more favourable reviews. Moreover, she may have consciously followed the trend to turn to the British past, emerging in the early 19th century and manifesting itself in the genre of the national tale and Walter Scott’s poems and historical novels. National tales reflected antiquarian interest and drew attention to the rich culture and history of the nations of the United Kingdom (Ruttkey 274). Early examples of this trend which Radcliffe might have been aware of are *Castle Rackrent* (1800) by Maria Edgeworth and *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale* (1806) by Sydney Owenson (Gottlieb). This conscious attitude of turning to the national past is supported by the fact that Radcliffe supplemented the poem with extensive notes on the mythological background of the poem.

In the early 18th century, George Hickes claimed that ancient Norse and English cultures were related, and that idea became popular in subsequent decades. Later in the century, Paul-Henri Mallet published Old Scandinavian texts, which were translated into English and published by Thomas Percy in a collection titled *Northern Antiquities*. On the title page of this collection it was claimed that the book contained information about “our own Saxon ancestors.” Mallet did not distinguish adequately between Celtic and Germanic peoples. Robert W. Rix believes that this confusion is the reason why Radcliffe included both druids and Norse gods in her poem. She may have adopted the idea that in the past British and Scandinavian people had a common culture and wished to portray it in her poem (Rix).

In *Salisbury Plains*, Radcliffe also builds on contemporary beliefs concerning the history of the Stonehenge. In the 17th century the antiquarian John Aubrey hypothesized that it

was built as a Druid temple, and the archaeologist William Stukeley agreed with him in the 18th century (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Radcliffe's choice to make a Druid the protagonist and also to rely on Norse mythology shows her awareness of the contemporary ideas on England's cultural past.

With regards to the supernatural, Radcliffe dismisses her usual method of relying on obscurity and suggestions. This is why the poem is perceived as radically different from her earlier works and was called an example of the "unexplained supernatural" by Kirstyn Leuner. Instead of creating an atmosphere that could accommodate quasi-supernatural effects, Radcliffe invokes Norse mythology as a framework in which she can present the supernatural. This constitutes the belief system that she deemed necessary for a credible representation of openly supernatural themes. Norse mythology became the focus of antiquarian interest in the second half of the 18th century; Thomas Percy, for example, published *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry Translated from the Islandic Language* in 1763, two years before the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Thomas Gray published numerous poems incorporating Norse mythology, among others *The Fatal Sisters* (1768), which is often regarded as Gothic in its choice of topic and atmosphere (Rix). Radcliffe admired Gray's poems, she started some of her chapters with quotations from him, and Mr. W praises his poem *The Bard* (1757) in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*.

Making the suspense less intense and the supernatural more explicit may have been, once again, Radcliffe's response to the criticism she received. In *The Critical Review* of 1798, Coleridge stated that in *The Italian*, Radcliffe tried to imitate the success of *Udolpho*, but it degenerated into repetition, and keeping up the suspense with "tricks" lost its appeal. Mary Wollstonecraft expressed a similar opinion in the *Analytical Review* in 1797:

Her mode, it is true, of accounting in a natural manner for supernatural appearances, now that the secret has gotten vent, lessens the effect, and the interest of the story is interrupted by the reader's attention to guard against the delusions of the imagination.
(516)

As Radcliffe was sensitive to the criticism of her works, it is possible that these reviews persuaded her to make the supernatural more explicit in her subsequent works. As a consequence, the suspense in *Salisbury Plains* and *Gaston de Blondville* is much less powerful than in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Building on mythology or quasi-mythic stories was not only fashionable, but it was an already existing practice in Radcliffe's poetry. In *Udolpho*, Emily composes a poem with the title *The Sea-Nymph*, which describes the sea-nymphs and their encounter with a ship. It also features the god Neptune and gives an example of his divine power. Another of Emily's poems, *The Glow-Worm*, as we have seen, features the dance of the fairies from the view-point of the glow-worm. In *Salisbury Plains* Radcliffe relied on her earlier method, but instead of presenting it as a composition of a fictional character, it was published as a literary work on its own.

The poem appeared in the 1826 posthumous collection, the title of which clearly recognised it as Radcliffe's own. Yet it begins with identifying itself as an ancient legend, a relic of Britain's past: "Tis set forth in a secret legend old, / Whose leaves none living did e'er unfold. / Quaint is the measure, and hard to follow" (109). It consists of almost a thousand lines of various length, describing the creation of Stonehenge, according to which to stop the evil wizard, Odin enlists the help of the first druid. Odin appears in the poem as a god reigning over the world: "Now Odin had watched from his halls of light / This dark Wizard's fell and increasing might" (114). He was a popular figure in poems building on Norse mythology, especially because, based on a false etymology, he was believed to be a historical chieftain who had been deified. This view is present in the poetry of Robert Southey, Wordsworth and George Richards (Rix), and may have also affected Radcliffe's portrayal of him. In *Salisbury Plains* Odin's power is matched by that of the evil wizard and so Odin turns to the druid for help. In the depiction of the fight between the wizard and the druid, Radcliffe continues her earlier practice in two aspects: she attributes special importance to emotions and she connects the supernatural with poetic creativity and the effect a literary production has on the audience.

In *Salisbury Plains*, some emotions are personified and appear as characters. The poem describes the conflict between the first druid and an evil warlock during which the druid removed all of the warlock's teeth – which contained his power – and buried them in the ground. Stones grew from the teeth, which became Stonehenge. At the final stage of the confrontation, the evil goddess Hela appears and shrieks three times:

At the first shriek, dark spreading mists appear;
And, in the midst, a Spectre, trembling Fear;
A wreath of aspin quivered round her hair.
More grisly pale than the Prophetess she;

More wild and haggard face could never be.
 At the next shriek, distorted Pain, [...]
 Even dark Hela shuddered, as he rose,
 For Hela could not grant him short repose.
 To the third shriek the SPECTRE-BRANCH waved high.
 A dim Shape came more dread than Pain or Fear;
 Fell woe was in her eye, but not one tear!
 A poniard in her breast, but not one sigh! [...]
 She spoke not, wept not, looked not— ‘twas Despair! (Radcliffe, 141-142)

Personification of emotions was common practice in 18th-century poetry, especially in the poems of William Collins. Radcliffe mentions Collins's ode *The Passions* with admiration in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, in which several emotions appear as characters. The poem was even performed with actual actors playing the emotions in Oxford in 1750 (Collins). Finch points out that Collins's practice to use invocations to speak to personified emotions bestows godlike power on them (280). This powerful aspect also enables Radcliffe to make them characters in *Salisbury Plains* with literally godlike powers, as they appear as the children of a goddess Hela. Personified emotions are present in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) as well, and were the subject of literary discussions with reference to the sublime in the 18th century (Knapp 52), including Radcliffe's own treatise *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, which discusses the sublimity of Milton's images (150).

Fear, Pain and Despair appear as living creatures with supernatural power who wish to aid the warlock in the battle. They appear human and non-human at the same time, they look like people, but with uncanny characteristics, for example Fear is "grisly pale" with a "wild and haggard face." This characterization was probably influenced by William Collins's *Ode to Fear* (1746), in which the very words *wild* and *haggard* are used to describe the personified Fear. Their description focuses on their abnormality, and the many exclamations in the passage emphasize how deep an impression they make on the druid and supposedly on the reader. Personification combines an ideal of an emotion with human behaviour and creates a hybrid creature (Knapp 59) who resembles a human being, but with deeply disturbing characteristics, since we never know *whose* emotions they are. In Radcliffe's poem, these creatures appear as antagonists whom the druid must fight.

The nature of the three personified feelings is closely connected to the gothic atmosphere. Most scholars agree that fear is a defining characteristic of the gothic novel

(Wallace and Smith 2009, 1), but pain and despair are also words frequently used to describe the gothic (e.g. Hume). In *Udolpho*, St. Aubert emphasizes the need for controlling emotion:

I have endeavoured to teach you, from your earliest youth, the duty of self-command; I have pointed out to you the great importance of it through life, not only as it preserves us in the various and dangerous temptations that call us from rectitude and virtue, but as it limits the indulgences which are termed virtuous, yet which, extended beyond a certain boundary, are vicious, for their consequence is evil. All excess is vicious. (Radcliffe, 20)

Personified emotions are the embodiments of excess which is termed *vicious* by St. Aubert. Sentimentalism, as well as Radcliffe's heroines valued the feeling of tranquillity, and these three emotions pose a threat to it. St. Aubert continues: indulging in excessive emotions "enervates the mind, and almost incapacitates it for again partaking of those various innocent enjoyments which a benevolent God designed to be the sunshine of our lives." Consequently, in *Udolpho*, excessive emotions pose a threat to the way of living that God wants people to follow. This threat becomes literalized in *Salisbury Plains* when emotions appear as antagonistic characters. Adela Pinch points out that personifying a feeling removes it from the subject who feels it and makes it impersonal (45). By objectifying the subjective feelings, Radcliffe can emphasize their generality while making them strange and forbidding.

In the poem, they pose the final obstacle before the druid's victory, therefore they can be regarded as the enemy with the most capacity to destroy the druid. In the power hierarchy of the poem, they rise above the goddess Hela who consequently abandons the fight and sinks below the earth: "Ye come unwelcomed. Hence, away!" / But Hela saw, with dire dismay, / Her children would no more obey" (142). These personified emotions have power on their own and not even Hela is exempt from their threat. In the excerpt quoted above, Despair was described as more dreadful than the other two, but later Fear is singled out as the one resembling Hela so much that the druid even confuses them:

It surely is the form of Fear!
 It has her wild red look, her spectre-eye, [...]
 Her backward glance, her face of livid hue,
 Her quivering lip, dropping with coldest dew;
 Her breathless pause, as waiting to descry

The nameless, shapeless, harm, that must be nigh!
 'Twas Hela's self — the mother of wan Fear! (Radcliffe, 139)

Although the druid's aim is to defeat the wizard, it is Hela and her children that he has to fight to achieve his goal. By defeating them, the druid ensures his final victory. His success brings to mind the concept of the importance of controlling one's emotions, present in all of Radcliffe's novels, but on a much larger scale. The wizard threatened the land with his evil power, and by defeating him and burying his fangs to build Stonehenge, the druid protected the people living there, as well as their descendants till the present day. While in *Udolpho* only Emily's own fate was threatened by the possibility that she would be unable to control her emotions, in *Salisbury Plains*, the fate of the nation depends on the druid's ability not to give in to fear, pain and despair.

It is emphasized several times throughout the poem that the druid does not have supernatural abilities, and it is deliberately vague how he is capable of performing supernatural actions:

He OWNED THE SPELL OF MINSTRELSY!
 And in the hour of deepest shade,
 When he would seek his forest-glade, [...]
 And called from his harp a certain sound,
 Pale shadows would stand in his presence 'round!
 How this could be known, without a spell,
 I must briefly own I never could tell. [...]
 On that note's swell they to the Hermit hie;
 And heed his questions, wait on his command;
 These were the Spirits white of Odin's band.

But though he oft the Runic rhyme did trace,
 No wizard he!
 No fiend he called, no fiend he served,
 And never had from justice swerved.
 From mystic learning came his power (Radcliffe, 117-119)

When the druid plays on his harp and sings, “pale shadows” are summoned who obey his commands. The power of music to influence people was explored by Dryden in his famous poem *Alexander’s Feast* (1697) and in Jeremy Collier’s essay *Of Musick* (1695), which Buck considers to have been Dryden’s inspiration (577). Dryden’s poem and its representation of the power of music is highly praised by Mr. W in *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, suggesting that Radcliffe knew it well and held it in high regard. The druid relies on the power of his music when he defeats the warlock and the three personified emotions. In this respect, he can be called an ideal poet who shares his powerful literary works with an audience. The connection between the supernatural and creative genius is made explicit by Mr. W in *On the Supernatural in Poetry* and – although not explicitly – it is present throughout Radcliffe’s novels. As we have seen, Radcliffe’s heroines are characterized by poetic creativity and sensibility, and through these traits, an affinity for the supernatural.

As the poem takes place in England’s mythical past, the druid’s characterization was also influenced by the figure of the ancient minstrel described by Thomas Percy in his *Essay on the Ancient Minstrels in England* (1765) and taken up by Walter Scott in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802). In their representation, the ancient minstrels were the producers of an oral culture in the Middle Ages, which was already on the verge of extinction by the late 18th century (McDowell 36 and 50). In Percy’s *Essay* (1765), he refers to the same mythical framework that Radcliffe chose as well: “The origin of their art was attributed to ODIN, or WODEN, the father of their gods, and the professors of it were held in the highest estimation. Their skill was considered as something divine; their persons were deemed sacred.”

The druid’s power is in close connection with reader response. The druid’s song grants him control over his listeners the way a literary work affects the reader. As we have seen, in *The Romance of the Forest*, Adeline was so much affected by the contents of the manuscript that the strength of her sympathy invoked the supernatural. Radcliffe’s works also had a profound effect on her readers, and she herself had been called “the mighty magician” and “the great enchantress.” In *Salisbury Plains*, the battle that the druid fights is not with the wizard himself, but with Hela and her children for control over the wizard’s actions. The druid puts him to sleep with the music of his harp, whereas Hela and her children intend to wake him up. In a sense, the wizard becomes the receiver of the druid’s poetic creation and responds to it by obeying the druid’s command to fall asleep. The druid is able to control the wizard’s actions against his will, which is a supernatural aspect of his poetic abilities.

The power of music is present in Radcliffe’s novels as well. In *The Romance of the Forest*, the villain intends to seduce the heroine Adeline and he uses music to achieve his

goal. Lipski notes that Adeline is able to resist the villain's influence only until she hears the music (125): "Again the music sounded—music such as charmeth sleep—and again she gradually yielded to its sweet magic. A female voice, accompanied by a lute, a hautboy, and a few other instruments, now gradually swelled into a tone so exquisite as raised attention into ecstasy" (157). Like the wizard, Adeline also succumbs to the power of the music, but only for a short time.

In *Salisbury Plains*, Radcliffe relied on Norse mythology, but adapted her earlier methods to make the supernatural more explicit, still attributing special importance to emotions and connecting poetic creativity with the supernatural. The same tendency of relying on old methods, while also renewing them, and making the supernatural more obvious can be observed in her last novel *Gaston de Blondville* as well.

***Gaston de Blondville* (1826)**

Compared to Radcliffe's other novels, *Gaston de Blondville* has been largely ignored by literary criticism. When it is mentioned at all, it is either to contrast it with the earlier novels and emphasize the presence of the unexplained ghost (Punter 55), or to condemn it as an unsuccessful performance. According to Edith Birkhead, "the story of *Gaston de Blondville* is tedious, the characters are shadowy and unreal" (30). Based on my own reading, Radcliffe here experimented with the aesthetic quality of separate scenes and abandoned the overarching mystery which characterized her earlier novels and which ensured the engagement of the reader throughout the entire narrative.

Scholarly literature contrasts Radcliffe's last novel with the earlier ones in several respects. Similarly to *Salisbury Plains*, it is set in Britain, in Kenilworth Castle, and not in France or Italy. Moreover, it takes place at a specific time in the past, and Radcliffe this time paid attention to the particulars of the era. I believe that – just like with *Salisbury Plains* – this change must have been Radcliffe's response to the criticism she received on not representing the foreign countries faithfully, and also her response to the growing popularity of literary works which focused on historical topics. According to Talfourd's biography, Radcliffe wrote the novel during the winter of 1802, after she visited Kenilowrth Castle (Norton 193). In *Gaston*, historical details abound, which were not well received: in Birkhead's opinion, the novel is "grievously overburdened with elaborate descriptions of customs and ceremonies" (30).

Although such precision in the historical elements is unusual for Radcliffe, I believe that her attitude to writing and her reliance on sources is similar to what she employed when

writing her earlier novels as well. Many of her readers believed that she visited the foreign countries that she chose as settings, but in fact she had not left England before the publication of *Udolpho* (1794). She read travel books to familiarise herself with the foreign customs and heavily relied on them when writing her novels. Among her sources are Patrick Brydone's *A Tour through Sicily and Malta* (1773) and Swinburne's *Travels in the two Sicilies* (1783, 1785) for *A Sicilian Romance* (1790). For *Udolpho*, she used Pierre Jean Grosley's *New Observations on Italy and Its Inhabitants* (1769), containing the wax figure resembling a corpse which inspired the mysterious object behind the black veil, and William Coxe's *Travels in Switzerland* (1789), which she used for the landscape of the Alps. Rictor Norton observes that this latter book may also have provided Radcliffe with inspiration for the names. There is a mention in it of a castle belonging to Emperor Rodolph, whose name is suggestive of the word Udolpho. It also tells the story of Agnes, Queen of Hungary who retired to a convent, which may have given Radcliffe the idea of Sister Agnes (72–74). Using sources for her narratives was Radcliffe's usual practice, which she also followed when writing *Gaston*.

For *Gaston*, Radcliffe seems to have used the following sources: David Hume: *History of England* (1754-61),⁸ William Dugdale: *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656), and also Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1783), which features Kenilworth Castle as an important location (Bobbitt 16). In addition to the written sources, in 1802 Radcliffe and her husband visited Kenilworth, and later Radcliffe used her own notes from this visit, especially in the frame narrative (Norton 192). It is questionable whether she was familiar with Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* (1821) – in Talfourd's biography it is stated that she wrote *Gaston* in 1802, but laid it aside to pick it up later, and repeated this process several times during her life. As she died in 1823, two years after the publication of Scott's novel, she may have read it, but it is uncertain whether it influenced the composition of *Gaston*.

Bobbitt notes that the antiquarian interest that characterizes the novel was male domain at the time, with authors such as Walter Scott publishing historical novels. However, Angela Wright and Montague Summers both note the influence of Sophia Lee's historical fiction *The Recess* on Radcliffe's works (Wright 66 and Summers 170), and she used *The Recess* as a source for *Gaston* as well. Bobbitt also remarks that *Gaston de Blondville* cannot be categorized as female gothic, as there is no persecuted heroine in it, instead a male character, the merchant Woodreeve is the one who undergoes the plight that is usually

⁸ Hume's *History* must have influenced Radcliffe's portrayal of Henry III, as Hume describes the king as one who is influenced by those he is surrounded by and his favourites – in *Gaston*, the king is willing to condemn an innocent man to death because he made an accusation against one of his favourites.

reserved for Radcliffe's heroines. Bobbitt is right in that it is unusual that the focus of the novel is not on a suffering heroine, but I argue that this change is only a shift of focus, and not the total abandonment of her earlier methods. There is a female character in *Gaston de Blondville*, Lady Barbara Huntingdon who marries the villain in the course of the novel without knowing his true nature. Her sufferings are depicted, but not in as much length and with as much detail as Woodreeve's, and the villain dies before Lady Barbara could become the victim of his villainy. Moreover, even though the length of Woodreeve's imprisonment is unusual (he becomes a prisoner in the second chapter and is only released at the very end of the novel, therefore stays a prisoner for seven days in a novel which describes the events of eight days), it is not without previous examples. Radcliffe subjected to suffering and imprisonment not only female, but male characters as well. The most striking example is Vivaldi's imprisonment by the Inquisition in *The Italian* which takes up a considerable length of time, but the sufferings of the Earl in the villain's prison in *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* are also elaborated on, and in *Udolpho*, not only Emily is incarcerated in Udolpho, but one of her suitors, Monsieur Du Pont as well.

I argue that instead of relying on the explained-unexplained dichotomy, it is more productive to observe a similar shift of focus in the representation of the supernatural as well. Bobbitt points out that the supernatural scenes are distanced from the reader. In the frame narrative Mr. Willoughton receives an old manuscript written by a monk called Grymbald, and he decides to modernize the spelling and present it to the reader. This is what constitutes the rest of the novel. In the level of distance from the reader, this is similar to a scene in *Udolpho* in which one of the characters, Ludovico reads a story while spending a night in a haunted chamber. The story turns out to be a short ghost story with unexplained supernatural in it, which is usually ignored by literary criticism because it is an entirely different narrative, embedded into the novel. Grymbald's manuscript is also read by a fictional character, Willoughton, but its length makes it the main body of the novel and renders Willoughton's portion only a frame to it. Horace Walpole employed a similar method of distancing during the first publication of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), in the Preface of which he claimed that the novel itself – which heavily features the supernatural – is a found manuscript. Walpole's example shows that by giving a distancing frame to the supernatural narrative, authors could shield themselves from criticism and maintain a respectable public persona. Radcliffe's decision to shift the focus to the embedded narrative and minimize the length of the frame shows that she did not believe, by that point, that this change could harmfully influence her reputation.

In the supernatural scenes of *Gaston de Blondville*, Radcliffe continues to follow her previous aims: to create a gothic atmosphere and to invoke the aesthetics of the sublime through the supernatural. She also builds on an existing belief system and gives the ghost an important purpose: to prevent the execution of the innocent Woodreeve and to punish the villain Gaston de Blondville. This purpose is verbalized by the ghost himself:

Again and nearer, that light appeared, and did not vanish immediately as before; and, before it faded, it assumed a form and countenance; and the King again perceived before him the stranger-knight. [...] The King gasping in breathless terror, said, “What art thou? Wherefore art thou come?” [...]

Give me rest!”

“How may that be?”

“Release an innocent man.”

“How may I know him to be such?” said the King.

“By the sword of justice, that lies before thee. A knight-hospitaller was slain by that sword; it has, this day, slain his slayer, Gaston de Blondville. The Prior of St. Mary’s was his accomplice. Punish the guilty. Release the innocent. Give me rest!” (Radcliffe, 20-21)

Throughout the novel, the ghost of Reginald de Folville has appeared many times and gave subtle hints of Gaston de Blondville’s guilt. Even though the king conducted an official investigation, no proof against the villain was found, so the innocent Woodreeve was found guilty and sentenced to die. In this scene, the ghost appears to Henry III the night before the execution and tells him the truth about his death. Handley quotes from Peter Marshall in her dissertation that ghost stories publicised instances of social injustice. As they expressed divine displeasure, they referred to an authority that overwrote the laws of society, and so the victims of injustice could use them to demand justice independently of social authorities (Handley 25 and Marshall 253). Reginald the Folville’s ghost performs a similar role here: serving divine justice when the king’s justice fails.

The purpose of the ghost is therefore established, and so his appearance can be perceived as credible. In this regard, he is similar to the ghost of Adeline’s father in *The Romance of the Forest* who also had a purpose for returning: to participate in the exchange of feelings through sympathy with Adeline. In *Udolpho*, one of the characters suggests that a ghost may return with the purpose of murder – in *Gaston*, the purpose is to save a life.

The supernatural receives more emphasis in Radcliffe's last novel than in the earlier ones. One way of achieving this is by making the ghost an active character in his own right. The ghost of Reginald de Folville has significantly more agency than the ghost of Adeline's father: he not only appears several times, but is familiar with the actions of the characters and actively influences them. He is constantly working on saving Woodreeve and uncovering the truth. In the other novels, the ghosts were like illustrations of the scene to heighten the effect, they had no such agenda. Their presence influenced the emotional state of the ones who saw them and indirectly made an effect on the reader as well.

It can be argued that there is no uncertainty regarding the existence of Reginald de Folville's ghost in the novel. Birkhead remarked that he is seen by several characters, not only the heroine with exceptional sensibility, consequently he cannot be explained away as a figment of imagination (Birkhead 29). I agree that as the novel progresses, the existence of the ghost becomes more and more obvious for the reader, and in the scene between the king and the ghost, there is no place for doubt that the ghost exists and demands justice. Yet in the novel – in the same way as in *Udolpho* – there are plenty of gestures which add uncertainty to the supernatural scenes. The narrator introduces the ghost with the following words:

We vouch not for the truth of all here told; we only repeat what others have said and their selves credited; but in these days what is there of strange and wonderful, which does not pass as current as the coin of the land; and what will they not tell in hall, or chamber, seated by night over blazing logs, as if their greatest pleasure were to fear?
(Radcliffe, 257)

The narrator takes a dubious position in relating the appearance of the ghost. He refuses to accept responsibility for the contents of his narration. The title of the manuscript which constitutes the novel is *Trew Chronique* which claims to be the authentic report of the events surrounding Woodreeve's trial. Yet when the appearance of the ghost should be described, the narrator refuses to "vouch for the truth of all here told" and dismisses the supernatural as fiction invented by the people to amuse themselves. Following this dismissal, the narrator goes on to relate what could be known of the ghost, contradicting his own earlier scepticism. The narrator here distances himself from the characters of his narrative who are willing to accept the supernatural nature of the events.

The supernatural is also supported by the inclusion of folk beliefs such as cruentation. Cruentation was the belief in the Middle Ages that a corpse starts bleeding in the presence of

the murderer. It was accepted as evidence in the court as well (Engelhaupt), and James I in his *Daemonologie* (1597) expresses the belief that it is the sign of God's judgement (Davies and Matteoni 22). Cruentation appears in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* when the nose of Alfonso's statue starts bleeding. In *Gaston*, the ghost bleeds three drops of blood on Gaston's robe. In the court, when Gaston is given the chain of the murdered Reginald the Folville, the three drops begin to spread and testify to Gaston's guilt. The phenomenon of cruentation serves a similar purpose to the ghost: to expose the villain's guilt and to save the innocent Woodreeve.

It is not only the narrator's attitude that makes the existence of the supernatural uncertain. In the novel, there is an ongoing debate regarding the nature of the inexplicable events, made explicit in the trial against Woodreeve, which provides the basis of the uncertainty that Radcliffe deemed necessary for her aesthetics: "The accusation against Woodreeve ran thus. It charged him with having raised up certain delusions, by means of unlawful arts of witchcraft, or of magic, to the end of persuading the King and his nobles, that the charge of a dreadful crime, imputed by the prisoner to the Baron de Blondeville, was true" (258). According to the members of the king's court, consciously manipulating the supernatural is a possibility which needs to be proven. It is also called *unlawful*, and it constitutes a crime which is punished by death. Both the villains and Reginald the Folville's ghost attempt to influence the outcome of the trial, resulting in a succession of supernatural scenes and even greater confusion than at the time of Woodreeve's arrest.

When E. J. Clery analysed the novel, she noted the lack of obscurity: "The ghost itself is initially discovered in a crowd scene, without suspense, obscurity, doubt or any of the Shakespearian mood-setting accompaniments praised in the introductory dialogue" (111). I disagree: I believe that as there are many ghost-scenes in the novel, not all of them can follow the ghost-scene in *Hamlet* as much as the manuscript-scene in *The Romance of the Forest* does. Yet, Radcliffe relies on the same principles as earlier, e.g. uncertainty, obscurity, and ensuring the gothic atmosphere by choosing the attendant circumstances carefully. The scene Clery refers to is the marriage ceremony of Lady Barbara Huntingdon and Gaston de Blondeville:

There was that day in the chapel, among the crowd, by some unknown hap, a stranger [...] He was seen in different parts, although the press of people was so great, it was difficult for any one to change his station [...]

His eyes had glanced on the tomb of Geoffrey de Clinton, and were now rivetted, where the stranger stood. [...] the emotion of the Baron increased: his looks became deadly pale, and he could no longer repeat the words, that were necessary in the ceremony. [...]

His Highness, inquiring of those about him whence this confusion had arisen, was answered, there was a stranger in the chapel, who seemed to be known only to the Baron, and it was surely the sight of him, which had occasioned this disorder. Then, the King commanded, that the doors should be shut, and search made for this unknown person. (Radcliffe, 12-16)

The attendant circumstances are in stark contrast with what Mr. W described as ideal in portraying the supernatural: instead of midnight it is broad daylight and – as Clery remarked – there is a crowd which seems to exclude the aesthetic experience of the sublime, which is usually a solitary experience. In *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, however, Mr. W talks about Banquo's ghost in Macbeth who also appeared in a crowd. Mr. W expresses that it lacks the “gloomy and sublime kind of terror” and adds that our interest is “of an inferior kind.” I believe that as there are many ghost-scenes in the novel, Radcliffe could not have intended to invoke the sublime in every one of them. Still, there are scenes which fulfil Mr. W's conditions, for example the scene quoted above in which the ghost appears to Henry III. In my opinion, the crowd-scene contributes to the representation of the supernatural in the novel in two significant ways: it increases the suspense by employing obscurity and it establishes its power. The narrator relates the disturbance and the confusion and is careful to refer to the ghost as stranger, as none of the characters knows his true nature as yet, but his presence turns the ceremony into chaos. His first appearance shows that he is capable of disrupting the workings of the court and that he has a spectacular effect on Gaston de Blondville, yet neither his identity nor his intentions are yet known.

Unlike the earlier novels which were narrated from the perspective of the heroine or the hero, the manuscript that Mr. Willoughton reads adopts the style of historiography and maintains a neutral point of view. This neutrality makes it possible to describe the effect on the various characters and to give a general overview of the events. This overview entails a sense of disturbance in the order of things: “although [...] it was difficult for any one to change his station” (12). The narration also focuses on the confusion the ghost causes, and how the king tries to investigate the cause, but without success. The crowd fulfils a similar function to darkness: it hides the ghost and thus produces obscurity. In the sequence of ghost-

scenes, there is a gradual change towards the fantastic sublime, ending with the ghost appearing to the king. In the process, Radcliffe relies on suggestions and obscurity, similarly to her earlier novels.

The power of the supernatural is illustrated by the effect it makes on people. Gaston de Blondville – the Baron in the excerpt – is affected the most: “his looks became deadly pale” and he could not continue the marriage ceremony. In another scene, his state is described as a kind of a trance: “The King spoke sharply to him, to rouse him, as was supposed, from his trance; but without effect, for he stood fixed and stiffened, like to a marble statue, yet with looks bent on the gallery, where the stranger stood” (45). In the final confrontation between Gaston de Blondville and the ghost, the ghost points at him from a distance, and the villain dies.

I believe it is worth making a connection between Mr. W’s ideas on the supernatural aspect of poetry, the druid’s *spell of minstrelsy* in *Salisbury Plains*, and Gaston de Blondville’s death. Literary works affect the reader in a powerful way, which is associated with the supernatural by Radcliffe, as in the manuscript-scene in *The Romance of the Forest*. The druid in *Salisbury Plains* is a poet who has the power to enchant others with his songs, and he puts the evil warlock to sleep. In *Gaston*, the ghost kills the villain by simply presenting himself to him. In the world of Radcliffe’s gothic works, emotions can pose literal threat to one’s health. Gaston de Blondville is emotionally affected by Reginald the Folville’s ghost, and eventually this causes his death. Bobbitt points out that the supernatural retribution present in the novel is carried to its conclusion when the villain dies on seeing the ghost (22). From Bobbitt’s remark, it is worth noting the capacity of the emotions inspired by the appropriate representation of the supernatural to have power over one’s body. This capacity is present in all of Radcliffe’s work, but it is most pronounced in the druid’s act of putting the warlock to sleep and in Gaston’s death.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed the depiction of the supernatural in *Salisbury Plains* and *Gaston de Blondville* (1826), published after Radcliffe’s death. In response to the criticism Radcliffe received, she abandoned the method of the explained supernatural which made *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) successful, and increased the number of the obviously supernatural scenes, but – as I have argued – she still followed her earlier methods in the portrayal of these scenes.

Radcliffe continued to attribute special importance to emotions. In *Salisbury Plains*, the druid had to triumph over the personified emotions of Fear, Pain and Despair, which is

evocative of the concept of controlling one's emotions in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In *Gaston de Blondville*, the villain is attacked by the emotions that the sight of Reginald the Folville's ghost inspire in him and they eventually cause his death.

The connection between poetic genius and the supernatural through the effect of a literary work is also present in both *Salisbury Plains* and *Gaston de Blondville*. In *Salisbury Plains*, the druid is a poet who "owns the spell of minstrelsy", and has the ability to enchant his listeners. In *Gaston* and *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, Mr. W (or Willoughton) shows appreciation of the literary value of a work based on the supernatural scenes.

Reginald the Folville's ghost is more dominant than the ghosts in Radcliffe's earlier novels, he has agency to act and manages to influence the events around him. The scene in which he appears to Henry III follows Mr. W's ideas on achieving the sublime through the supernatural. He behaves in line with the belief system of divine retribution and follows the well-established idea that ghosts were effective in correcting instances of social injustice. The scenes in which he appears bears the mark of Radcliffe's careful arrangement, but as the story progresses, the uncertainty regarding his existence is dissolved, and so the suspense disappears. I believe that *Gaston* signals Radcliffe's conscious aesthetic endeavour, but lacks the capacity to keep up the readers' interest which made her earlier novels so popular.

7. Theatrical Adaptations of Radcliffe's Novels

After examining Radcliffe's novels, in this final chapter I am going to take a look at their stage adaptations, specifically the adaptations of the supernatural scenes examined in the dissertation so far. I believe that the adaptations can give us some insight into how the novels were received by both the adaptors and by the public at the time of their publication, and they can give a more complex picture of her fame in the 1790s. Radcliffe's novels inspired not only countless imitators, but many playwrights as well: Evans lists 10 plays which were adaptations of one of Radcliffe's novels or used it as a source (91). Her works were performed not only in the United Kingdom, but also in France and in America. I chose four adaptations which were performed while Radcliffe was still alive and an active author: James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* (1794, Covent Garden), Henry Siddons's *The Sicilian Romance, Or, The Apparition of the Cliffs, an opera* (1794, Covent Garden), William Dunlap: *Fontainville Abbey* (1795, New York), and James Boaden's *The Italian Monk* (1797, Haymarket). I also added a later adaptation, Mary Russell Mitford's *Gaston de Blondville* (1854), based on Radcliffe's posthumous *Gaston de Blondville, or The court of Henry III. keeping festival in Ardenne, a romance* (1826). In choosing the plays, I endeavoured to find those which were professedly the adaptations of one of Radcliffe's novels, not merely one scene or motif. The exception is *The Sicilian Romance* by Henry Siddons which has several sources, but invokes specifically one of Radcliffe's novels in the title.

My selection was made based on the availability of the texts of the plays, and I also wanted to include adaptations from the height of Radcliffe's fame, the middle of the 1790s, as well as one from the decline of her fame and the adaptation of her posthumous work. Due to the lack of availability, I did not include the two adaptations of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*. At the same time, despite its availability, I decided not to discuss the opera *The Mysteries of the Castle* (Covent Garden, 1795) by Miles Peter Andrews, based on *Udolpho* because on reading it I found only limited resemblance to the novel. I excluded two other adaptations of *Udolpho* partly because of their lack of availability and partly because they were performed after 1800 and therefore did not shape Radcliffe's reception in the 1790s.

By adaptation, I mean the performances of the plays based on Radcliffe's novels, as it was the performances which actively influenced Radcliffe's reputation. Unfortunately, I have limited access to records of the performances – besides some extremely short reviews in the newspapers, my only source is James Boaden's *Life of Kemble* (1825) in which he gave an

account of the performances of his own plays. In the analysis of the supernatural scenes, I mostly relied on the texts of the plays and the stage directions.

On examining the plays, it may be observed that the dramatists treated Radcliffe's novels with great liberty, and used them as sources for their own purposes. James Boaden was the only one who attempted to portray the supernatural in a fashion similar to Radcliffe herself, while the others creatively adapted the scenes to fit their own concepts. Even though the supernatural scenes were changed, all of the dramatists decided to include them in some form to make full use of the supernatural. It is probable that the reason for the playwrights' great liberty is the fact that on the stage it is difficult to introduce the mere possibility of the supernatural, which characterizes Radcliffe's fiction. The theatrical adaptations had to follow different paths, while retaining the basis of the original. Consequently, they were unable to adopt Radcliffe's aesthetics of uncertainty, and had to substitute it with a concept they believed would be favourably received by the audience. The adaptations also suggest that the scenes chosen were perceived as dealing with the supernatural in a way which could be exploited on stage.

I structured the chapter based on the nature of the relevant scenes in Radcliffe's works. The ghost-scenes explained in the novels are usually also explained in the plays, typically with an addition of comic effect. The dramatists kept the prophetic dreams and Radcliffe's unexplained ghost-scenes, but adapted them to suit their own purposes: for example, Dunlap provided an explanation for the ghost in the manuscript-scene. The significance of emotions is generally not as gothically emphasized as in the world of Radcliffe's novels, so I did not include it as a focal point in my analysis.

In the period, London theatres underwent a change, performances became more and more dominated by spectacle. Brighter and more extensive lightning was used to highlight the parts of the stage where the action happened (Donohue "Theatres" 298). The intimate auditorium which characterized 18th-century theatre was replaced by many galleries. The forestage disappeared only in the middle of the 19th century, but both its importance and its size gradually diminished (Baugh 311). Both Drury Lane and Covent Garden were rebuilt during the 1790s, enabling them to accommodate much larger audiences (Drury Lane, with its capacity of 3600, became the largest theatre in Europe) (Foakes 19). Beside their increased size, they also became able to provide sets for grandiose locations such as ancient castles, thus becoming uniquely designed for the performances of gothic drama (Donohue "Introduction" 51).

In the presentation of the supernatural on stage, Shakespeare's influence was enormous in the period. As Shakespeare served as a model for both Radcliffe and 18th-century drama, it is important to establish how profound this effect was. As literacy was more and more widespread, and Shakespeare's plays were printed, one famous edition was published by Samuel Johnson in 1765 which included Johnson's annotations. There were many other editions as well, for example Edmond Malone's in 1780 (Townshend 61). People were thus able to both read the plays and see them performed, albeit in altered form. Shakespeare's works were highly popular in the performances as well; during the so-called Age of Garrick almost the fifth of the performances were Shakespearean dramas (Mydla 76). There is another reason why Shakespeare's works were performed so many times in the century. The Stage Licencing Act in 1737 imposed censorship on the content of theatrical productions and it was easier for managers to rely on Shakespeare and other classics than to perform contemporary dramas which were more liable to invite censure (Mydla 75). Shakespeare idolatry in the century was not restricted to the performances. The Shakespeare Gallery opened in 1789 with paintings featuring various scenes from his works (Mydla 82), and one of these paintings had a key role in the stage adaptation of *Fontainville Forest* as well.

Literary criticism has demonstrated that Radcliffe had a deeply personal literary relationship with Shakespeare; she knew his plays very well and probably saw some of them performed (Mydla 124). Shakespeare was a model of poetic inspiration for her – and he had been a huge influence on the gothic genre in general. Horace Walpole wrote about his attitude towards Shakespeare in several of his letters and in the second Preface of his most well-known work, *The Castle of Otranto*. He defended Shakespeare from Voltaire's criticism, claiming that a natural genius is superior to conformity to rules. He also referred to Shakespeare to legitimize his own work, which he knew would be unusual. By emphasizing that he was copying Shakespeare, he hoped that he would be shielded from the attacks of the critics (Mydla 120-121). Later the use of the supernatural elements was also justified by Shakespeare. As E. J. Clery showed, in his *Essay On Original Genius* (1767), William Duff connected the supernatural in literature to aesthetics, stating that only a genius like Shakespeare could venture "to burst the barriers of a separate state, and disclose the land of Apparitions, Shadows, and Dreams" (141). Others may attempt it, but would not succeed because Shakespeare's talent is unrivalled ("Women's Gothic" 66).

Shakespeare's plays influenced gothic drama as well. According to Jeffrey Cox in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (2003), gothic theatre enjoyed most popularity between 1789 and 1832. He points out that apart from Shakespeare, it was heavily influenced

by two different sources: the gothic novels themselves and the German *Sturm und Drang* movement (125). It was considered a generic hybrid, combining elements of tragedy, comedy, and abundantly employing music and spectacles (128). Spectacles were becoming more and more common throughout the century, with the growing popularity of magic shows and “illegitimate theatre” in general. The Lyceum and the Great Room in Spring Gardens hosted magic-assemblage events regularly, where people got used to being amazed by the effects (During 215). However, nearing the end of the century, sensational shows received considerable negative criticism, as they provided merely bodily enjoyment, instead of elevated pleasure through elevated emotions (Saggini 39). In this respect, Boaden’s *Fontainville Forest* stands as an exception because the performance aimed to reconstruct Radcliffe’s aesthetic goals on stage.

Early gothic dramas include *Douglas* by John Home (Edinburgh and Covent Garden, 1756) which deals with a mystery in the past influencing the present (Evans 19-20) and the theatrical adaptation of Leland’s *Longsword* by Hall Hartson, titled *The Countess of Salisbury* (Dublin, 1765), which was often performed in the next 30 years (Evans 27-28). Cox regards Horace Walpole’s *The Mysterious Mother* (1768) as the first gothic drama, even though it was never performed. As it dealt with the topic of incest, Walpole considered it too horrifying to appear on stage (Mydla 120). Instead, he circulated it only privately, and thus it did not reach such a large audience as *Otranto* (Cox 126). In the theatrical adaptation of *Otranto* by Robert Jephson, titled *Count of Narbonne* (Covent Garden, 1781), the supernatural extremities of *Otranto* were curbed. The giant armour of Alfonso, which mysteriously assembles itself, was changed to a scene with the explained supernatural: Theodore appears in an armour and his resemblance to his ancestor confuses the villain.

The adaptation of *Otranto* was not the only gothic drama which was more conservative than the novels. As Thorp pointed out, before the 1790s, playwrights were cautious in the employment of the supernatural on stage, and the few attempts such as *Vimonda* (Haymarket, 1787) by Andrew MacDonal were not well received by the audience. Rather, the stage ghost was used as a source of humour, exemplified by the *Haunted Tower* (Drury Lane, 1789) by James Cobb. In Cobb’s play, the protagonists make use of the villain’s credulity to triumph over him and the scene with the explained ghost is put on stage with burlesque humour (Thorp 480). The ghost of Adeline’s father in James Boaden’s adaptation *Fontainville Forest* (Covent Garden, 1794) was the first non-comical ghost which was put on stage with success. Radcliffe’s other ghosts appeared on stage following a number of different approaches. One of the possible reasons for the restraint in the portrayal of the supernatural is

the difference between the written text and the theatrical medium. Radcliffe was most successful in presenting the possibility of the supernatural, but in the theatre the choice has to be made whether to make the ghost appear on stage or not. The safest option which promised immediate success was to present the supernatural with humour, which is what happens in *The Sicilian Romance* and in *The Italian Monk*.

The explained supernatural in *The Sicilian Romance* and in *The Italian Monk*

Besides *Udolpho*, two of Radcliffe's novels feature the explained supernatural in their plots, both of which were sources for dramatic performances during the 1790s. *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) served as an inspiration for Henry Siddons when he wrote *The Sicilian Romance: or, The Apparition of the Cliffs, an opera* (1794, Covent Garden). Siddons was young, 20 years old when he adapted Radcliffe's novel, but his play shows his savoir-faire in the world of the theatre. *The Italian* was dramatized by James Boaden as *The Italian Monk* (1797, Haymarket). At the time of the adaptation, Boaden had been working with the Covent Garden theatre for a few years, and had already adapted Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) successfully. He was requested to make the adaptation by the theatre.

Siddons did not follow strictly Radcliffe's novel, instead he relied on many gothic works to put together his play. Two months before the premiere, it was submitted to the censor under the title *The Castle of Otranto*. The title was probably changed because Siddons believed that Radcliffe's fame could bring more people to the theatre than Walpole's (Evans 103-104). Beside the title, the story of the wife of the villain (which includes the explained supernatural) and the name of her daughter were definitely borrowed from Radcliffe's novel.

On a few occasions *The Sicilian Romance* and Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* were sequentially performed on the same night. However, the handling of the supernatural is in stark opposition in the two adaptations: *Fontainville Forest* features a real ghost in a sublime setting, whereas Siddons focuses on the comical aspect of the explained supernatural (Wolfram 58). Besides the haunting of the villain's supposedly deceased wife, the play abounds in comical scenes which are based on the mistaken perception of the supernatural. Literary critics quote Gerbin's scene the most often (Thorp 483 and Wolfram 59). Gerbin, the porter of the castle decides to show his indifference towards the ghost by walking around at night, and runs off the stage frightened when he sees not even the supposed ghost, but the villain entering the tower, thus ending the first act.

Another scene bears a resemblance to one in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* when a supernatural intervention saves the persecuted gothic heroine from the villain, only in

Siddons's play it is not a supernatural creature, but a man who betrays himself with his first word:

FERRAND, seeing him

Speak, horrid spectre, if from darkest hell,
Rous'd by my crimes, you come to snatch me hence—
Or if an angel—

MARTIN, bowing

No, Sir – no angel – I'm a poor *devil*.

FERRAND, recovering

Why, what art – Hell and fury! Leave me, wretch!

MARTIN

Aye, and very glad to get off so well, I assure you. (Siddons, 38)

The scene does not attempt to inspire terror and the sublime in the audience, instead it mocks the conventions of the gothic, as well as the ghost-scene in *Hamlet* which served as a model for many ghost-scenes in gothic works. Similarly to Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, it presents a character behaving according to the rules of the gothic where spectres may haunt the guilty, then confronts it with the everyday world to create a comical effect. This comical aspect of the explained supernatural is present in the adaptation of Radcliffe's other novel, *The Italian Monk* as well. Radcliffe's *The Italian* was adapted to stage and performed at Haymarket (with Charles Kemble playing the hero Vivaldi) the year after the novel was published. The adaptation was made by James Boaden who had already written *Fontainville Forest* based on Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest*. In his first adaptation, Boaden aimed to recreate the same effect on stage that Radcliffe achieved through her books. In the process of the adaptation of *The Italian*, he relied on the same method: he condensed and simplified the plotline of the many-volume-long novel, while keeping the most powerful scenes and having them performed for the maximum effect. The title of the play brings to mind not only Radcliffe's *The Italian*, but Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) as well, probably to capitalize on the popularity of Lewis's novel, even though the play is the adaptation of only Radcliffe's.

The Italian features the explained supernatural with long drawn-out suspense and final explanation in the character of the monk Nicola di Zampari. Zampari is a complex figure who shifts his allegiances during the course of the novel, deciding finally to aid the hero Vivaldi and supply him with an explanation to the mysteries he helped create. Boaden drastically simplified his figure and decided to leave out the final confrontation between him and the villain: a powerful scene displaying the richness of the characters, which is unusual in a gothic novel. In the play, he has only three appearances: the first two scenes heavily feature the supernatural, while his final appearance supplies the explanation to his first haunting and contributes to the denouement of the play. Boaden imitated Radcliffe's usual technique of subordinating character to the effect a scene can have on the audience. He also followed Radcliffe in providing an explanation for the first supernatural event and leaving Vivaldi's dream unexplained.

The supernatural scene which is later explained takes place early in the first act. Unfortunately, in his book *Life of Kemble* in which he supplies the reader with much information on the theatres of the period, Boaden does not elaborate on its rehearsal much (whereas he does on *Fontainville Forest*, which was a huge asset for me in writing this chapter). He based the scene on the one in the novel, but considerably shortened and simplified it. It features Vivaldi's encounter with Ansaldo (Zampari in the novel) in a gothic setting: at night in the ruins of a fort. Ansaldo makes an appearance, and speaks a few words, but the emphasis is on Vivaldi who is unsuccessful in trying to investigate the mystery and his servant Paullo (in the novel Paulo) who provides comic relief with his exaggerated fear of the supernatural. As no descriptions are available considering the setting and costumes, I can only make assumptions based on the text of the play. As Ansaldo was a monk, the actor was probably dressed in a religious habit, with a cowl on his head, hiding the greater part of his face. The acting itself probably focused on conveying emotions – Saggini notes that in the acting manuals of the period, wide stance and grand gestures were recommended. At the same time, frozen poses showing an individual emotion alternated with dynamic scenes (96), and this characteristic may be observed in the scene of Vivaldi and Paullo encountering Ansaldo.

The appearance of the supposed ghost is extremely brief, and it echoes the ghost-scene in *Hamlet*. When Ansaldo appears, he immediately becomes the focus of attention, both for Vivaldi and Paullo, suggesting that in this ghost-scene Boaden intended to repeat his previous success with *Fontainville Forest*. Following Radcliffe's conditions of uncertainty and suspense, he speaks only very little before disappearing, but his words are powerful: "She is gone – for ever from thee" and "Fate speaks by death!" Vivaldi brings to mind Hamlet when

he calls on Ansaldo to give him an explanation: “Stay I beseech thee, whether of good or evil. By what strange pow’r dost thou know all my steps?” (9) (Hamlet says in Act 1, Scene 4: “O, answer me? / Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell / Why thy canoniz’d bones, hearsed in death, / Have burst their cerements”). Unlike *Hamlet*, instead of the explanation in the form of the ghost’s monologue or the manuscript read aloud, Ansaldo disappears, ending the meeting and the fearful atmosphere abruptly.

In the novel it is important that during his many encounters with Zampari, which are all narrated from Vivaldi’s perspective, he can never see his face, only after his dream. In the play, Vivaldi’s and the audience’s perspective are not the same, the audience rather sees both Vivaldi and his encounter with Ansaldo. Boaden’s solution was to have the monk briefly appear on stage, then disappear, with Vivaldi chasing him. With Vivaldi off stage, Ansaldo appears again to meet Paullo, with the following stage direction: “The monk comes behind him, and then, advancing, glares upon him in a menacing manner, and exit [sic!] at the side scene” (10).

When Paullo describes this encounter to Vivaldi, he puts special emphasis on the supernatural features of Ansaldo:

It was like a monk – that is, it had a cowl on
– a little open. His face seemed the spectre of a
long fast – He glared upon me with eyes flaming
in sockets a foot deep in his head, and the motion
of his arm, the very wind of it laid me prostrate
on the ground. (Boaden, 11-12)

The exaggerations in Paullo’s description destroy the sublime potential of the scene. Paullo is an unreliable narrator of the events, he perceived everything as supernatural – after the departure of Ansaldo, he even mistook the arriving Vivaldi for a ghost –, which has a comical effect in the play. His exaggeration has an opposite effect: it strengthens the audience’s perception that it was not a ghost, but an ordinary man, which is later confirmed in the play. Boaden favoured the comical effect here, but in *Fontainville Forest* and in Vivaldi’s dream he chose a different approach.

Prophetic Dreams in *Fontainville Forest*, in *Fontainville Abbey* and in *The Italian Monk*

In *The Romance of the Forest*, Adeline experiences four dreams, the first warning her of danger, the other three acquainting her with the murder which had been committed in the abbey. In both of the two adaptations that I examine – James Boaden’s *Fontainville Forest* (Covent Garden, 1794) and William Dunlap’s *Fontainville Abbey* (1795, New York) – the first dream was left out and the other three were condensed into one scene in which Adeline shares them with Madame La Motte. Boaden’s *Fontainville Forest* was performed the same year *Udolpho* was published, during the years Radcliffe’s fame peaked. Boaden was meticulous in this adaptation which is recognisable in the dreams as well. Dunlap’s play was performed one year later in New York, and this distance is reflected in the portrayal of the dreams as well.

Boaden followed the novel more faithfully than Dunlap concerning the contents of the dream, using almost the same words as Radcliffe, putting them into iambic pentameter:

Adeline
 Methought, in a wretched old apartment,
 A dying Cavalier, weltering in blood,
 Lay stretch’d upon the floor – By name he called me,
 A deadly paleness spread o’er all his features;
 Yet look’d he most benign, with mingled love,
 And majesty. (Boaden, 28)

Adeline describes in detail her impression of the dying man, and her speech indicates that she feels sympathy for his sufferings. The man initiates a connection with Adeline specifically – he calls her name – to which she responds, but she wakes up before learning anything specific from him. Boaden strongly hints at the family relationship between Adeline and the man, but follows Radcliffe in keeping the audience in suspense at this point.

The scene takes place right after Adeline finds the manuscript and presents her speaking about her dream retrospectively. The change in the sequence of events loosens the connection between the dream and the manuscript, in opposition to the novel in which it is the dreams which lead Adeline to the chamber where she finds the manuscript. By introducing the dream after finding the manuscript, Boaden strengthens the emphasis on the content of the dream and the emotional connection between Adeline and her dead father. As the dream

precedes the manuscript-scene which features a real ghost, the dream suggests the ghost's existence and his active agency in making contact with Adeline, similarly to the novel.

Boaden imitates Radcliffe by having the characters fail to understand the dreams, and so leaving them open to interpretation by the audience. Similarly to the novel, Adeline's fear wakes her up before she could learn more: "Horror's hand / Grasp'd me so strongly, that I sudden wak'd." Even though she turns to Madame Lamotte (in the novel *La Motte*) for a possible explanation for the dreams, she encourages her not to search for it: "I would not have you yield to such illusions [...] Think no more of them" (29). With no characters commenting on the nature of the dreams, the audience can only make assumptions about their content and their effect on Adeline, both of which suggest that the ghost is trying to communicate with the heroine.

Dunlap approached the question of adaptation differently from Boaden. He rather relied on Radcliffe's novel as a source of inspiration, and did not aim to keep as much of the events and the atmosphere as possible. He simplified the plot even more than Boaden, leaving out for example both of Adeline's suitors, and chose to focus only on one aspect – *La Motte's* ethical dilemma –, presenting it with plenty of detail. As the past murder is closely connected to this aspect, it is also revealed, and in the process of its uncovering he followed a more coherent sequence of events than Boaden.

Similarly to *Fontainville Forest*, the dream is told by Adeline to Madame La Motte, but it is much shorter, and it is included in a longer narrative which concludes in the finding of the secret chamber with the skeleton, the murder weapon and the manuscript. The dream itself is put into context with explicitly identifying where its content takes place, which is Dunlap's addition, as it is not there either in Radcliffe's novel or in Boaden's adaptation:

Adeline
 Methought the eastern tow'r op'd wide to view,
 And to my eyes disclos'd a dismal room, [...]
 There, on the pavement stretch'd, in death's lose pangs,
 A gallant cavalier lay, piteous, groaning. (Dunlap, 178)

In this adaptation, Adeline does not elaborate on the scene she saw in her dream. Instead of the presentation of Adeline's sympathy and her emotional connection with her father, she merely registers the existence of the dying man. Compared to Radcliffe's and Boaden's

version, the man's role in the dream is negligible. Instead, after waking up, supernatural phenomena encourage her to find the secret chamber:

Adeline

Oft thought I heard my name in solemn whispers
 Murmur'd, with mingling groans and lengthen'd sighs.
 With eye fix'd whence I heard the sounds, I saw
 The tatter'd hangings waving to and fro. [...]
 At last I enter'd in the vaulted room,
 Such as my dream disclos'd. (Dunlap, 179)

Adeline encounters all the stock elements of a haunted house: sounds and moving objects, and all serve to lead her to the place where she can find evidence of the murder. This open portrayal of the supernatural is uncharacteristic of Radcliffe, and reflects Dunlap's own shaping of the source material. Yet the suggestion of it is present in the novel as well: "such a combination of circumstances she believed could only be produced by some supernatural power, operating for the retribution of the guilty" (141). In the novel, Radcliffe does not pursue this idea, she only leaves it as a possibility. Dunlap's Adeline articulates her role in uncovering the secret, acknowledging the supernatural help she received and attributing it to God: "I am the instrument in God's high hand / To drag from darkness deeds which gloom the day" (177). According to Adeline's interpretation, God sent her the supernatural events, which included the dream, because he wanted her to serve justice by uncovering the past murder. This concept is in stark opposition with Radcliffe aesthetics of uncertainty.

In *The Italian Monk*, Boaden left out many elements to condense the novel into a play, but he decided to include Vivaldi's dream. In the novel, this dream is important because it adumbrates the scene that follows it: the mysterious monk showing Vivaldi his face and giving him a bloody dagger as the evidence of a murder. Also, the scene includes a long interrogation on Vivaldi's part as he tries to understand the monk's motivation and is reluctant to bring the murder weapon to the Inquisition without knowing whether a murder had really been committed or not. Similarly to *Fontainville Forest*, Boaden simplified the plot and kept the scenes which could be effective on stage. Consequently, he kept the dream, which was supernatural in nature, but he significantly shortened the conversation between Vivaldi and the monk, thus obscuring the logic of the supernatural behind the dream:

Vivaldi

Methought I saw the monk of dark Paluzzi,
 His cowl uplifted, frown upon my misery;
 His right arm bare, and in his grasp a dagger.
 He pointed to the blade embath'd in blood,
 And, in a voice that thrill'd my very heart,
 Call'd me by name, and bade me to attend him.

(The Monk ascends behind the Couch in the Attire described)

Monk

Vivaldi, mark me. (Boaden, 58-59)

The contents of Vivaldi's dream follow the novel: it presents the monk as a supernatural being who wants to communicate with him and shows him the bloody dagger. When Vivaldi narrates his dream, the monk appears at the appropriate moment, as if continuing the dream.

In the play, their conversation is short, and in it the monk instructs Vivaldi on what to tell the Inquisition. Vivaldi's enquiries about the monk's nature and his motivation, together with his realization that the face is the same as in the dream, were entirely left out. The dagger is also missing from the conversation, thus only appearing in Vivaldi's dream. It is clear that Boaden left out the parts in which Radcliffe actively presents and questions the supernatural, engaging the reader in the debate over its existence. In the adaptation, only those parts remained which could be turned into a spectacle on stage, such as the contents of the dream and its continuation in the appearance of the monk. As the monk is later revealed to be an ordinary man, his part in this scene remains a question which is not resolved later. In the process of adaptation, Boaden chose not to provide a context for the dream, falling short of Radcliffe's criterion of incorporating the supernatural into an existing belief system, and abandoning the aesthetics he employed in *Fontainville Forest*, in favour of spectacle. In *Life of Kemble*, Boaden makes no mention of the reception of the dream scene, but he states that the applause at the end of the performance lasted for some minutes, suggesting that the play as a whole was a success (202).

Ghost-scenes in *Fontainville Forest*, *Fontainville Abbey*, *The Italian Monk* and *Gaston de Blondeville*

As I showed in the chapter on emotions, in *The Romance of the Forest* her father's ghost appears in response to Adeline's sympathy. In *Life of Kemble*, Boaden writes about various aspects of *Fontainville Forest* and the rehearsal process. Unfortunately, no such description of the rehearsals is available for the other plays. Boaden had great admiration for Radcliffe's works, and when he wrote *Fontainville Forest*, he tried to have the same effect on stage as what he experienced during reading *The Romance of the Forest*. He calls this effect "impressing the mind with terrors" (97). He wanted to create a ghost-scene which inspires sublime awe and he knew that he had to plan carefully because others had failed in successfully portraying such a ghost. This process of deliberate organisation with the effect of the outcome in mind is lacking in the dream-scene of *The Italian Monk*.

Boaden explains that he used as a model for the ghost Fuseli's *Hamlet* paintings, which were exhibited at the Shakespeare Gallery. He believed that these paintings also have the wished effect on the viewer, so he noted the different ways this effect is achieved. The first thing he mentions is that there are not many positive indications of substance in the ghost. He also points out the importance of colour: the silvery tone of the moonlight also contributes to the desired effect. And finally, the figure of the ghost is elevated above the other people by his posture, he is taking a gigantic step and pointing with dignity and command (98-99).

In his book, Boaden gives an account of one of the rehearsals, held in the evening, so that the ghost-scene would be more authentic. The company agreed that the ghost should be visible through a bluish-grey gauze "so as to remove the too corporeal effect of a 'live actor,' and convert the moving substance into a gliding essence" (117). When the actress playing the heroine gave the cue, the ghost appeared, but Boaden was not satisfied with the effect. The actor chosen for the role of the ghost, Thompson was short and thick and was not capable of the gigantic step and commanding presence which dominated Fuseli's paintings. He was wearing the traditional stage armour with a grey veil over it, and it looked clumsy (118).

Another actor, Follet was chosen because he was taller and had a more imposing figure. Unfortunately, he was a well-known comic actor, most famous for his role of a clown eating carrots in pantomimes. They agreed that if he spoke, the audience would recognise his voice (118), so the words of the ghost would be spoken by Thompson in a hollow voice. Follet did not put on the stage armour, but was wearing some kind of blue-grey fabric, made

in the shape of an armour. There was a blue-grey gauze spread before the scene and Follet was faintly visible behind it (119).

The company's focus on these various details aimed to intensify the experience of the audience. In his lectures in 1808, Coleridge discussed illusion on stage. He pointed out its duality: on the one hand, stage scenery aims to deceive the mind with the illusion of reality, on the other hand it gives pleasure through its artistic nature and thus it enhances the consciousness of its artistry in the mind of the viewer (Foakes 26). During the rehearsals, a similar duality was present in the planning – the imitation of Fuseli's painting and the deliberation over the costumes are indications of an intention of artistry present in staging the ghost-scene, meanwhile the aim was to draw the audience into the experience as much as possible.

Both in the novel and in the drama, the heroine Adeline finds a secret chamber where his father was murdered and reads the manuscript written by him in his last days. This is the time when the ghost appears. As I explained in the chapter on emotions, in the novel the emphasis is on the sympathy between Adeline and the murdered man. She learns much later that it was her own father, so the manuscript has personal relevance to her. As I detailed in my analysis of the manuscript-scene, the focus is on creating an aesthetic effect, so there was no need to reveal the ghost's identity at this point in the novel. We do not learn much about him, only that he suffered, he says one word, sighs and is only visible for a few seconds. By comparison, Boaden's other source for the scene, the ghost in *Hamlet* appears at the very beginning of the play, has his own monologue detailing his murder and wants revenge. The ghost in *Fontainville Forest* relies on both Radcliffe's novel and the Shakespearean tradition. The ghost in the play is more prominent than in the novel, he is visible for some time and speaks a little bit more, but not nearly as much as the ghost in *Hamlet*. He speaks three times, each time only a few words, each time reacting to what Adeline is saying.

In *Fontainville Forest*, Adeline reading out the manuscript substitutes the ghost's monologue. Whereas in the novel it contained nothing specific concerning the man's identity, in the adaptation it starts with the man introducing himself. It continues with naming his murderer who is his own brother, making the allusion to *Hamlet* even more pronounced. Like in *Hamlet*, the ghost wants revenge, and the manuscript starts with the words "The wretched Philip, Marquis of Montalt / Bequeaths his sorrows to avenging time" (38). Moreover, his revelation has further consequences for Adeline's situation: signalling her danger in the villain's abbey, as Adeline recognises it on the stage, when the manuscript identifies the

murderer as the author's brother: "O my brother, I had never wrong'd you," Adeline reacts with "His brother! What, yon Marquis?" (39).

In the novel, there is a gradually growing tension in this scene, as Adeline reads the manuscript which culminates in her seeing the apparition and swooning. In the adaptation, the tension is still there, but it is connected to the unfolding of the past murder. The ghost speaks three times to confirm what the manuscript says and by calling Adeline by her name the second time, he also makes a connection between them. As the manuscript was written by Adeline's father while he was alive, it does not mention the actual murder, but the ghost completes the narrative with the words "Perished here" (40). The scene – and also the third act – ends with the ghost finishing the story, confirming that he really died in that room. Lynch stated that in *Udolpho*, the act of reading is regarded as a source of supernatural effects because the reader becomes so engrossed in the text that its content assumes a sense of reality (30). In the adaptation of the manuscript-scene, the reading of the manuscript ends with the ghost appearing, making Lynch's observation the reality of the play.

As for the reception of the play, it was more successful than the other attempts at a terror-inspiring modern ghost before. Boaden described the reaction of the audience during the manuscript-scene the following way:

the whisper of the house, as he was about to enter, – the breathless silence, while he floated along like a shadow, – proved to me, that I had achieved the great desideratum; and the often-renewed plaudits, when the curtain fell, told me that the audience had enjoyed "that sacred terror, that severe delight" for which alone it is excusable to overpass the ordinary limits of nature. (Boaden, "Life of Kemble" 119)

There were negative reviews as well; one of them claimed that the ghost-scene was contemptible, but Boaden was satisfied with the profits he earned with the play. It was performed several times during 1794 from March to October and once again in 1796 (Saggini 81).

In William Dunlap's *Fontainville Abbey*, the manuscript-scene follows directly Adeline's narration of her dream. Dunlap kept the gothic atmosphere of the scene: Adeline comments on the lateness of the hour and the heavy storm before she starts reading. Similarly to Boaden's solution, Adeline reads the manuscript aloud for the audience, with a voice outside answering her. Yet as opposed to Radcliffe and Boaden, Dunlap decided to introduce the explained supernatural in the scene: right after Adeline finishes the manuscript, Peter the

servant appears and admits that it was he who answered Adeline. The explanation is not as comical as in *The Sicilian Romance* or in *The Italian Monk*, as Peter proceeds to warn Adeline of a danger, and gives an alternative, more-or-less plausible explanation for his words: he wanted to draw her attention to him and wanted to warn her of the villainous nature of the marquis.

The manuscript-scene itself is similar to Boaden's adaptation: the manuscript from the novel constitutes the basis, but the emphasis is shifted from the representation of the man's suffering towards the details of his demise and the necessity of avenging his death. Similarly to *Fontainville Forest*, there is a growing tension in the scene, as Adeline proceeds with the manuscript, and Peter's voice supports this effect. Peter first says "Aye, that he is," referring to the Marquis as a villain, then "Here," and finally "Adeline" twice. He starts from a general reference to an outside circumstance and finishes with Adeline herself, creating an effect as if the scene itself had a special importance for Adeline. Furthermore, after Peter's first two remarks, Adeline convinces herself that she mistook the sounds of the storm for a voice, and only when she hears her own name does she realize that somebody is reacting to her reading.

Up until the point where Peter appears, the scenes seem a direct continuation of the supernatural phenomena which started with the dream, and nearing the ending of the manuscript, Adeline articulates her resolution to uncover the mystery:

Adeline

And is there none, Heav'n instrument of justice,
To bring such deeds to light, unmask the wretch,
And save the future victims of his guilt?

Voice without

Adeline.

Adeline

Ha! I am call'd upon to do it. [...]
I obey the will of Heav'n. (Dunlap, 181).

Right after Adeline's declaration Peter appears and reveals that it was he – and not a ghost – who answered her. This would suggest that Adeline's conviction of the supernatural guidance

is disproven, yet the dream and the following occurrences are not explained, and the play ends with Adeline reinforcing her belief in the supernatural:

Adeline

Thus the connecting hand of Fate, through ills, [...]
Hath led the orphan of a murder'd father
To stop in full career audacious guilt (Dunlap, 209)

Adeline refers to the concept of active Providence, as well as to the ghosts seeking justice, present in the novel as well, but much less emphasized. Dunlap explained the ghost scene, but incorporated the supernatural into the play through the dream and additional gothic stock events.

As for the portrayal of Spalatro's ghost in *The Italian Monk*, it was much less carefully arranged than the ghost of Adeline's father in both adaptations. The ghost himself does not appear on stage, Spalatro only speaks about his encounter with the apparition which happened off stage, and without any actual proof, it is suggested that it was only Spalatro's imagination. There is a strong indication of the possibility of guilty conscience conjuring up hallucinations which can be mistaken for ghosts, the same concept that Radcliffe capitalizes on as discussed in the chapter on emotions. Schedoni articulates this possibility, condemning it as a weakness:

Schedoni

There are, who, wandering at this lonely hour,
With murder for the herald of their way,
Would dream that every gust of fretful wind
Rebuk'd their purpose. (Boaden, 47)

Schedoni expresses his conviction that it is only one's imagination which is affected, echoing the same viewpoint as his character does in Radcliffe's novel. At the same time, his monologue invokes the picture of a man who encounters supernatural phenomena, and his choice of words ("lonely hour," "every gust of fretful wind") effectively creates a gothic atmosphere. In a few lines, he represents both sides of the argument, while being faithful to his character in the novel. As he continues, he acknowledges that even he is affected, thus making his standpoint more obscure: "Ev'n I, whose reason mocks such childish thoughts, / Feel unaccustom'd dread palsy my progress" (47).

Boaden changed Spalatro's personality by giving him a family of a wife and a daughter who are ignorant of Spalatro's murders. They unconsciously affect Spalatro's conscience, making him reluctant to kill Ellena on Schedoni's orders ("She looks so innocently; and moreover, brother stabbers, I have a child myself", 46). Soon after he exits the stage to commit the murder, he comes back, claiming that he saw the ghost of one of the previous victims of the group of assassins that he belongs to. Unlike in *Fontainville Forest*, the ghost did not appear on stage, probably because in that play, the appearance of the ghost was the spectacle that ended the third act. In *The Italian Monk*, Boaden retained his habit of ending the acts in a powerful way, but the spectacle of the ghost was substituted with the revelation that Ellena is Schedoni's daughter. Spalatro's ghost merely serves as an element of the atmosphere in which the revelation takes place.

Radcliffe's posthumous novel, *Gaston de Blondville, or The court of Henry III. keeping festival in Ardenne, a romance* (1826) was dramatised by Mary Russell Mitford under the title *Gaston de Blondville*, and published in *The Dramatic Works of Mary Russel Mitford* in 1854. It was clearly intended for performance, yet it was not performed at the theatre. In the novel, the ghost of Reginald de Folville makes multiple appearances. Radcliffe's posthumous novel was criticized for its abundance of historical detail which failed to engage the readers' attention. In the adaptation, Mitford did not aim to portray this historic interest on stage, she instead condensed all the action in the novel into three acts. The play thus became lively, keeping the readers' attention constantly fixed.

The exact date of Mitford's composition is unknown, but it must have been after 1826, the publication of the novel. It is probable that Mitford adapted Radcliffe's novel soon after its publication, as this decade is characterized by her interest in the theatre: she wrote two successful plays: *Julian* (1823) and *Rienzi* (1828). If we accept this estimation, then there is a 30-year gap between the performances examined so far and the adaptation of *Gaston*. The spectacular effects accompanying a ghost-scene were no longer considered a novelty. Nevertheless, the play includes three ghost-scenes, all of them in the significant places of the three act-ending scenes.

The first one has the greatest similarity to the ghost-scene in *Fontainville Forest*. It features the wedding of the villain Gaston de Blondville interrupted by the appearance of Reginald de Folville's ghost, with the curtain falling on the ensuing chaos. The ghost is accompanied by sound and light effects, and he appears by a shrine in a gothic chapel. His clothing is significant and in itself is proof of the villain's guilt: the crest on his helmet identifies him as the victim, and his chain and sword are the same as those worn by Gaston in

the chapel. What makes the scene similar to Boaden's adaptation is that the presence of the ghost itself is of consequence and both the acting and the accompanying effects serve to emphasize this.

The ending of the second act is an imitation of the play-within-a-play scene in *Hamlet*, already present in Radcliffe's novel. As Gaston's crime is enacted by pageants, there is no literal supernatural involved in the scene, but it fulfils a similar function as the first ghost-scene: the spectacle as living proof of the villain's guilt, which shakes the people present and results in confusion. Moreover, the play-within-a-play is perceived as a supernatural event by the king ("This is sorcery - rank sorcery" and "Of a surety, this must be witchcraft", 162). A similar scene is enacted in Coleridge's *Remorse* (1813-14) which may have served as a model for Mitford. In *Remorse*, Don Alvar performs mock-sorcery with spectacular effects such as fire suddenly flaring up to reveal his brother's attempt to assassinate him and to affect his brother's conscience. The performance is perceived as supernatural, and Don Alvar is arrested for sorcery.

Both of Mitford's scenes feature Gaston emotionally reacting to the spectacle. At the end of the first act he swoons on seeing the ghost. At the end of the second act there is no stage direction concerning him, and he does not speak, but the king's words directed to him ("Gaston! arouse thee, man", 162) indicate that he visibly experiences discomfort. This effect is even more overwhelming for him the third time. Mitford changed Radcliffe's plotline, in her play: the merchant Woodreeve does not lose the trial, instead it is decided that following the medieval custom, the outcome of the trial should be decided by combat. The Archbishop of Canterbury declares that through the trial, God's will is to be shown ("Let Heaven decide the right", 178). Consequently, Gaston fights a duel, and when it seems that the outcome will be Gaston's victory, the ghost appears for the last time. On seeing the ghost, Gaston drops his sword, and loses the duel. In the novel, the ghost appears in the middle of a tournament, and on his sight, Gaston falls from his horse dead. The ghost fulfils his own vengeance. In the adaptation, the ghost appears as the vehicle of divine intervention in the duel.

In Mitford's adaptation, the first appearance of the ghost was considered significant in itself, and later it was more important what the ghost did than his mere presence. In the earlier adaptations, actual ghost-scenes were rare, neither Spalatro's ghost nor the ghost of Adeline's father in Dunlap's adaptation makes an appearance on stage. The only exception is the ghost in Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* which includes a carefully arranged ghost-scene, but that success was not repeated.

Conclusion

In the present chapter, I analyzed the scenes featuring the supernatural in five theatrical adaptations of Radcliffe's novels: James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* (1794, Covent Garden), based on *The Romance of the Forest*, Henry Siddons's *The Sicilian Romance, Or, The Apparition of the Cliffs*, an opera (1794, Covent Garden), William Dunlap: *Fontainville Abbey* (1795, New York), James Boaden's *The Italian Monk* (1797, Haymarket), and Mary Russell Mitford's *Gaston de Blondville* (1854). The way Radcliffe's supernatural scenes were adapted to the stage are indicators of how they were perceived in Radcliffe's time, and I found that the corresponding scenes in the adaptations also invoked the supernatural one way or another. I came to the conclusion that the various dramatists treated Radcliffe's novel as a source of inspiration rather than being faithful to it, probably because it was impossible to follow Radcliffe's technique of suggestions and obscurity on stage. This is most true of Henry Siddons who mixed several gothic novels in creating his own drama, and treated the supernatural exclusively with humour. The supernatural offered an opportunity for both comical effect and spectacle, and instead of the suggestive *possibility* of the supernatural, which we find in Radcliffe, these two options appear in the adaptations.

The comical potential of the explained supernatural is exploited by Henry Siddons most thoroughly. He builds the play on mock-supernatural scenes, the most significant one being that of the imprisoned wife of the villain, taken from Radcliffe's novel. Boaden's *The Italian Monk* features a ghost-scene which is later explained; the scene starts as if it were aiming to inspire the sublime, but is turned into a humorous episode by the servant Paullo.

All adaptations kept the supernatural nature of Radcliffe's dreams, but concentrated on its different aspects. Boaden, being the most faithful to Radcliffe's novels, emphasized the sympathy and the emotional connection between Adeline and her dead father. Dunlap incorporated the dream into a sequence of supernatural stock elements which lead Adeline to the uncovering of the murder. As for Vivaldi's dream, Boaden kept its supernatural aspects, but failed to incorporate it logically into the unfolding of the mysteries.

Regarding Radcliffe's ghost-scenes, in the adaptations dramatists were cautious with them, as they were liable to invoke humour rather than terror. James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* was the first – and to my knowledge, the only Radcliffe-adaptation – to feature a sublime ghost with more-or-less success. During the adaptation process, the ghost-scene from *Hamlet* was used as a model, both the scene performed and the paintings it inspired around the same time. In his adaptation, William Dunlap decided not to include a real ghost, but present the scene in full effect, and explain it right after, even though the play features

supernatural agency. Mitford in her adaptation *Gaston de Blondville* positioned the ghost at the end of the three acts. The first ghost-scene is similar to Boaden's in that the presence of the ghost itself is significant, and the theatrical effects serve to emphasize it, whereas in the final scene the ghost appears and acts as the active vehicle of divine intervention.

The variety of the approaches to the presentation of the supernatural on stage suggests that because of the difficulty in following the original, the playwrights relied on their own creativity during the adaptation. None of the plays presents the supernatural with a dismissive overtone, concluding that it does not exist – this view being present in *Udolpho* as one side of an ongoing debate and associated with the whole body of Radcliffe's works by literary criticism. I believe that the presence and variety of the supernatural in the adaptations is a sign that in Radcliffe's time, these scenes were regarded as being associated with the supernatural in some ways, which needed to be appropriately adapted to the stage.

Conclusion

In my dissertation, I provided an analysis of the portrayal of the supernatural in Ann Radcliffe's gothic novels, adding some pieces of her poetry and the contemporary theatrical adaptations of her novels. While acknowledging the value and usefulness of other perspectives, I employed a generally historical approach, founding my analysis on the concepts present in the discussions in Radcliffe's novels, most prominently in *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1826), as well as 18th-century ideas on emotions, dreams, supernatural beliefs and medicine.

I aimed to organise the dissertation in a logical structure: providing a background on Radcliffe's reception, and then analysing the novels, moving towards the more obviously supernatural aspects. I explored how the explained supernatural became perceived as Radcliffe's signature technique in the reception, owing to its employment in the character of Nicola di Zampari in *The Italian*, and to Walter Scott's such characterization of her literary endeavours in *Lives of the Novelists*. In the subsequent chapters, the dissertation offers a different perspective on Radcliffe's handling of the supernatural, one that is connected with aesthetics and is characterized by deliberate effects of uncertainty. To establish the starting point of the subsequent analysis, different from the explained-unexplained dichotomy, I analysed Radcliffe's posthumous dialogue which discusses the topic in the greatest detail. I identified some focal points in Radcliffe's portrayal of the supernatural: its ambiguous nature, its association with the sublime and the necessary requirements for achieving this effect, the importance of achieving an emotional effect on the reader, and its association with a highly prestigious poetic genius. I relied on these points in my approach to Radcliffe's supernatural scenes, categorized not by the novels they appear in, but by the form the supernatural takes.

Starting with Radcliffe's ghost-scenes, I first summarized ghost-beliefs in the 18th century to provide a framework in which Radcliffe's ghosts can be positioned, as well as to show the cultural interest in the question in the period. Then, I collected the different opinions expressed by Radcliffe's characters to explore how this issue is presented in the novels. I found that the debate is present in almost all of the novels (it is absent in the first one, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, and it receives less emphasis in *The Romance of the Forest*), and it is often presented as a clashing of different opinions, leaving the question undecided. Intellectual characters often argue against the existence of ghosts and ridicule superstitious beliefs, such as the Count in *Udolpho* and Schedoni in *The Italian*. On the other hand, the

appreciation of the supernatural is a sign of one's sensibility and enables a richer perception of everyday events, and as such it is highly encouraged.

This interpretation is supported by the description of Emily's wedding in the very last chapter of *Udolpho*, which evokes a supernatural atmosphere for a special, but natural event. Radcliffe masterfully keeps both sides of the debate alive throughout her novels to keep up the suspense regarding the mysterious incidents described. This ambiguity can even be present within one personality, as it is shown in the behaviour of Willoughton, the greatest advocate of the supernatural, when he decides to stop reading the *Boke of Sprites*, and when Schedoni behaves fearfully in the possible presence of Spalatro's ghost, yet lectures Vivaldi on his superstitious credulity. I ended the chapter with the analysis of three ghost-scenes, one explained, one ambiguous and one obviously unexplained to show the similarity in the portrayal of the scenes. My argument is that – excluding the lack of ambiguity in the obviously supernatural scene in *Gaston* – all three scenes follow Mr. W's recommendation of the portrayal of the supernatural, regardless of whether it is explained later or not.

After discussing the ghost-scenes, I explored the nature of emotions in Radcliffe's novels. Comparing them with sentimental fiction, I showed that Radcliffe builds on the practice of attributing utmost importance to them and their power over the body, but exaggerates their effects. I argued that Radcliffe relies on sentimental literature and contemporary medicine for the belief system Mr. W deemed necessary for the possibility of the supernatural and to create a threatening, gothic atmosphere. I collected examples from the novels to show that even though the exaggeration is a constant in Radcliffe's practice, its extent follows no consistent rules, but each time Radcliffe subjugates it to the needs of the plot. In other words, Radcliffe's practice shows not a realistic representation of emotions in the 18th century, but an opportunity to include the possibility of the supernatural, thus creating her aesthetics of uncertainty. In the world of Radcliffe's novels, an intense emotional state can lead to bodily illness, even death (as in the case of Madame Montoni), and it can be used as torture (as it happened to Osbert, the Earl of Athlin). Emotions can alter perceptions, and Radcliffe relies on this idea to introduce the possibility of ghosts, for example the ghosts of Emily's father and Spalatro's victims. I analysed in detail the manuscript-scene in *The Romance of the Forest* in which Radcliffe uses sympathy for presenting the possibility of a ghost.

In the chapter on dreams, I explored the four dreams present in Radcliffe's novels: three in *The Romance of the Forest* and one in *The Italian*. The supernatural nature of these dreams was noticed by scholars Robert Miles and Holly Hirst. In the 18th century, these were

clearly perceived as supernatural, as it is remarked by Anna Maria Mackenzie, and their theatrical adaptations preserved this interpretation. I drew attention to the dream theories of the time, and the literary tradition Radcliffe followed, established by Horace Walpole and Clara Reeve, and relied on Holly Hirst's conclusions who analysed them based on 18th-century theology to show that their inclusion in the world of the novels is supernatural in nature, as well as contributing to Radcliffe's gradual supply of hints concerning the overarching mystery in her romances.

The next chapter deals with two of Radcliffe's posthumous works, the novel *Gaston de Blondville* and the poem *Salisbury Plains*. These works discard the ambiguity present in Radcliffe's previous works, and literary criticism regards them as exceptions to the rule of her authorial strategies. I argue that Radcliffe followed her earlier practice, but shifted the emphasis towards the more obviously supernatural, in response to the negative criticism she received to the explained supernatural in *The Italian*. The long narrative poem *Salisbury Plains* illustrates the concepts present in Radcliffe's novels in a different form: the power and threatening nature of emotions and the connection between poetic genius and the supernatural. In *Gaston de Blondville*, the existence of an active, avenging ghost working for justice and saving a life is proven by the end of the novel, but in the process of the unfolding of the mystery, Radcliffe relies on her earlier methods, and the supernatural scenes follow Mr. W's guidelines.

In the theatrical adaptations, the playwrights faced the impossibility of keeping Radcliffe's ambiguity in presenting only the possibility of the supernatural. They chose different methods and often treated Radcliffe's original as an inspiration which does not need to be followed faithfully. It was easiest to portray the supernatural with humour, exaggerating the fright of the characters, and then making it ridiculous by explaining the supernatural – this is what Henry Siddon opted for in *The Sicilian Romance*. To my knowledge, there was only one attempt at following Radcliffe's effect of the sublime: the manuscript-scene in James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* which was carefully arranged, and met with relative success. All the other scenes were changed on the stage to suit the needs of the different genre and medium, yet all retained an association with the supernatural, signalling that in the novels they were indeed perceived as such.

Exploring the various manifestations of the supernatural present in Radcliffe's works gives us a better understanding of Radcliffe's practice and her ideas on its representation associated with her aesthetic aims. All in all, my analysis suggests that Radcliffe constantly developed as a writer and renewed her techniques in response to the reviews, but relied on a

constant aesthetic for the portrayal of the supernatural to which she returned in all of her novels. Reading her novels with this awareness can give us a deeper understanding of how she became one of the most celebrated gothic authors of her time.

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