

8-2016

Ann Radcliffe's Superpaternal: A Study of the Supernatural in *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

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Recommended Citation

Kramer, Lynn, "Ann Radcliffe's Superpaternal: A Study of the Supernatural in *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*" (2016). *English Theses*. Paper 20.

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*Ann Radcliffe's Superpaternal: A Study of the Supernatural in The Romance of the Forest and
The Mysteries of Udolpho*

by

Lynn Kramer

An Abstract of a Thesis
in
English

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

August 2016

State University of New York
College at Buffalo
Department of English

Abstract

This study proposes a new way to examine the supernatural being in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Romance of the Forest*. Critics have argued that the supernatural being is used in these novels to remind the heroines to think rationally; however, I argue that his purpose is more complex than that of a figment who instills reason. Rather, his role is to make the females realize their sexual vulnerability within the imprisoning, Gothic house. He is able to show the women they are in sexual danger by creating sexually explicit situations with the heroine that occur in her bedroom. While he never has sex with her, his ability to eroticize her, through his gaze, allows her to realize the impropriety of the real life men who attempt to dominate her within the house.

The supernatural's ability to instill the idea of sexual vulnerability in the heroine turns him into a father-like figure by positioning him as a type of guardian. By giving this ghostly being the attributes of a guardian, Radcliffe creates what I call the superpaternal. The superpaternal is the ultimate father, as shown by his ability to be a greater sexual threat than the physical men of the house, and by his position as an image of the heroine's biological father. As a father figure, the superpaternal's actions bear incestuous implications and his presence within the house is the reason why Radcliffe's heroines never experience sexual maturation during the novel; rather, they marry their beloveds at the end of the novel due to the unnatural sexual feelings the superpaternal causes the heroines to have. Radcliffe purposely chooses to exclude the consummation of Adeline's and Emily's marriages from the novels because she is protecting her female characters from further visual objectification by the reader and the supernatural being.

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Acknowledgements

Thank you, Dr. Berglund, for your patience in seeing this project to completion, and for your invaluable advice, guidance, and expertise. Without you, this thesis would not have reached its true potential.

Thank you, Dr. Fulk, for your thoughtful suggestions and insight, which gave my thesis new possibilities. Also, thank you for teaching *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Without your class, I would have never discovered Ann Radcliffe.

Finally, thank you to all the English professors at Buffalo State for teaching with such contagious passion and enthusiasm. My time spent in each of your classes will not be forgotten.

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Ann Radcliffe's Superpaternal: A Study of the Supernatural in *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

Introduction

The focus of this study is Ann Radcliffe and her novels *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). The texts chosen for this project were picked because they are among the most commonly read Radcliffe novels and also for their lasting influence on the genre. When comparing the novels, the reader is able to see Radcliffe's maturation as an author. After reading both stories, it becomes clear that she is experimenting with her female characters, Emily and Adeline. She first creates Adeline, who has the physical prowess of a man but who is able to remain feminine and, perhaps too physical and wilful of a character, then writes Emily, who is arguably the most popular and yet most stereotypical Gothic heroine. Passive and content, Emily endures her stay at Castle Udolpho, waiting for her savior to arrive. While her creation of Emily's character remains a highly contentious point for critics to argue that Radcliffe's delicate Gothic is merely a stepping stone for more interesting and daring authors, her genius shines in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. She created what is to become the most stereotypical Gothic novel on the surface in order to educate female readers about the reality and horror associated with rape. She was able to approach the unspeakable subject of rape through her supernatural character; which her heroines, by acknowledging his existence, learn to accept that sexual assault is a never-ending threat for women.

Andrea Dworkin's *Intercourse* discusses the idea of rape as being omnipresent in a patriarchal society, similar to the environment of Radcliffe's novels. She comments that the threat of sexual exploitation does not necessarily have to involve penetration; she writes, "The

force of male dominance is possession even when that force is social coercion, the community forcing her to sexual subordination and an implicit sexual servitude” (*Intercourse* 73). The societal acceptance of sexual subordination Dworkin writes about in her text describes the culture Radcliffe’s female characters live in. It is accepted, even expected, that women are made to provide pleasure, forced by society to be seen as sexual even before reaching puberty. With the inclusion of society, sex then becomes a public, not private idea where females are openly viewed as desirable objects, figuratively undressed and analyzed for quality. Radcliffe’s novels comment on this so-called ripe for the picking attitude by publicly displaying Adeline and Emily’s imprisonment where they are subjected to physical, sexual, and mental distress from the male characters, but from no one more than the supernatural being in the text.

This study proposes a new way of studying the supernatural, a feature that critics have previously argued is used to remind the heroines to think rationally, or as Terry Castle phrases it in “The Spectralization of the Other in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.” “Emily develops and learns to control her ‘hysteria’ in the course of her ordeal” (233). Nelson C. Smith also comments on the irrationality of Radcliffe’s characters in the article “Sense, Sensibility and Ann Radcliffe,” writing that Radcliffe “has all the conventions of the Gothic novel to bring to bear as examples of the results of a mind made too susceptible by sensibility” (583). Despite critics largely accepting the supernatural being as a symbol of reason, I argue that his purpose is more complex than that of a figment meant to instill sense in the heroines; rather, his role is to make the female characters realize their sexual vulnerability within the imprisoning, Gothic world.

The supernatural being is able to show the women they are in danger by sexualizing their personal space, creating explicit situations with the female character that occur in her bedroom, a sacred place for the Gothic heroine. While he never has sex with her, his ability to eroticize her

through his gaze allows her to realize the impropriety of the material men who attempt to dominate her within the house. Through the supernatural being's objectification of the heroines, the female characters begin to recognize their sexual maturity and are then able to better assess, and escape from, future unwanted erotic exchanges with other men.

The supernatural's ability to instill the idea of sexual vulnerability in the heroine then turns him into a father-like figure by positioning him as a type of guardian. By giving this ghostly being the attributes of a guardian, Radcliffe creates what I call the superpaternal. The superpaternal is the ultimate father, as shown by his ability to be a greater sexual threat than the physical men of the house, and by his position as an image of the heroine's biological father. The heroines apply fatherly attributes to the supernatural, believing or assuming he is their actual blood, and they do this in an attempt to overcome their vulnerable position within the house. The supernatural, as a father figure, then bears incestuous implications through his erotic exchanges with the heroines. His presence within the house, I argue, is the reason Radcliffe's characters never experience sexual maturation during the novel. Rather, Adeline and Emily marry their beloveds at novel's end because of the sexual objectification and unnatural feelings the supernatural being causes them to have. For Radcliffe, the decision to marry the heroines at the end of the novel is deliberate, and she does this to protect Adeline and Emily from further sexual objectification by the reader and, as it will later be explained, the supernatural being. Due to the erotic and violent sexual experiences the heroine's encounter throughout the novel, their ability to trust and desire men, regardless if the relationship is consensual, does not exist; therefore, even when Emily and Adeline are free from their rapists, the emotional stress that has been inflicted upon them would prevent them from enjoying any kind of romantic relationship with

their husbands. By not allowing the heroines to consummate their marriages during the novel, Radcliffe is saving them from being subjected to another rape scenario.

The main goal of this thesis is to propose a new way of understanding the supernatural being's function in the aforementioned texts; however, this thesis also aims to show the complexities of Radcliffe as a stand-alone *Gothic* writer. Despite Terry Castle's bold statement in her aforementioned article that "modern critics have been similarly put out [by Radcliffe's writing]—that is, when they have even bothered to write about Radcliffe at all" (231), she remains an innovator in the history of the genre, and an author who is more complex than she may seem. Like the genre she helped shape, Radcliffe's writing is simplified, boiled down to her use of setting, the supernatural, and her delicate heroines, but as this thesis will argue, she is more than an opportunist, as many Gothic authors have been labeled.¹ She creates cleverer Gothic stories than her predecessors and successors, elevating the genre defined by Michael Gamer in his essay "Gothic fictions and Romantic writing in Britain," as "a juvenile fancy –and immature and sensationalistic aesthetic" (89).

Although this thesis argues on behalf of Radcliffe's inventiveness, critics tend to view her work as a continuation of the Gothic Horace Walpole, and others, created. Robert Miles's article "The 1790s: the Effulgence of Gothic" credits Walpole, the Aikins, and Sophia Lee as the most important and influential writers of the period; however, Miles's reductive logic is flawed. He implies that simply because Walpole, the Aikins, and Lee wrote their novels first, thereby

¹ Michael Gamer's "Gothic Fictions and Romantic Writing in Britain" suggests that writers were drawn to the Gothic because it offered "an attractive and potentially lucrative aesthetic" for those eager for success. His article implies that authors only began publishing Gothic texts because of the immense success the genre was experiencing. Their novels were seen as commercial rather than serious works. See Robert Miles "The 1790s: the Effulgence of the Gothic" for more on Radcliffe's commercial success.

shaping the genre, their contributions are somehow more innovative and memorable than future Gothic writers. While this thesis does not deny the importance of the three previously mentioned authors, for without their works there would be no genre, Miles's article suggests that after the release of the previously mentioned forerunners' texts, any Gothic author writing after that time period is revising their stories rather than introducing something substantially new to the genre. He briefly provides the Radcliffean scholar hope by referring to the author as the most "dominant novelist of the decade;" however, his tone soon turns skeptical when he finishes the sentence with "certainly as far as commercial success is concerned" (45). Miles argues that Radcliffe's popularity is directly related to her ability to borrow and elaborate on a major theme from her predecessors; for example, "her most significant innovation was to expand a particular element of *Otranto*, the heroine in flight from a patriarchal ogre in a European setting" (46). Miles, by arguing Radcliffe simply elaborated on Walpole's work, labels her as a contributor, not an originator, and his argument regarding her borrowing technique seems justified when referring to *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), her first published work. The novel draws its premise from Walpole's novel, but Radcliffe creates subtle differences such as changing the number of castles, a modification that suggests she was not only trying to compete with her male predecessor, but to outshine him. Not only does Radcliffe attempt to compete with Walpole in terms of the Gothic setting, she completely differs from, and even mocks, Walpole's use of patriarchy in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). In *Otranto*, Walpole's Matilda escapes through the trap door to hide from Manfred, but in *Athlin*, Osbert plays the role of the female. He is imprisoned by the baron, a Manfred-like character who is even more sadistic than the original, and he must run from the overpowering patriarch in order to escape. Radcliffe's use of male imprisonment is an attempt to change the Gothic Walpole created and, similar to her increasing

the number of castles in her story, implies insult to the inventor. While she eventually reverts back to Walpole's original story when she imprisons the female, critics seem to forget that she first entrapped the man. While it is true that she modifies and reuses – to an extent – certain Gothic tropes, her experimentations with the genre, namely with gender, define her as an author whose novels should be known in history for more than their ability to follow Walpole's example. Miles's brief article about the rise of the Gothic novel is just one example of the mentality of modern critics who believe it is necessary to include Ann Radcliffe in Gothic history because of her popularity, but who consider her work as the sentimental writing of a woman who, as indirectly suggested by Michael Gamer, was "ambitious for popular success" (89).

A History of the Gothic Novel

“Manfred, prince of Otranto, had one son and one daughter: the latter, a most beautiful virgin, aged eighteen, was called Matilda” (*Otranto* 17). So reads the first sentence of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and, with that sentence, the Gothic genre was created. Walpole begins his story with a focus on Manfred, a man, which establishes the genre (and story) as male oriented, but just when the reader is acquainted with the male character, Walpole introduces his female character, Matilda. The change in focus, from male to female, sets up a type of linear equation for the reader, I argue. Without knowing the full story, the reader understands by the structure of the sentence that there is a male who is then led to a female. Within the first sentence of his story, Walpole has already defined what will later become the Gothic: the male’s search for the female. Walpole designed the female’s flight from the male when he created his novel, which tells the tale of Manfred, the owner of Otranto. The house’s prophecy states that the family’s bloodline shall end when the inhabitants of the home become too numerous. Manfred ignores the warning and is in the process of marrying his son to Isabella, a beautiful princess. The marriage would double the size of the family, but the wedding ends abruptly when a giant knight’s helmet crushes Manfred’s son, symbolizing the beginning of the end of his family’s bloodline. With his heir dead, Manfred, who only has a daughter, seeks to marry the princess himself, forgoing his previous marriage in order to recreate his claim to the property. Isabella, who is repulsed by Manfred’s brash behavior, runs away from him into the darkest and most secret passageways of the house where she attempts to hide and is frequently rediscovered by Manfred. The male-female chase later becomes the most popular and well-

known Gothic scenario, and Walpole's claim to have created the prototype of the lost and frightened female is solidified within literary history, but only because he creates her, not for what he does with her character. For Walpole, the female character's function is solely a womb, and his treatment of the heroine becomes a common theme among later Gothic works.

As the genre became more popular, writers and scholars complicated Walpole's simplistic male-female model. The genre, according to Jerrold Hogle's Introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, at surface level, represents a male-female chase, but the story evolved into a son who wants to become the patriarch of the family, for which he requires the female. More often than not, there is not a physical fathering that occurs in Gothic novels; rather, the male becomes the head of the family through marriage or, in the case of Victor Frankenstein, by building his own family through scientific means. However, in order for the son to become the patriarch, the story dictates that he must kill (who he kills varies) and the guilt of what he must do haunts him but does not prevent him from going through with the act. After the murder, he is left with "chaos and death," (Hogle 5) two words which remain at the heart of the Gothic. The guilt the son lives with after killing his father eventually manifests into a real or imaginary supernatural being who haunts all of the characters and becomes a symbol for the son's past corruption. Within that competing power struggle, the female of the story has to fight for her own claim, which is the right to own her body, and she is left "fearing that pursuit of a domineering and lascivious patriarch who wants to use her womb as a repository for seed that may help him preserve his property and wealth ... yet worried that, fleeing in an opposite direction, she is still 'within reach of somebody [male], she knew not whom'" (Punter 6).²

² From *Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture: New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter.

Walpole's Gothic model, the flight of the female, created the incestuous theme which will become more pronounced in later Gothic novels where females will not be forced to run from future fathers-in-law (said patriarchs), but from their actual fathers, uncles, and brothers.

Clara Reeve, who wrote *The Old English Baron* (1777) several years after Walpole's *Otranto*, creates a similar story, clearly stating her intentions in her introduction: "This Story is the literary offspring of *The Castle of Otranto*, written upon the same plan" (*Baron* 1). Reeve's use of the word "offspring" further legitimizes Walpole as the "father" of the Gothic not only for having created the genre, but also for providing a model for his successors, a so-called parental guide for his "children" to follow. The reader sees the development of the "literary offspring" in *The Old English Baron*, but also notes that Reeve's use of his model is attempting to correct the defects in Walpole's text, which, she claims, were so great that they offended and upset readers. Despite her attempt to recreate a more entertaining and flawless Gothic novel, Reeve is rarely mentioned in Gothic literary texts because "critics tend to see her as consolidating Walpole's experiment rather than adding something substantially new" (Miles 42). What Reeve attempted to remedy in her novel was not the function of the female characters (with which, as a female herself, one would think she would take issue); instead, she chooses to focus on a more legitimate "picture of Gothic times and manners" (*Baron* 1).

Not until Ann Radcliffe does a Gothic author change the purpose of the heroine. On the surface, Radcliffe's female characters resemble Walpole's and Reeve's because of the role they play within the text—that of a passive captive—but Radcliffe's work is more complex and original than most authorities on the subject give her credit for, especially as regards her heroines. Radcliffe creates a story about a woman who tries to escape from a man, yes, but the story is ultimately the female's own. She is the only early Gothic author who writes from the

female's perspective, giving voice to the heroine when others would not. Radcliffe wrote during a time when women learned proper behavior from conduct books and were taught to avoid faults such as the conventional misogyny summarized in Mary Poovey's *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen*: "women are voracious; they are inconstant; women are irrational; women are vampires, heralds of death and decay" (5). This stereotypical description of women ultimately stems from the eighteenth-century notion that women, despite behaving properly, were a constant source of arousal for men. Although men had insatiable appetites, women were faulted. Commenting on men's sexual urges, Radcliffe created novels defending the female sex in which she argued that sexual attention is generally unsought by women. Averting the gaze from her female characters, she shifts the attention (and blame) to her male characters. A memorable example occurs in *The Romance of the Forest* when the reader is told: "She [Adeline] sunk at his [La Motte] feet, and with supplicating eyes, that streamed with tears, implored him to have pity on her.

Notwithstanding his present agitation, he found it impossible to contemplate the beauty and distress of the object before him with indifference. Her youth, her apparent innocence –the artless energy of her manner forcibly assailed his heart" (*Romance* 5-6). In what is surely an inappropriate response to the situation, La Motte cannot hide his attraction to Adeline who is terrified and quite literally begging at his feet to be rescued. While it can be argued that La Motte's interest in the girl is sympathetic, not sexual, shortly after they escape from the ruffians, La Motte's infatuation with Adeline renews. Free from harm, he continues his physical assessment of the girl and deceptively describes Adeline in heartfelt terms, calling her his "unfortunate companion, who, pale and exhausted... had gained from distress a captivating expression of sweetness" (*Romance* 6); however, no amount of Romantic language can cover up

the fact that Adeline's sweet weariness, no doubt brought on by their quick departure through the woods, is really an excuse for La Motte to stare at her exposed garment, which he tells the audience "was thrown open at the bosom" and "Every moment of farther observation heightened the surprise of La Motte, and interested him more warmly in her favour" (*Romance* 7). If readers were deceived into believing La Motte felt sorry for Adeline, the obvious sexual interest shown by him in the previous sentence proves his true intentions regarding the girl, and although Radcliffe writes the comment about Adeline, she uses La Motte to make a case against men's "unnatural desires." In a show of La Motte's perversion, namely that he is turned on by Adeline's terror, Radcliffe attempts to educate her audience about the fact that women are not sexual objects meant for men's visual pleasure. I believe Radcliffe fights against the objectification of women and protects the so-called daughters she penned by prohibiting them from being violated. By so doing, the author figuratively becomes the mother of the Gothic; mothering, nurturing, and guiding her female characters through life, and however male-dominated their stories appear to be, she ultimately fights for the female's claim to her property and body.

Despite the fact that she contributed progressive female characters to the Gothic genre, literary history primarily credits Radcliffe for her use of descriptive imagery.³ Robert Miles comments that her importance as a writer has to do with her landscape description, which she took to "a new level of perfection" (46). Her sublime, picturesque landscapes were labeled Radcliffean, setting her apart from other Gothic writers, but even after the mention of her original landscapes, something Miles argues sets her apart from other Gothic authors, critics

³ See for example, Katarina Gephardt's "Hybrid Gardens: Travel and the Nationalization of Taste in Ann Radcliffe's Continental Landscapes," Raymond D. Havens's "Ann Radcliffe's Nature Descriptions," and Nina da Vinci Nichols's "Place and Eros in Radcliffe, Lewis, and Brontë."

cannot help but compare the similarities of her work with her predecessors and successors. Contrasting her to other authors diminishes her work and labels her as a writer who is only known for the techniques she borrows or has in common with others. Eugenia DeLamotte's *Perils of the Night* confirms Radcliffe's borrowing techniques when she writes, "Radcliffe may have taken her underground passageways from Walpole and her deserted suite from Reeve, but her most brilliant contribution to the Gothic romance was the idea of combining stage properties with what she had learned from [Samuel] Richardson" (31). Even when DeLamotte discusses Radcliffe's "most brilliant contribution," which is something other than her picturesque scenery, the compliment seems condescending as her brilliance is owed not to her own invention, but to the ideas borrowed from *Clarissa* (1748). If she is not being compared to Walpole, Reeve or Richardson, her work is being contrasted, criticized, and graded in terms of the differences and similarities her work has to others, and to no one more than Matthew Lewis.

The two authors are compared to each other because they were writing during the same time period; it has been said that they were both "the necessary fruit of the revolutionary tremors" (Miles 43). Their comparison to one another is also primarily because of the drastically different way each author handles their female characters' sexuality or, as critics would argue regarding Radcliffe, the lack thereof. Radcliffe's limited use of sexuality in her works is referenced in critical discussion primarily because it is compared to Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), which brutalizes sex.⁴ In David Punter's *A New Companion to the Gothic*, Robert Miles's chapter "Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis" gives a history of "The Original Gothic,"

⁴ For example, Regina McAloney's "The Catholic Monster in the Gothic Novel: Matthew G. Lewis's *The Monk* and Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*" and Vartan P. Messier's "The Conservative, The Transgressive, and The Reactionary: Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* as a Response to Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*."

explaining the differences between the authors' work, labeling Radcliffe's works as sensibility texts and Lewis's as "Sadean sensationalism" (93). Despite Miles's attempt to explain the differences between their works, the very fact that they share a chapter in his book complicates the attempt to classify them as individual writers. For every Radcliffe theory given, he automatically counters her approach to the Gothic with a Lewis theory, and ultimately he suggests that the authors' works are only able to be read as sublime terror texts, rationalization texts, or, simply, texts of perversion. Given Radcliffe's engagement with murder and rape, the argument that Radcliffe can only be read as sublime terror is obviously false; the 'exciting' thrill her heroines experience in *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* during the encounter with the supposed skeletal remains actually turns horrific when Emily's aunt and Adeline's father are truly murdered.

It is easy to see that Miles is trying to outline the most well-known characteristics of both authors, but his classification of the two works implies that the Gothic genre, at least early Gothic, is only about terror and horror. By juxtaposing Radcliffe and Lewis's work, Miles's reductive argument is implying that the authors are only able to be read in comparison to one another. The reader is only able to know that Radcliffe opts for sensibility in her texts by reading Lewis's sensational text and comparing the two works in terms of their differences. Miles outlines the authors' uniqueness only to place them into a limited space, suggesting that the writers will never be able to be literarily defined as anything other than the two authors who "Despite their differences, had much in common" (Miles 94). By placing Lewis and Radcliffe together, critics are figuratively turning Radcliffe into the heroine of her Gothic stories, confining her by the physical man, Walpole, and the supernatural man, Lewis, which is similar to the male characters who entrap her own heroines.

Radcliffe and Lewis's shared articles subject her to subordination, suggesting that Lewis's one text is somehow all-encompassing or in-depth enough to be relatable to Radcliffe's six different and original novels. The comparison between the two is more detrimental for Radcliffe than Lewis because it diminishes her evolution as a Gothic author. More than Walpole or Lewis, Radcliffe actually changed the form of the genre – and also changed artistically over the course of penning several novels – but by confining her to the same group as Walpole and Lewis, critics would lead us to believe that she, like Clara Reeve, is attempting a rewrite of the popular but perverse Gothic texts in order to make them suitable for a female audience. The rewrite argument appears persuasive despite Lewis writing his novel after Radcliffe because the authors' shared articles often blur the historical timeline, making it seem that Radcliffe and he published at the exact same time, which they did not. It certainly seems that Radcliffe is attempting to change the graphic nature of the Gothic when critics unquestioningly believe that *The Italian* (1797) is Radcliffe's response to Lewis's *The Monk*, “whose scandalous treatment of the body was a challenge to her polite Gothic,” according to Yael Shapira in “Where the Bodies Are Hidden: Ann Radcliffe's ‘Delicate’ Gothic” (455).

While modern critics are guilty of equating Radcliffe with Lewis, Radcliffe experienced a similar association with the author during her lifetime. Her chance at elevating the Gothic genre diminished when Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* published. A Michael Gamer essay references Lewis's reputation in the literary world by providing an example of the disapproval his novel received from critics. In a letter to Mary E. Robinson, written in 1804, much later than *The Monk's* publication date of 1796, Samuel Coleridge expresses his refusal to include Lewis's poem “The Mad Monk” in a collection of works. The shame Coleridge would receive at appearing in a volume with Matthew Lewis is enough to shock him; he tells her, “I have a wife,

I have sons, I have an infant Daughter [sic] – what excuse could I offer to my own conscience if by suffering my name to be connected with those of Mr. Lewis” (Gamer 90). If Coleridge could not even think of including Lewis in a book of poetry years after his first publication, imagine the shame Radcliffe felt having her works associated with an author who is credited with making a mockery out of the explained supernatural, a phenomenon Radcliffe uses not to provide farce but to show the heroines (and readers) the danger of rape.⁵ In this instance, Lewis’s borrowing technique rather than elevating the genre made it more common and vulgar.

The propriety of the Gothic was not only questioned by readers because of the introduction of Matthew Lewis, but also because of the political and historical circumstances surrounding its origin. Beginning in 1788 and continuing until 1807, the number of Gothic novels on the market increased rapidly, and the cause of this Miles credits to the French Revolution; he references the Marquis de Sade who argued that, “the bloody horrors of the revolution pushed novelists to new extremes of imaginary violence, as they strove to compete with the shocking reality” (43). Gothic authors were then labeled as opportunists or terrorists, capitalizing on the horrors of the time in order to interest readers, but Miles maintains that the connection between Gothic works and the physical realities of the revolution was speculated, not confirmed, especially regarding Radcliffe’s writing.⁶ Miles credits the connection between the

⁵ Lewis reverses the concept of the explained supernatural in his novel. He offers the pretend supernatural first to his readers when Agnes dresses up as the bloody nun, and then he gives the readers the real supernatural when the bloody nun actually manifests. He, as Radcliffe does to Walpole, seems to mock his predecessor, Radcliffe, when he suggests that readers are not interested in reasonable explanation but actual, real horror. Reason versus horror is a concept that troubles the eighteenth-century Gothic (and society), and is a problem that will be later explained in this thesis.

⁶ Claudia Johnson’s *Equivocal Beings* supports Radcliffe’s indifference to the Revolution; she writes, “Although critics have subjected Radcliffean themes –about domesticity, female propriety, and aesthetics – to political interpretation, she is generally not supposed to have been

Gothic and the French Revolution as a contemporary idea, and instead acknowledges that the genre “derived from the Burkean cult of the sublime” (43).⁷ Miles also references the ideas of William Hazlitt, who argued that the Gothic did not stem from the revolutionary terror, but because of the “widespread perception that all old structures were in a tottering condition, such as, for instance, castles” (Miles 44). The Gothic then, according to Hazlitt, feeds off the anxieties of an antiquated world facing an evolving, rational society. The barrier between past and future is an idea Radcliffe’s novels encompass as shown by her use of the explained supernatural (reason), Gothic architecture (antiquity), and a tyrannical man who represents the old, feudal world. Despite the move toward reason in Gothic novels, the genre became associated with barbarism because of Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France in 1790*, which commented on the death of chivalry.⁸

Readers of the Gothic were raised during an age of propriety, and educated by such texts as Fordyce’s *Sermons to Young Women* and Gregory’s *A Father’s Legacy to His Daughters*; therefore, the negative response the Gothic received would arguably weigh heavily on Radcliffe, and her association with the genre was a troubling source of anxiety for her. Vartan P. Messier’s article “The Conservative, the Transgressive, and the Reactionary: Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian* as a Response to Matthew Lewis’ *The Monk*” mentions how deliberately Radcliffe chose to differentiate herself from the vulgar Gothic; he writes, “By carefully considering the potential

much aware of the ideological conflicts raging during the years she was publishing, 1789-97” (75).

⁷ The idea that fear and attraction are mutually exclusive. For more information on this topic, see Burke’s *A Philosophical Inquiry into the origin of our ideas of The Sublime and Beautiful*.

⁸ Burke maintained that chivalry, political and sexual oppression were Europe’s “proud cultural patrimony” and the only way to keep freedom. Critics, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, viewed Burke’s mentality as feudal, dark, and barbaric. She called his way of thinking regressive and Gothic which began the term’s association with negativity and said barbarism (Miles 45).

reception of her work on the contemporary literary scene, Radcliffe was cautious to select material that would not come under attack” (38). Despite the elegance of her prose, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was criticized even though it had an overwhelming amount of support from readers. In a review from Sir Walter Scott, found in Norton Rictor’s *Mistress of Udolpho*, Scott criticizes Maturin’s *The Fatal Revenge* (1807) for being too similar to Radcliffe’s works in his desire to explain away the supernatural being; he writes, “we fling back upon the Radcliffe school for their flat and ridiculous explanations, and plainly tell them that they must either confine themselves to ordinary and natural events, or find adequate causes for those horrors and mysteries in which they love to involve us” (Norton 154). While Scott does not directly relate Radcliffe’s works to *The Monk*, the criticism he has for the revealed supernatural can only come from reading Lewis’s work, which does not explain but exaggerates the supernatural. If what I argue about Radcliffe’s work is true, then she would take extreme offense to the idea that her supernatural was not horrific or entertaining enough for some readers, especially since she uses it as an educational tool regarding the dangers of rape. As time progressed, more authors began criticizing the Gothic genre, and they were all consistent in keeping Radcliffe at the core of their discussion; arguing that, “it [the Gothic] required no skill at all to cater for the modern taste of terror. Any lady’s maid could conduct her reader in a cold sweat through four volumes by following a few simple rules, consisting mainly of the heroine’s curious investigation of decayed apartments...” (Norton 157). The sentence above is an obvious reference to Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and the increasing criticism the author received, forced her into an early retirement. Rather than defending her novels, she remained silent. Her silence was viewed by critics as an admission of guilt that she helped contribute to the vulgar and regressive philosophies that Burke argued Lewis, Walpole, and other Gothic writers heralded. By remaining

silent, Radcliffe allowed modern critics to figuratively turn her into a Gothic heroine, as her lack of voice mirrors the so-called dignity of virtue⁹ that one hopes will elevate oneself from impropriety.

Despite Radcliffe's wish to be seen as a high rather than low Gothic author, modern critics are still apt to define her as the "mistress" of the genre, according to David Punter's Introduction to *A New Companion to the Gothic*. Not only would Radcliffe be offended by the allusion to her so-called impropriety, but the use of the word "mistress" is also problematic to a modern reader as it suggests that Radcliffe's relationship to the Gothic is illegitimate. Grudgingly, critics include her within the category because she is a part of the history, but soon after, they point out that she is really not a Gothic writer but a Romantic writer. Deidre Shauna Lynch's article "Gothic Fiction" explains that authors –like Radcliffe – who used legacy and antiquity in their novels were acknowledged as Gothic, but with Romantic tendencies. Lynch further associates Radcliffe with the Romantic because of her use of poetry at the beginning of her chapters. Lynch explains that "Such practices elevated the tone of the Gothic novel. They also made it resemble, formally, another byproduct of the romance revival" (51). Lynch's sentence offers the idea that Radcliffe, although indirectly, understood the negative connotations brought on by her association with the Gothic, and in an attempt to separate from the low culture side of it, changed the form of her works in order to mirror Romantic texts that resembled the likes of Shakespeare and Milton. It is questionable whether or not Radcliffe's use of form succeeded in elevating her works in the audience's eyes, but regardless, her novels remain at their core Gothic. While Anne Williams argues in her text *The Art of Darkness: A Poetics of*

⁹ The dignity of virtue, or conscious innocence, is a concept from Eugenia DeLamotte's *Perils of the Night*. Described as "the spiritual barrier between him and her that he will be abashed into maintaining a physical distance as well" (32).

Gothic that the genre contains both Gothic and Romantic tendencies, there is still a bold line dividing the two where an author is either considered Gothic or Romantic, not both. According to Williams's line of thinking, not until the late 1800s do works such as *Dracula* (1897), *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) become truly Gothic novels and everything before them was simply experimentation.

Radcliffe's works are called Romantic by critics because she is too delicate to be considered truly horrific, but there is a reason why she is mentioned in Gothic history –other than for her use of landscape – and that is because she, although less severe, meets the criteria of several Gothic characteristics, including but not limited to her use of sex. While Lewis's use of horrific sex is what leads many to consider him a true Gothic author, Radcliffe's allusion to rape is just as suggestive and equally dark as that of her supposed male counterpart. Although this thesis argues that comparing Lewis and Radcliffe is detrimental for the female author, it is necessary to contrast the authors' use of sex in order to showcase Radcliffe's Gothic nature. In his novel, Lewis allows his heroine, Antonia, to be raped by Ambrosio, who is later revealed to be her brother. The fact that Ambrosio succeeds in raping her is terrible enough for readers, but Lewis continues the defilement with his other character, Agnes. While Agnes engages in sexual contact willingly, she becomes pregnant while in a convent, forced to deliver her baby in a dungeon where she is punished by the prioress for her sin. The baby dies while she is imprisoned and rather than ignoring the corpse, Lewis shows his readers the worm-infested baby. It is hard to ignore Lewis's unambiguous assertion that heterosexual sex, whether consensual or not, is horrific. While Radcliffe's heroine, like Lewis's, fears for her chastity, she is never subjected to rape but only placed in threatening sexual situations, but that does not mean Radcliffe is any less of a Gothic author.

While her stories may pale in comparison to *The Monk*, her writing in *The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Italian* is darker and more sexual than it may seem, specifically in the threat she is able to create using the supernatural being. The figure often enters the heroine's bedroom while she is asleep, using the cloak of darkness to hide his identity, where he looks upon her in bed. The act of viewing the female while she sleeps carries sexual overtones; however, Radcliffe intensifies the sexual threat when she reveals that her heroines are uncovered, further exposing their bodies to the men. Critics are able to bypass the overt sexuality of the situation because Radcliffe explicitly provides the male's motive for being in the girl's bedroom. An example of sexual gazing seeming unintentional happens in *The Italian* when Schedoni encounters Ellena in her bed and is going to stab her; Radcliffe writes, "Her dress perplexed him; it would interrupt the blow, and he stopped to examine whether he could turn her robe aside" (271). The reader, diverted by the knowledge that Schedoni is going to murder Ellena in her bed, is unable to recognize the sexual danger at first glance, which is that Ellena is alone in her bedroom with an adult male. Removing the murder aspect from the scene, it is easy to see that the sentence is filled with sexual ambiguities from the very act he is about to perform, "stabbing" her with his poniard, a phallic metaphor, to his mention of the dress interrupting the blow – a way of saying the dress would interrupt his rape – and finally his debate as to whether or not he is able to disrobe her without her noticing. The delicate phrasing Radcliffe uses in this scene supports the argument that she is attempting to rewrite a suitable Gothic story for a female audience, but regardless of the phrasing she uses, the meaning is still there – Schedoni is contemplating raping Ellena before he kills her. There is nothing delicate about that idea.

Because Radcliffe does not come to the same conclusion regarding sex in her works, and her use of it is subtler than Lewis's, critics view her as a Romantic writer, and their logic for

doing so is overly simplistic. The argument is something like the following: Matthew Lewis writes horror; Matthew Lewis is a Gothic author. Therefore, in order to be a Gothic novelist, you must write horror. Ann Radcliffe uses terror rather than horror; thus, she cannot be a Gothic author. According to “The Conservative, the Transgressive, and the Reactionary: Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian* as a response to Matthew Lewis’ *The Monk*,” Messier claims that terror texts “titillate the senses” and offer an overall didactic message whereas horror texts have no real purpose other than to annihilate and shock (44-5). While his use of the word terror is accurate when viewing Radcliffe’s body of works, why are the two terms mutually exclusive? Terror and horror are both rooted in fear, but because Radcliffe uses a deft hand when describing sexual encounters, she is seemingly punished by modern critics for not being daring enough. If she were to rape the heroine, demoralize or degrade her outright, or if she were to write as explicitly as Lewis, would she receive the same critical acclaim given to Lewis by Messier? Messier describes Lewis as a man who “strives to break established boundaries of content and form, as well as the conventions of morality and accepted political ideologies” (Messier 3). Critical scholars seem to ignore that as a female author in the eighteenth century, Radcliffe’s ability to ‘write like a man,’ in terms of sexuality, was almost impossible; if not impossible, it would entirely eliminate her female (and male) audience, thus prohibiting her from educating readers on the reality of rape. But why does a woman author have to ‘write like a man,’ that is to write explicit sexual horror, to be accepted into the Gothic genre anyway? By limiting the scope of the Gothic to horror-based novels, certain scholars think they are classifying the genre when in reality they are merely excluding the majority of female authors from the canon entirely. It is hard to ignore the sexist attitude of some critics when they describe Radcliffe’s work as “women’s Gothic fiction” (MacKenzie 410). This label given to Radcliffe is insulting. Simply

put, she is included in the genre, but not equal to male, Gothic authors. “Sorry Radcliffe, old gal, you are just not sexy enough for this boys’ club. I hear they are willing to accept you in the Romantic genre,” said no scholar ever, but when Nichols describes Radcliffe’s work as discreet sexuality, the farcical quote seems more truthful than not.

Scholars tend to view Radcliffe’s scant sexual details as a sign that her heroines are sexless, not in the sense that her females are without sexual organs, but that the females cannot see themselves as sexual. Even in the most assaultive situations, Emily does not register her sexuality, ignoring the implications of the man who grabs her waist in a darkened hallway. The officer, claiming to save her from isolation, offers to bring Emily to the party, a gathering which is described by the heroine as a scene of vice. She refuses his invitation and despite his aggressive hold on her, tells him, “I thank you for the kindness of your intention,” (*Udolpho* 364). She clearly does not understand, or want to understand, his true motive for bringing her to the party, and Radcliffe supports Emily’s naivety about her body when she writes that “she replied, without appearing to understand him” after she thanks him for his kindness (*Udolpho* 364). Nina daVinci Nichols’s article “Place and Eros in Radcliffe, Lewis, and Brontë” also supports the idea of the heroine’s inability to recognize her sexual maturity when she writes in reference to Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: “They learn instead, vicariously, that the wages of passion are madness, disease and death and so conquer the inner self by repression and sublimation. Emily kills the beast within before it kills her. Or, to speak in the book’s own metaphor, at novel’s end she escapes from her castle of innocence into an equally innocent love nest with Valancourt” (190).

By suggesting that Radcliffe represses the sexuality of her heroines, critics are inadvertently making her work more graphic and darker than Lewis’s, who admits his female

characters are sexual. By recognizing that Lewis's female characters are sexual, the readers, in a disturbing way, better understand why the women are raped. Compared to Radcliffe's heroines who are never technically raped but who are presented as sexless by critics, the argument then forces the reader to view the women as children, calling to mind ideas of pedophilia, thus creating a much more disturbing message. However, the pedophilic implications are misleading. Radcliffe never suggests her heroines are sexless; in fact, she encourages the reader to think of them as sexually mature by her constant placement of men, more specific, the supernatural, in her heroine's bed chamber. If Radcliffe's plot necessitated a private interaction between the man and the heroine, she could have conveniently written a scene where he finds the heroine during the day, but instead she chooses to have him secretly enter her room while she is sleeping. Radcliffe purposely creates sexual tension because she is highlighting the fact that the genre is not just about a man who chases a woman because he wishes to marry her, but specifically about a man who needs to impregnate the girl in order to claim the property he has stolen.

Radcliffe showcases the sexual danger of the Gothic genre by creating the supernatural, a sexual being who frequently experiences erotic exchanges with her female characters. The being's power manifests from the female's imagination. In a scene where there is undoubtedly a physical person outside of Emily's door, she still believes it is the supernatural who is haunting her, his sexual prey; Radcliffe writes, "She called to know who was there, and receiving no answer, repeated the call; but a chilling silence followed. While she yet listened, the breathing was distinctly heard, and her terror was not soothed, when, looking round her wide and lonely chamber, she again considered her remote situation" (*Udolpho* 282-3). Prior to this, Emily is alerted of the mysterious figure's presence by a loud knock on her door, but despite the physical knocking she hears, the silence, followed by heavy breathing, makes her question the humanity

of the person. Convinced it is the supernatural being, Emily then remembers her remote situation, which is a polite way of alerting the reader that she knows the being could rape her without anyone hearing. I argue that the erotic supernatural then becomes the reason Radcliffe allows her heroines to consummate their marriages, and thus achieve their sexual identity, after the novel ends because they are already subjected to visual objectification prior. Radcliffe, as their “mother” wishes to protect her “daughters” from being further assaulted by the viewers (both the reader and supernatural seer).

A Brief Summary of *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*¹⁰

¹⁰ See the appendix for a complete summary of the novels' plots.

Gothic Architecture: Competing Male and Female Spaces within the Novel

While the plot of both Radcliffe novels is similar, also in common is their use of Gothic architecture: an abandoned, haunted house. A familiar trope within the Gothic, the house, with its many secrets and mysterious rooms, serves to remind the females of their unlikely escape and powerless position within the structure. The patriarch, as the owner and captor, becomes a symbol for the house, which is a representation of a male-dominated space. Anne Williams's *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* explains the relationship between the patriarch and Gothic structure. She begins the explanation of Gothic space in her article "The House of Bluebeard," a chapter written about George Coleman's drama *Blue-Beard* (1697). Bluebeard, a perverse and violent husband, tricks women into marrying him for his riches, and then literally tricks his wives into getting killed. Williams writes: "she is trapped, confronted with his definition of her as unruly matter, deservedly punished, the dirty secret in the house of culture." By the word "culture," Williams refers to the male's property. Because Bluebeard owns the property, thereby owning his wives, who own no property, the house is able to become a figure of Bluebeard himself; Williams writes, "Bluebeard's castle –and by extension the characteristically Gothic setting—represents... a figure for Bluebeard himself—his 'property' is coextensive with his 'properties'" (43). Williams clarifies her assertion that the house is an extension of the male by specifically linking the most masculine features of the building to represent the man; she writes, "its walls, towers, ramparts suggest external identity... The walls of the house both defend it from the outside world ('A man's home is his castle')" (44). By linking the external property of the house with the owner, Williams creates the image that he is the very house he inhabits, thus turning the man into an even greater threat to the female, especially in regards to her innocence.

If the man embodies the very house he lives in, the female is not safe in any room, including her bedroom, which becomes a false sanctuary for the females, who, because of their naivety, believe that the bedroom is the only room in the house that offers them protection from male intruders.

Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* features a Bluebeard-like villain, Montoni, who is seemingly able to haunt Emily by his physical self and through his house. The reader is introduced to Udolpho by Montoni, who tells Emily, "'There,' ... 'is Udolpho'" (*Udolpho* 216). Montoni, by being the first person to identify the castle, is establishing that the castle belongs to him, signifying to the reader that the castle and he are unified as one, terrifying object. Not only does Montoni's claim to the castle suggest his relationship to the structure, but the way Radcliffe describes the castle physically mirrors Montoni. The reader is given the first description of Udolpho from Emily's perspective, "The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets" (*Udolpho* 216). The sheer size of the castle, coupled with its defenses, remind the reader of Emily's initial impression of Montoni, "Emily felt admiration, but not the admiration that leads to esteem; for it was mixed with a degree of fear she knew not exactly wherefore" (*Udolpho* 117). Emily is both amazed and fearful of the castle, which mirrors her feelings towards Montoni, and her dread of both objects is magnified because of the close proximity the castle and he have to one another. Emily sees the defenses of the castle, its strength, and then at the same time sees Montoni, who is equally strong and terrifying. Emily characterizes the castle as "Silent, lonely and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign," (*Udolpho* 216) an almost perfect description of Montoni himself. Emily, by personifying the castle, is able to join the established fear of Montoni to the fear of Udolpho

itself, suggesting to the reader that Udolpho with its “mouldering walls” and “battlements” is experiencing an awakening with the return of the owner. Without Montoni, its living entity, the castle has turned into a rotting ruin; however, as soon as he returns, the castle begins to regenerate. Emily surveys Udolpho further: “instead of banners, [there] now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them” (*Udolpho* 216). As Montoni approaches Udolpho, the castle and its elements awaken, symbolized by the rush of wind. Not only is Montoni able to bring the castle to life, his disappearance from it implies that his reappearance turns it into an unnatural object, a place where nothing living can grow. The castle is overgrown with wild plants, but as soon as Montoni returns, a supernatural-like wind sweeps over the property, implying that the plants are shuddering from his approach; it is as if Montoni is killing the plants’ spirit, undoing everything natural, and suggesting that the castle itself is a tainted, unnatural object just as Montoni’s character is.

The idea of Montoni as an unnatural character has a more significant implication in regards to the castle, aside from its inability to foster new life. The word implies that Montoni’s relationship to the structure is forced in the sense that he has falsely claimed himself as the owner and has molded the castle in his image: desolate, rugged, and overpowering. As Emily will eventually find out, Montoni is not the proper owner of Udolpho.¹¹ He has stolen the property, taken the house by force, killing the real owner in order to establish himself as the patriarch, which ultimately prevents him from fully embodying the house itself. The supernatural

¹¹ Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest* will make a similar discovery.

being will be revealed as the true owner of the house and, as such, fully meets the criteria Anne Williams lists as necessary to fulfill the role of Gothic patriarch.¹²

As male dominated as the structure appears to be, Anne Williams argues that the Gothic setting is not only a male space, but split between male and female aspects. She writes that the male space is represented by the outside of the house as a way of hyper-masculinizing the owner, turning him into an object as strong as the house he inhabits. If the male space is associated with the external aspects of the house, the female space, as dictated by her entrapment within the structure, must then be associated with the inside of the house. Williams argues that not only is the inside space feminized, but it is also sexualized. Williams designates the rooms that contain sexuality; she says, “its dungeons, attics, secret rooms, and dark hidden passages connote the culturally female, the sexual, the maternal, the unconscious” (44). According to the Gothic, the heroine seeks to escape from the house and explores the only places she is allowed to go: the dungeons, attics, and secret rooms, and while she is examining the rooms, the man within the house, led by his desire for her, searches for her, thus turning the private rooms she inhabits into the sexual, culturally female space Williams refers to. Although the heroine unintentionally sexualizes every space she encounters because of her desirability, the most feminized and dangerous space the heroine can occupy is her bedroom.

Cynthia Griffin Wolff’s “The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality” explains the sexual anxiety the female characters experience while in their own bedroom, arguably the most private and feminine space in the Gothic structure. Wolff argues that the heroine’s sexual anxiety is showcased by Radcliffe’s use of doors. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily’s bedroom door is only able to be bolted from the outside, and also can be

¹² The supernatural being as the rightful owner will be discussed in more detail later in the thesis.

accessed by way of a secret staircase. Emily's apprehension about her room, as Wolff argues, is "a source of repeated and continuing terror as each night the fearful fantasy returns: 'What if some of these ruffians,' said she, 'should find out the private staircase, and in the darkness of night steal into my chamber!'" (Wolff 210). Emily's fear of having someone break into her room is not trivial. The so-called ruffians she imagines are not there to steal her possessions, and although Emily cannot voice her true concern, she is actually worried about being raped. Therefore the anxiety she expresses regarding her room, specifically the door that cannot be locked, is in relation to her physical self. Wolff explains this concept; she writes, "Thus the Gothic building (whatever it may be) that gives the fiction its name may become in this treatment of the tradition a way of identifying a woman's body" (210). Similar to the male's embodiment of the house, the bedroom becomes a metaphor for the female body, and while Radcliffe never allows the female character to be raped, the females experience sexual endangerment while in the ostensible security of their own bedrooms.

Both Emily and Adeline are haunted inside the castle (or abbey) by a supernatural who causes sexual anxiety. The supernatural being's most well-known intrusion on Emily occurs during the middle of the night in her bedroom. Awakened by a sound, Emily then witnesses this scene: "she saw the door move, and then slowly open, and perceived something enter the room, but the extreme duskiess prevented her distinguishing what it was" (*Udolpho* 247). Radcliffe chooses the pronoun "it," allowing an element of ambiguity that alerts readers that the being is indeed supernatural. Emily, too, believes in the figure's inhumanity when Radcliffe writes, "the extreme duskiess prevented her distinguishing what it was" (*Udolpho* 247). Despite Emily's imaginative belief regarding the figure's origin, her current fear is manifested because of her sexual vulnerability. Although maintaining that "something" entered her room and not someone,

the being is assumed male because of Emily's constant preoccupation with her isolation in a remote area of the castle, a structure filled with unknown and immoral men. The switch from an asexual being to a male supernatural is apparent as the scene progresses and the being's sexual threat is revealed. Emily, afraid as to what the figure's purpose in her room is, watches it with bated breath, but her state of unease is perplexed by its hesitance. Rather than acting out in violence, the figure is passive, remaining idle for a long period of time before "advancing slowly towards the bed" where it "stood silently at the feet, where the curtains, being a little open" (*Udolpho* 247) and watched Emily in her bed, believing her asleep. Its approach toward the bed makes Emily understand the intentions of the being, namely that not just "it" will rape her, but *he* will rape her. Only a man can take her innocence; therefore, it can be assumed that the supernatural being, having the power to scare Emily sexually, is not only a spirit, but also male. After he comes near her bed, Radcliffe claims he gazes upon Emily and his look "deprived her of the power of discrimination, as well as that of utterance" (*Udolpho* 247). Obviously Emily is unable to speak because she is terrified, but what makes her so sexually afraid? Yes, an unknown figure is in her room, but as Radcliffe clearly states, he does not try to violate her, he only wishes to look upon her while she is in bed. While a man's presence in a woman's room does not shock the modern reader, it is important to keep in mind that Emily is in a state of undress, in a bed with curtains undrawn, and in a room with a door that is able to be unlocked from the outside. All of these things combined serve as a warning that like the curtains and the door, Emily's body is able to be opened and unlocked against her will.

Adeline unlike Emily experiences an encounter with the supernatural that occurs while she is dreaming. While it can be argued that a dream hardly represents a personal encounter because it is imagined, Adeline believes it to be a supernatural experience because of its

vividness; she thinks, “they [the dreams] were so very terrible, returned so often, and seemed to be connected with each other, that she could scarcely think them accidental; yet, why they should be supernatural, she could not tell” (*Romance* 110). In her dream, she approaches a dying man, and, as Julia Kristeva’s theory of the abject suggests, she is both interested and appalled by his presence, this man who occupies the liminal space between disturbing horror and fascinating object. Feeling compassion for him, Adeline attempts to give comfort to his transition; however, as she moves towards him, she becomes frightened when she views him up close. Radcliffe writes, “the spectacle shocked her, and she started back, but he suddenly stretched forth his hand, and seizing her’s, grasped it with violence” (*Romance* 108). The grabbing of Adeline’s hand symbolizes that he feels a spiritual connection to her, and while his reach for her hand hardly seems sexual, it is the violence with which he grabs her that raises the question of his intent. While hand holding is often thought of as romantic and sentimental, the fact that he grabs her hand and refuses to let go suggests that, on a certain level, he wishes to possess her, to keep her with him. By not releasing her hand, he is making Adeline aware that not only can a man, or men in general, overpower her, control her, but that she is susceptible of being caught against her will. Therefore the dream serves as a warning of an impending horror, and as the man suggests by grabbing her hand, she is not only in danger, but in danger sexually.

The Supernatural's Purpose within the Text

Although the females are placed into potentially sexual situations with the supernatural, the being never physically compromises the heroines, which raises the question of his purpose. As mentioned previously, I argue he is used to remind the heroines of the real danger that exists in the house: the physical men. Radcliffe uses the supernatural because, more than the physical males themselves, who really pose the threat of rape, his ability to infest the female imagination is more terrifying than the actual scenarios the females are placed in. For example, after Adeline's initial visit from the specter, he continues to haunt her and each dream after becomes more vivid and sexual. Radcliffe describes Adeline's second dream to the readers: "The man she had before seen, soon after stood by the coffin, and, lifting the pall, she saw beneath it a dead person, whom she thought to be the dying Chevalier she had seen in her former dream: his features were sunk in death, but they were yet serene. While she looked at him, a stream of blood gushed from his side, descending to the floor" (*Romance* 109). Although the gush of blood is reported to be coming from his side, it covers the floor surrounding Adeline, a crude symbol for the loss of her virginity. Even if Adeline were to get raped, the incident, albeit cruel and graphic, would not result in her being covered in blood. The being, combined with Adeline's idea of sex, is more horrific than the actual experience because of the graphic nature of the dreams.

But how can a figure who does not harm the females remind the heroines their virginity is in danger? After all, Emily's being only enters her bedroom, coming close enough to look at her while she sleeps, and Adeline's figure never really has physical contact with her because their exchange takes place within a dream. The important thing to note in these two scenarios is that both supernatural beings intrude upon the female while she is in her most private spaces, her

bedroom and mind. Adeline's supernatural, although entrapped in a dream, has influence over her emotions, manipulating her to believe she is in sexual danger. More so for Emily than Adeline, the invasion of her privacy coupled with his gaze has the power to objectify her, which then becomes for her a pseudo-sexual encounter in the sense that it causes her to begin thinking of herself as a sexual being. Her discovery of her womanhood is brought on during the exchange with the unknown male presence in her room, and his appearance would allow her to recognize the fact that a man and female alone together in a dark bedroom is a private experience reserved for man and wife. Thus her understanding of what occurs in the bedroom between man and wife leads her to a feeling of sexual anxiety regarding the situation. Radcliffe provides evidence that Emily no longer views herself as sexless after the initial visit with the supernatural; she writes, "If she [Emily] had been subject to vanity, she might have supposed this figure to be some inhabitant of the castle, who wandered under her casement in the hope of seeing her" (*Udolpho* 348). Although Emily's character does not speak these words directly, the narrator suggests that she is thinking them, attempting to turn the situation with the being into a harmless, flattering exchange. Mary Poovey's essay "The Proper Lady" discusses the heroine's extreme naivety; she writes, "so thoroughly protected by her guardian that she has never felt –much less learned to understand –genuine desire" (25). Erotic experiences are necessary for the heroine to learn, Poovey argues, and serve to mature her, but only after she is freed from her overprotective parents. Emily's protective state is dispelled when the being enters her room at night, and she is unable to look at its nighttime visit as mere flattery. Even after Morano's character is revealed to be the supernatural presence, the intent of the intrusion is sexual and Emily knows this. Her innocence cannot be recovered after the encounter for she now fully understands what the men surrounding her are capable of, and no longer does a touch let alone a grabbing of the waist

become harmless. Thus the supernatural, by placing himself into a sexualized situation with the heroine, is positioning himself as a guardian-like figure by teaching her of the true nature of the men surrounding her.

Not only does Radcliffe give the supernatural a protector-like role, but she also takes the idea of him as a guardian further by allowing the heroines to ascribe paternal characteristics to him. The lack of paternal (or maternal) affection in the house, combined with their feeling of vulnerability, allows the heroines to easily fantasize that their encounters with the being are familial, non-threatening exchanges between “father” figure and “daughter.” Much like the Gothic genre, Radcliffe’s heroines are guilty of attempting to rewrite, not the past, but the experiences they have while imprisoned that cause them anxiety. Frequently throughout *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily encounters haunting, inexplicable music of which she is unable to locate the source. Emily first hears the music in her room while allowing herself to indulge in reverie about her father. Her melancholy causes her to relate the music to her deceased father, rationalizing that it is he who plays her the song. Radcliffe writes, “Long-suffering had made her spirits peculiarly sensible to terror, and liable to be affected by the illusions of superstition. –It now seemed to her, as if her dead father had spoken to her in that strain, to inspire her mind” (*Udolpho* 9). As soon as Emily believes the music is a message from her father, she dismisses the possibility, her father’s advice returning to her thoughts, telling her “to acquire that steady dignity of mind, that can alone counterbalance the passions, and bear us, as far as is compatible with our nature, above the reach of circumstances” (*Udolpho* 9). Despite Emily allowing her reason to check her imagination, she cannot help remembering how Udolpho came into Montoni’s possession. The reader is told, “She remembered the singular event, connected with the castle, which had given it into the possession of its present owner; and, when she considered

the mysterious manner, in which its late possessor had disappeared . . . her mind was impressed with an high degree of solemn awe; so that, though there appeared no clue to connect that event with the late music, she was inclined fancifully to think they had some relation to each other. At this conjecture, a sudden chillness ran through her frame; she looked fearfully upon the duskiness of her chamber, and the dead silence, that prevailed there, heightened to her fancy its gloomy aspect” (*Udolpho* 311). This scene is important because Emily is forced to admit that the supernatural exists, and the real reason for her sudden chill is not because she remembers the disappearance of the owner, but because she is connecting the being who violates her bedroom with the same being who appears to be playing the music, the music that “her dead father had spoken to her.” Thus she accidentally connects the supernatural in her bedroom to the idea of her father, and as this thesis will later discuss, the relationship between the being and its connection to her biological father becomes further complicated by the sexual implications of the specter.

Adeline as well as Emily is able to connect the supernatural to an image of her biological father. Radcliffe establishes a bond between Adeline and the stranger, using their prisoner connection as the reason she feels remorse over the man’s death; however, she and the man appear to have a stronger emotional attachment, a bond that feels more paternal than friendly. After the being grabs her hand, Radcliffe describes him to the reader: “[she] saw a man, who appeared to be about thirty, with the same features. He smiled tenderly upon her” (*Romance* 108). Radcliffe gives a clue to the audience when she uses the phrase “with the same features,” suggesting that the man and Adeline look alike, but it is not merely coincidental that the two share similar countenances; rather, the tender smile he bestows on Adeline implies that he is not

surprised about their resemblance because he recognizes her as his daughter.¹³ Although Adeline does not know at the time of their encounter that she is dreaming of her father, after she awakes, she becomes obsessed with discovering the man's identity and the circumstances surrounding his death. She fervently pursues the chambers near her room where she stumbles (literally) on a rusty dagger and a faded manuscript, and as much as she is frightened to discover the truth, she reads the diary out of necessity to understand the meaning of her dream. The diary tells the tale of an innocent man who is captured in the woods by thieves and brought to the abbey, he believes, because they wish to rob him, but shortly after being kidnapped, the man realizes the men intend to steal from him and kill him. As Adeline reads the man's story, she sympathizes with him, realizing that he and she share similar fates, and in the back of her mind is the realization that they also have another trait in common – their looks. Radcliffe subtly hints to the reader that Adeline knows the man in the dream really is her father, giving the reader sentences such as, “at the same time some words were uttered in a voice she heard before” (*Romance* 110), and eventually the reader's suspicion is confirmed after Adeline is kidnapped. She laments her situation, addressing her frustration at her father; she cries, “‘O my father!’ said she, ‘why did you abandon your child? If you knew the dangers to which you have exposed her, you would, surely, pity and relieve her’” (*Romance* 166). While it may seem natural for Adeline to seek her father in this scene, as the father represents a daughter's protector, it is unnatural for her to turn

¹³ Radcliffe reveals at the end of *The Romance of the Forest* that the man in the dream is Adeline's father who was taken to the abbey by Montalt, his brother, and killed in order to receive the family's inheritance.

to her father as the reader knows of their estrangement.¹⁴ Therefore it can only mean that she is referring to the supernatural figure from her dream who she believes is her biological father.

What, then, is the purpose of using a supernatural being if only to connect him to an image of the heroine's biological father, ultimately implying that the figure is not supernatural at all? On a simplistic level, Radcliffe bestows mystical qualities onto her men in order to fulfill the criteria of a Gothic novel, but by so doing, critics comment that Radcliffe's works were categorized as popular rather than serious literature. Yael Shapira argues that Radcliffe was able to differentiate herself from vulgar Gothic authors by elevating the use of the supernatural; she comments, "By providing a rational explanation for uncanny events, Radcliffe's narratives didactically mirrored the move from superstition to enlightenment and thereby claimed a greater respectability. It enabled her to include the supernatural while signaling her distance from it; to incorporate ghosts into her text and at the same time qualify, and ultimately negate their presence" (456). Shapira, by arguing Radcliffe used the supernatural to make her story less commonplace, subtly implies that the author enjoyed Gothic literature and wanted to write a story using a mystical being, but recognized that by so doing, she would be labeled as ill-bred; therefore, to write the story she wanted, she had to change the genre to suit the middle and upper class readers. By changing the supposed rules surrounding the use of the supernatural, and arguing that he is a symbol for enlightenment, Shapira is turning him into a type of arbitrary figure within the text. By boiling Radcliffe's novels down to enlightenment texts, critics are guilty of ignoring the carnality within her stories. Radcliffe is not so crude as to explain everything to the reader, but her ambiguity on certain topics, such as rape, combined with her use

¹⁴ Raised by a thief, Adeline constantly questions the paternity of the man who claims to be her father. Someone so evil could not possibly be related to honest Adeline, or so she believes; this point is ironic because Radcliffe will later identify Montalt, the villain, as her uncle.

of the supernatural during the sexual assault scenes, points to the fact that the supernatural being is not meant to be a symbol for enlightened thought; rather, his purpose is to remind the heroines of the real danger that exists in the house, the physical men.

After their encounter with the supernatural beings, Emily and Adeline are better able to realize the sexual implications of the physical men assaulting them, Morano and Montalt, respectively. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe reveals that it is not the supernatural being but Morano who invades Emily's bedroom.¹⁵ Before the revelation of Morano, Emily, who is terrified by the mysterious being in her room, is frightened further when Radcliffe tells the readers, "Certain remembrances now struck upon her heart, and almost subdued the feeble remains of her spirits" (*Udolpho* 247). While this sentence is presumably meant to reveal that Emily recognizes the countenance of Morano, there are other assumptions Radcliffe would have the reader make; that is, shortly before Emily's epiphany, she ascertains that the figure in her room is male, and the "remembrances" which "struck upon her heart" is Radcliffe's way of alerting the readers that Emily is now aware of the sexual intent attached to this stranger, especially because of his close proximity to her bed. However, before anything can happen to Emily, the man picks up the lamp in order to survey the chamber and Emily is able to recognize him; the reader is told, "springing towards the bed, Emily discovered – Count Morano! She gazed at him in speechless affright, while he, throwing himself on his knee at the bed-side, besought her to fear nothing, and, having thrown down his sword, would have taken her hand, when the faculties, that terror had suspended, suddenly returned, and she sprung from the bed" (*Udolpho* 247). Despite the specter being revealed as Morano, Emily is no less frightened than

¹⁵ Morano, Montoni's friend, is betrothed to Emily at one point in the story. After Montoni leaves Italy for Udolpho, the engagement with Morano is ended. Upset over his loss of Emily, Morano follows Montoni to Udolpho in order to free his betrothed.

she was before she thought a stranger had entered her bedroom; the sexual threat remains the same in both light and darkness. For example, before she knows who it is, the figure is described as springing toward the bed, and the reader, along with Emily, can only believe that he is running toward her in order to rape her. After the light reveals it is Morano, he stops running and instead throws himself on his knee by her bed, a position meant to resemble a proposal, and by so doing, he is intentionally trying to trick Emily into believing he is decorous; he has come to not only rescue her, but to prove his love by offering to marry her. However, his eagerness to stop running toward her only happens after she recognizes who he is, which suggests to the reader that he only stopped moving because she identified him, and he cannot go through with the rape without the disguise of darkness. Morano, realizing he has taken her by surprise, beseeches Emily to fear nothing, but Radcliffe mentions he only throws down his sword after he has kneeled by her bed in order to plead with her. While the sword itself suggests violence, the alternative meaning of the pointed object, sexual penetration, cannot be ignored, especially because Morano is pleading with Emily to marry him so that he can supposedly save her from Udolpho. While marrying Emily in order to free her from Montoni seems courteous, Morano is forgetting that she abhors him, and even if she did agree to marry him in order to escape the castle, she would be entering into a marriage that would ultimately result in rape because of her lack of affection for him.

While it can be argued Emily is able to understand Morano's intentions because of his actions, it is not until the supernatural enters her room and, as previously argued, stares at her while she is in her bed that she better understands her maturity as a woman. The reader realizes she feels this way because the heroine's naivety would not allow her to believe that a man would be sexually attracted to a child; therefore, she would have to be a grown woman in order to elicit the attention of a man. A counterargument for this theory occurs, however, and that is that Emily is

already a mature woman before her entrance into Udolpho. After all, she is technically engaged to Valancourt and is therefore deemed by society to be sexually and emotionally mature enough for marriage, but Emily only agrees to the union because she believes it was her father's dying wish, not because she feels any emotional or sexual attraction to him.

Similarly, Adeline is also only able to realize the sexual implications of Montalt, who attempts to kidnap and marry her, through her encounter with the supernatural being. Montalt tries to persuade Adeline to love him, but after failed attempts at winning her trust, he kidnaps her and takes her to his private villa where he intends to marry her. From the moment Adeline enters the villa, the scene is described in pure decadence: liquor, fruit, silk, and perfume all surround her, and the scenery is not the only enchantment the villa contains. While inside, Adeline becomes inert, mesmerized by music: "Perceiving all change of escape was removed, she remained for some time given up to sorrow and reflection; but was at length drawn from her reverie by the notes of soft music, breathing such dulcet and entrancing sounds, as suspended grief, and waked the soul to tenderness and pensive pleasure" (*Romance* 157). The villa seems to contain an erotic essence, and Radcliffe implies that all within the building are subject to its power, suggesting that Adeline might lose control and engage in sexual contact involuntarily. However, Adeline is able to break the trance, and the reader can only assume her ability to resist passionate feelings is because of her innate sense of goodness, an angelic display of power that is seemingly able to ward off the Marquis's advances; Radcliffe tells the reader, "and with a look, on which was impressed the firm dignity of virtue, yet touched with sorrow, she awed him to forbearance" (*Romance* 163). After being reproached, Montalt thoroughly intends to romanticize his proposal, but his offer of marriage seems more of a threat than a romantic confession. He tells her, "'Are you not now in my power, and do I not forbear to take advantage of your

situation? Do I not make you the most honorable proposals?” (*Romance* 159). Not only are his words laced with violent subtleties, but he is frequently prone to passionate, lustful behavior that verges on attempted rape. While trying to tell Adeline how much she means to him, the Marquis is so overwhelmed with his supposed love for her that he throws himself upon her. Radcliffe writes, “He threw his arm round her, and would have pressed her towards him, but she liberated herself from his embrace” (*Romance* 163). While Montalt’s actions are not subtle, Adeline fully understands his implications, as seen by her vigilance to escape from his grasp. As argued, her ability to understand she is in sexual danger is possible because of the previous experience with the supernatural being. I argue, had she experienced Montalt’s physicality before the encounter with the being, her naivety would have allowed him to continue his pursuit and could have concluded with her rape.

The Superpaternal

Radcliffe, by placing the supernatural into a guardian role and an image of her female characters' biological fathers, is playing with the Gothic genre's idea of patriarchy. She creates competing "fathers" represented by the supernatural and the physical men of the house in order to capture the dynamic of the Gothic (the old vs. new power). However, unlike Walpole, the heralded father of the Gothic, Radcliffe does not give patriarchal status to the physical man, but instead allows her supernatural to claim the title. She does this by revealing that the respected houses are not truly owned by Montoni, LaMotte or Montalt. She connects the ownership of the house to the supernatural being, thus implying that the physical males, who are subservient to the true owner, are mere tenants or domestic servants to the specter. Eve Tavor Bannet in *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel* supports the subservient argument when she provides a definition of the eighteenth-century domestic; she writes, "the word *domestic* was applied not only to people living in the same household but to members of different households who shared the same chief or family head" (127). If the supernatural is the true owner of the house, the "chief" or "family head" as Bannet phrases it, then the physical men (Montoni, LaMotte, and Montalt) are domestics in the sense that they, along with the female, follow the same head of house albeit unknowingly. Therefore the physical men are unable to become the true Gothic patriarch because of their lack of ownership.

Domesticating the physical man then places him into an effeminized role, which again prevents him from obtaining the role of ultimate patriarch. An example of this process occurs in *The Romance of the Forest* with La Motte and Adeline. Radcliffe describes La Motte in terms of a Gothic heroine, giving him all the stereotypical, feminine traits that her characters are faulted

with having; she writes, “He was a man whose passions often overcame his reason, and, for a time, silenced his conscience; as it was, he was always weak, and sometimes a vicious member of society; yet his mind was active, and his imagination vivid, which, cooperating with the force of passion, often dazzled his judgement and subdued his principle” (*Romance* 2). Claudia Johnson *Equivocal Beings* in her chapter “Less than Man and More than Woman: *The Romance of the Forest*” labels Radcliffe’s men, especially La Motte, as overly sentimental. Johnson argues that Radcliffe’s feminization of La Motte is used to equalize both sexes, but the fact remains that La Motte is overly tearful and emotional and Adeline is firm, active and stereotypically masculine. Based on the behaviors of Adeline and La Motte, it is clear that Radcliffe does not equalize the sexes at all but instead reverses the male and female roles. She creates a more independent and dominant woman, a progressive idea for the time, but allows La Motte, and even Montalt, to fall into the role of passive female. Johnson’s argument is persuasive, but there is still a very clear separation between the sexes, suggesting that someone, whether male or female, must always be subservient to the other. It is hard to ignore La Motte’s feminine passivity when Radcliffe provides the readers with the following scene: “Adeline with a smile, inquired of La Motte, if he believed in spirits. The question was ill-timed, for the present scene impressed its terrors upon La Motte, and, in spite of endeavour [sic], he felt a superstitious dread stealing upon him” (*Romance* 18). La Motte’s description of his fear while exploring the abandoned abbey mirrors the thoughts of a Gothic heroine, and Radcliffe further insults his manliness when she allows Adeline to question his bravery. Radcliffe, by describing LaMotte stereotypically as a Gothic heroine instead of as a Gothic male antagonist, removes any legitimization he would have at claiming the role of patriarch. Despite Adeline’s masculine habits, she too would be unable to represent male dominance in the household because she is

obviously female. Thus the male supernatural becomes the proper owner and true patriarch, and is not only labeled as such, but becomes a superpaternal, a term I created to mean the ultimate father.

The superpaternal's status as the ultimate father is drawn from two sources. First, as already discussed, he is connected to a paternal figure both as a guardian and by becoming a type of mirror for the heroine's biological fathers. The second aspect of the superpaternal is that he, more than the physical owners of the house, the false fathers to Adeline and Emily, is able to possess the house by his ascribed characteristics as a specter. As Williams argues in *The Art of Darkness*, the Gothic dictates that the owner and the house are unified, and although Radcliffe connects Montoni to an image of the outside of the house, he is never omnipresent like the supernatural. The reader is provided an example of the being's ability to be seen and unseen at will; he [a sentinel] says, "I saw something like a shadow flitting before me, as it were, at some distance. I stopped, when I turned the corner of the east tower, where I had seen this figure not a moment before, –but it was gone!" (*Udolpho* 350). The being defies Montoni's men, proving by his ability to evade them that he has mastered the house, utilizing mysterious passageways otherwise unknown. By exploring the castle, the supernatural forces the structure to reveal its secrets, claiming his ownership by making the false owner, Montoni, reveal the truth regarding his ownership of Udolpho. In a scene where Montoni relates to his companions that he inherited the castle from a female relative, the supernatural interrupts his tale and forces him to tell the truth. The scene then follows: "'Repeat them!' said a voice. Montoni was silent; the guests looked at each other, to know who spoke: but they perceived that each was making the same inquiry... The servants were now summoned, and the chamber was searched, but no person was found" (*Udolpho* 273-5). The supernatural challenges Montoni to repeat his ownership story not

only because he knows it is false, but also because he is asserting his dominance over Montoni and the structure. He wants Montoni to know that he understands the castle, especially the castle's secrets, better than the would-be possessor does. Only the supernatural is able to learn the house's secrets thus establishing himself as the proper owner, and he does all this despite Radcliffe's initial description of Montoni and Udolpho's reactive reunion. Montoni is not animating the castle at all; rather, the supernatural, the true owner, is reacting to Montoni's return, calling the house into action in order to help the specter protect the heroine's innocence.

Radcliffe again establishes the supernatural's dominance over the physical patriarch in *The Romance of the Forest*. The first example involves LaMotte, who attempts to take over the abbey in the hopes of living there in order to escape from his creditors in Paris. He sees opportunity in the abbey and a place to create his home; his thoughts reveal, "The desolation of the spot was repulsive to his wishes; but he had only a choice of evils – a forest with liberty was not a bad home for one, who had too much reason to expect a prison" (*Romance* 23). After believing he has found a place of concealment, disturbance occurs within the abbey when the owner of the structure, Montalt, returns to reclaim the dwelling. LaMotte attempts to establish himself as the patriarch of the family by providing shelter, food, and protection, but is ultimately a failure when what little power he gains is taken from him by the current owner, the Marquis. Interestingly enough, even though Montalt is the possessor of the house, he too is unable to reign as patriarch over its inhabitants. Despite being the owner, his absence from the dwelling suggests that the house has somehow rejected his claim. Even his entrance to the story supports the idea that the house is unwilling to allow him in; Radcliffe writes, "a person, who, from his authoritative voice, appeared to be their leader, affirmed, that the lights had issued from this spot. Having said this, he again knocked loudly at the gate, and was answered only by hollow echoes.

Soon after, the violence of the assailants seeming to increase with every gust of the tempest, the gate, which was old and decayed, burst from its hinges and admitted them to the hall” (*Romance* 86-7). Despite Montalt’s authoritative nature, he still has to knock at his own house, a sign that he is apprehensive of intruding on the structure, and his illegitimacy is again shown when he and his men have to physically force their way into the abbey. As the owner, it seems strange that he should have to break into his own property, and the fact that he does, implies there is a presence within the house that does not want him there. The spirit of the supernatural, the man from Adeline’s dream, is the very force that prevents Montalt from reigning over the house. The man in the dream, Adeline’s real father, is the true proprietor of the dwelling, and as Adeline’s dream suggests, his spirit still haunts the structure, serving to remind Montalt that for as long as his memory remains, the Marquis will never be the true owner of the house.¹⁶

Aside from Montalt’s lack of residency within the house, there is another reason that provides evidence to suggest he is not the true owner. As previously mentioned, Adeline disobeys his will, refusing to marry him, and his inability to provide a wife for the household, thereby adding children to its numbers, disallows him from becoming the patriarch of the house. Without children, Montalt cannot be the true patriarch; rather, that role is reserved for the supernatural, or as previously named, the superpaternal, who is the only real father in the sense that he serves as a replacement for the heroine’s biological father. Montoni, LaMotte, and Montalt are never able to embody the father role despite their many attempts at forcing their patriarchal claim on the heroines. Emily never creates an emotional bond with Montoni, and LaMotte ultimately gives up any paternal right he has to Adeline when he chooses to save himself by allowing Montalt to pursue her sexually.

¹⁶ Montalt kills his older brother to obtain the wealth and status assigned to the first-born son.

The superpaternal, aside from becoming the true patriarch of the family, is also named as such because of his ability to represent a greater sexual threat than the physical males themselves. Radcliffe creates a more threatening being when she implies that the superpaternal, a fictitious object, is able to carry out a very physical and real human interaction, namely sex. Aside from the obvious fear associated with the being, Radcliffe uses the superpaternal in the abstract. Yes, he is a physical figure within the house, but he also represents a greater idea: a faceless and nameless attacker. In all of the exchanges with the superpaternal, the female character is unable to identify, or even see, her intruder. While this is conjecture, I believe Radcliffe was commenting, through her use of the supernatural, on not only the threat of rape, but women's inability during the eighteenth century to prove or acknowledge the attack.¹⁷

The superpaternal's sexual threat is also made greater by the fact that the women have linked him in a subconscious way to the idea of their physical fathers. As a result, the females are inadvertently placed into an incestuous-like relationship with the being. While the being never has sex with the female characters, he undoubtedly causes them to have unnatural feelings about men, feelings that verge on the uncanny. While Sigmund Freud's use of the word is not directly related to Radcliffe's works, his definition of the term is suitable for the heroine's feelings regarding their experiences with the superpaternal; he defines the word as "all that is terrible – to all that arouses dread and creeping horror" (*Uncanny* 1). His definition of the word almost seems tailored to the genre, especially Radcliffean Gothic, and although she is known for her terror provoking scenes and not for horror, Freud's use of the words "creeping" and "dread" align closely to the fear the heroines face. For example, a scene from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* elicits

¹⁷ For a discussion of the legal risks of alleging rape in this period, see Laurie Edelstein, "An Accusation Easily to be Made? Rape and Malicious Prosecution in Eighteenth-Century England."

these emotions from Emily who sees the supernatural on the battlements below her bedroom. The scene is described as “she perceived the figure move, and then wave what seemed to be its arm, as if to beckon her; and, while she gazed, fixed in fear, it repeated the action” (*Udolpho* 347). The use of the word “creeping” is especially poignant in this scene as the slowness in which the figure waves to Emily is reminiscent of Freud’s definition, filling her with dread. Emily is also fearful because she cannot determine whether or not the being actually exists, and the uncertainty associated with deciding whether or not an object exists has a lot to do with the idea of the uncanny. At this point in the story, Emily has already established that the supernatural being lurking in her bedroom was really Morano, but when she sees the figure on the battlements, she again believes him to be a specter, more specifically, a representation of her deceased father. Her willingness to believe the figure is actually her father has to do with the overwhelming vulnerability she feels within the house, but by admitting that the being is indeed her father, she also must accept that he has returned to her as a sexual deviant. This awkward familiarity is exactly what Freud is classifying when he writes about the uncanny; he further elaborates on the definition: “the ‘uncanny’ is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar” (*Uncanny* 3). Again the use of the word “uncanny” seems appropriate when applying it to Emily and Adeline’s relationship with the superpaternal. How can something familiar, that is their biological fathers, be classified as frightening? According to Freud, it becomes so because there is something new that is added to the familiar, and in the instance of Radcliffe’s supernatural, the new aspect is sex.

Emily’s supernatural experience is filled with sexual subtleties, but how can Adeline’s encounter with the being be defined as sexual? As mentioned previously, in one of the dreams, Adeline is surrounded by a pool of blood, a representation of her loss of virginity, but there is a

more obvious incestuous undertone in her dream which pertains to the identity of the man. While Radcliffe would have her readers believe Adeline is looking at the man in a daughterly fashion, there is no actual confirmation that he is indeed her father at this point in the story; therefore the assumptions the readers are making about her feelings toward the man could be a complete misreading, and the compassionate looks she gives him could be the tender condolences of a lover saying goodbye. For every hint Radcliffe makes about the man being Adeline's father, there is a misreading attached to the sentence, suggesting that the two could be lovers, creating an incestuous reading experience. Again the dream elicits images of lovers when the reader is told, "He called to her to follow him, and led her through a long passage to the foot of a staircase. Here she feared to proceed, and was running back, when the man suddenly turned to pursue her" (*Romance* 109). His pursuit of her mirrors the scene in *The Castle of Otranto* where Manfred seeks his daughter-in-law, purportedly in order to marry her, but the real reason for the chase is because he wants to rape and impregnate her. Adeline's filial yet incestuous feeling for the man creates confusion as to whether or not this fatherly, guardian figure is going to help prevent or carry out a sexual assault. Emily faces the same uncertainty about her superpaternal figure, and the unnatural feelings the heroine's have regarding sex and men could explain why Radcliffe allows her ostensible heroes to be absent for most of the story.

The Missing and Loveless Hero in Radcliffe's Novels

While Radcliffe's novels fall under the category of Gothic fiction, critics have been apt to define her style as Radcliffean, asserting that she is more of a romantic than horror writer, but strangely enough, for an author who is thought of as writing love stories, Radcliffe hardly includes her heroes at all in her novels; in fact, she downright ignores them in favor of focusing on her heroines and persecutors. Both Valancourt and Theodore, the heroes in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Romance of the Forest*, disappear for over half the novel. The heroine is ignorant of her beloved's whereabouts, and if she seems distraught over his disappearance, it is only out of selfish necessity. Radcliffe's heroines more often mourn the loss of their loves not because they miss them, but because they are trapped and require the help of the heroes in order to escape.

In *The Romance of the Forest*, Adeline laments that Theodore has been imprisoned and that she will again be friendless without him. Before Theodore is taken away, he suggests he and Adeline get married, an offer he thinks is essential to her safety; however, she is hesitant to accept the proposal despite the fact she knows she needs him in order to ward off the Marquis; Radcliffe writes, "Adeline was, for some time, too much agitated to reply; and though she had little to oppose to the arguments and pleadings of Theodore; though she had no friends to control, and no contrariety of interests to perplex her, she could not bring herself to consent thus hastily to a marriage with a man, of whom she had little knowledge" (*Romance* 190). Her thoughts speak more of rationality than love, and while Radcliffe disguises this reluctance with the knowledge that Adeline does not know Theodore well enough, her excuse does not seem true. A few lines later, the reader learns that Adeline and Theodore share "That similarity of taste

and opinion, which had at first attracted them, every moment now more fully disclosed. Their discourse was enriched by elegant literature, and endeared by mutual regard” (*Romance* 190). Their common interests contradict Adeline’s statement that she does not know Theodore well enough to marry him, and again, the choice of the words “endeared” and “regard” suggest more of a friendship than a romance to modern readers.

Although this scene takes place early in the novel, Radcliffe never allows Adeline to fully declare her love for Theodore. If anything, Radcliffe again plays with the male and female roles, making Theodore the weeping, overly emotional heroine while Adeline plays the role of heroic male. Later in the novel, when the two are reunited, Adeline thanks Theodore for saving her from the Marquis, expressing her gratitude simply; she says, “‘I know not how words can express my sense of the obligations I owe you’” (*Romance* 171). Theodore’s response to her is much more flowery and feminine; he says, “‘Ah! Call it not generosity,’ he replied, ‘it was love.’ He paused. Adeline was silent. After some moments of expressive emotion, he resumed; ‘But pardon this abrupt declaration...’ He paused again. Adeline was still silent” (*Romance* 171). Theodore takes on the role of emotional, love-struck woman, and although it can be argued that the text is unclear as to who is emoting expressively, Radcliffe purposely points out Adeline’s silence not once, but twice. Therefore it can be concluded that it is Theodore presumably crying during the exchange. It is worth noting that Theodore becomes further effeminized after he is stabbed during a sword fight with the Marquis and faces impending imprisonment. Adeline quite literally becomes the male hero when she saves Theodore, who is powerless over the guards. Adeline governs the opposing men, threatening them as if she were the Marquis herself; she tells them, “‘this gentleman cannot be removed in his present condition, without endangering his life, you will remember, that if he dies, yours will probably answer it’” (*Romance* 177). Although

Adeline does not specify what she means by “yours,” it can be assumed that she is referring to the men’s lives, a very masculine threat for a woman to make. While Radcliffe wishes the reader to believe that Adeline, at first, cannot agree to marry Theodore because she does not know him well enough, the real reason, I argue, is that she does not see him as sexually desirable male, but an overly emotional and weak female.

Emily and Valancourt’s relationship is also based on mutual gain as Emily wishes to be rescued from her imprisonment and Valancourt wishes to advance his position in society. When first introduced to the novel, the hero tells St. Aubert he is ““only a wanderer here”” (*Udolpho* 33). While St. Aubert admires the man’s spirit and is jealous of his freedom, more details surface about Valancourt that makes his position in society questionable. He tells St. Aubert that he is able to roam freely and without being harassed because of the way he is dressed; he says, ““This dress, too, gives me an ostensible business, and procures me that respect from the people, which would, perhaps, be refused to a lonely stranger, who had no visible motive for coming among them”” (*Udolpho* 34). The fact that Valancourt thought about his dress and the societal position it would acquire him suggests that he is not always dressed as nicely as he is, and that his status is much lower than he is leading Emily’s father to believe; however, rather than question his disguise, St. Aubert tells him that he admires his taste. While Valancourt’s upbringing implies noble roots, the reader learns he is the youngest brother, and as such, he would not be entitled to the property or wealth associated with his family name. Therefore when St. Aubert proposes an engagement to his daughter, Valancourt readily accepts with the understanding that he will own La Valle by possessing Emily. Women were often considered to aid in men’s “quest for social prestige,” according to Mary Poovey, in the eighteenth century. Poovey goes on to write that “most important, women were crucial pawns in the struggle for landed wealth, upon which both

political power and social prestige ultimately depended” (*The Proper Lady* 11). While Radcliffe implies Emily and St. Aubert are not wealthy, their property suggests otherwise. For why else would Madame Cheron refuse the titles to both plots of land to Montoni if they were not valuable commodities? Radcliffe supports the property’s value in a scene where Valancourt visits Emily shortly after her father’s death. Radcliffe notes that he was seen “expressing his admiration of the chateau, and its prospects” (*Udolpho* 101). Valancourt, as the younger brother, would then find a marriage to Emily respectable and the perfect opportunity to establish his own legacy; therefore, it is questionable as to whether or not Valancourt feels an emotional attachment to his fiancée or if he simply sees her as the object of aspiration that Poovey writes about.

Aside from the loveless relationship Radcliffe portrays between heroine and hero, there is another reason the author chooses to ignore the heroes for the majority of the story and that is because she is protecting her female characters from further sexual objectification from the viewers, both the readers and the superpaternal. Emily and Adeline’s sexual experiences have only been unnatural, overly erotic exchanges with men who want to rape them and men who are obsessed with them. As a result, the heroines do not possess a natural sexual desire and, because of their past experiences, both women are extremely averse to any sexual interaction, consensual or not. As potential rape victims, Adeline and Emily would then view sex in terms of conquest and dominance, not romance. Andrea Dworkin’s chapter “Possession” indirectly explains the view Emily and Adeline share regarding intimacy; she writes, “Intercourse is commonly written about and comprehended as a form of possession or an act of possession in which, during which, because of which, a man inhabits a woman, physically covering her and overwhelming her and at the same time penetrating her; and this physical relation to her –over her and inside her – is his

possession of her” (*Intercourse* 63). Dworkin’s comments regarding patriarchal dominance over the female are arguably similar to Radcliffe’s mentality regarding her female characters. While Radcliffe’s novels deceptively argue true love prevails, the underlying fact remains that Emily and Adeline live in a male dominated world where not only their lovers, but most of the men they encounter, view them as pleasure objects or merely things that can be sold (married off) for personal gain. Even when given a choice in marriage, as is the case with Madame Cheron who willingly marries Montoni, the marriage results in the wife’s loss of humanity. Emily’s aunt is used for her money (and most likely her body), imprisoned when she is unwilling to comply with Montoni’s wishes regarding her property, and murdered while attempting to voice her authority and independence. Although Madame Cheron’s example of marriage is extreme, the history of Radcliffe’s male characters allows the reader to assume that similar fates would befall Emily’s and Adeline’s marriages despite also having chosen their husbands.

Dworkin’s comments on marriage can be helpful in supporting Radcliffe’s argument that marriage objectifies women. The author’s choice to excuse her heroines from the shameful degradation they would undoubtedly experience during the consummation of their marriage is an act of love on the author’s part. However, Ann Ronald’s “Terror-Gothic: Nightmare and Dream in Ann Radcliffe and Charlotte Brontë” argues that by not allowing her heroines to consummate their marriages in the eyes of the audience was a regressive return to patriarchal bliss, or “fairy-tale sex” as she calls it; she writes, “One gets no sense of maturity, no suggestion of a heroine tempered by experience. Udolpho, filled with banditti and villains, could have been the setting for a number of initiation rites, especially since Radcliffe obliquely prepares her readers for certain activities by using sexual imagery to describe the castle. But sex never quite happens, impropriety never even takes shape, and experience never touches Emily’s body or mind” (180).

Again, Radcliffe is shamed for her heroine's lack of sexiness, but what critics ignore is that the heroines, "birthed" from Radcliffe's own pen, are protected by their "mother" who through her characterization of men recognizes the patriarchal dominance of the world but still chooses to fight for the female body and sexual privacy. Looking at Radcliffe's works, critics can argue that she is just as domineering as the patriarchs she creates in her novels because she allows her female characters to be subjected to sexual endangerment. However, she defends herself at the end of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, interjecting in the story to say, "And, if the weak hand, that has recorded this tale, has, by its scenes, beguiled the mourner of one hour of sorrow, or, by its moral, taught him to sustain it – the effort, however humble, has not been vain, nor is the writer unrewarded" (*Udolpho* 632). Interesting is her choice of the word "him" in the sentence which is being used as proof that she tries to teach females of their endangerment. By addressing the audience as male, despite her primary readership being female, I believe Radcliffe is expressing hope for a change in patriarchy and for a chance that a man might read her novel and attempt to understand the sexual anxiety and fright of women.

Conclusion: Radcliffe's Continuing Efforts to Fight against the Patriarchal Normative

The purpose of this thesis is to propose a new way of studying the supernatural being in Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and to also show the complexities of Ann Radcliffe as a Gothic, rather than a Romantic. Radcliffe literally becomes the mother of the Gothic when she creates her novels, and although she follows Walpole's initial Gothic model, one of a male creation story, she is able to make the genre unique not only through her use of the supernatural but also through her female characters. By recognizing and accepting the nature of the Gothic, Radcliffe understands that she must write a male, patriarchal story, and if the genre dictates that there must be a cruel and domineering man, then she must create a character to play that role; therefore the man of the Gothic cannot change, but what can change is how the female handles her imprisonment, and this is where Radcliffe begins to recreate the genre. Her female characters, while appearing to be stereotypical Gothic heroines, are really unique in the sense that they attempt to fight against their patriarchal authority. Although her heroines may not always be successful in such attempts, as is the case with Emily St. Aubert who tries to threaten Montoni with what DeLamotte terms "the dignity of virtue," her heroines begin to evolve in their fight against unwanted men. A particularly memorable moment in *The Romance of the Forest* is when Radcliffe first shows the physicality of Adeline. After hearing that she is set to wed Montalt within a night, she formulates a plan to escape, and almost with the bravado of a man she tells Peter, "we fly from enemies; strangers may prove friends: assist me but to escape from this forest, and you will claim my eternal gratitude: I have no fears beyond it" (*Romance* 147). Adeline tries to change her life in this moment and, although her plan is discovered and stopped, she does not stop reacting to the circumstances she faces. She

again attempts to run away from Montalt once she is trapped within his villa; the reader is told of her escape through the window: “she sprang forward and alighted safely in an extensive garden” (*Romance* 164). Despite Radcliffe’s heroines appearing content with their imprisonment periodically in the text, the author provides moments of activity that show the female’s capability to fight for her freedom. Radcliffe continuously experiments with her female characters, evolving them, making them physically stronger, especially her later heroines, in particular, Ellena from *The Italian*.

The Italian also fits the superpaternal model Radcliffe creates in *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* with the character Schedoni. From the moment Schedoni is introduced, the reader recognizes the mystery associated with him; Radcliffe writes, “when the form gliding toward them disappeared in the gloom of the arch... They heard no footstep pass them” (*Italian* 26). Unlike the other supernatural beings in Radcliffe’s works, Schedoni’s powers are never revoked by his physicality, meaning that even after the reader understands he is human, he still maintains his specter-like qualities until the end of the story. However, there is more to Schedoni than his mystical qualities; unlike Emily and Adeline’s supernatural being, Schedoni actually becomes the heroine’s biological father, not merely a figure for him. At one point in the story, he enters Ellena’s room while she sleeps in order to murder her (as Radcliffe would have her audience believe), but before he can go through with the act, he is halted when a picture falls from her dress. He demands to know who the man in the portrait is and mistakenly believes it is himself. Ellena explains that the image is of her father, and from this moment, Schedoni is helpless, terrified at what he might have done to his daughter had the picture not fallen from her robes. Although the reader later finds out that Schedoni is not her biological father, for a brief moment he actually embodies a patriarch, especially when Ellena sees the knife and specifically

thanks her father for protecting her; Radcliffe writes, “she resumed, ‘Why should you think it necessary to conceal the danger which has threatened me, since it is to you that I owe my deliverance from it? O! my father, do not deny me the pleasure of shedding these tears of gratitude, do not refuse the thanks, which are because of you! While I slept upon that couch, while a ruffian stole upon my slumber – it was you, yes! can I ever forget that it was my father, who saved me from his poniard!’” (*Italian* 287). Ellena’s speech is the perfect example of Radcliffe’s brilliant subtlety. While allowing Ellena to appear innocent by thanking Schedoni for saving her life, Radcliffe’s use of the word “poniard” suggests an alternative meaning to the encounter. It is hard to ignore the phallic imagery of the word, and with its use, Ellena is alluding to the fact that she knows Schedoni was not only going to murder her but rape her first.

Out of the three heroines mentioned in this thesis, Ellena is the only female character to use a word that signifies penis (albeit indirectly), and Radcliffe’s hint does not go unnoticed by Schedoni who immediately after hearing the word becomes fearful, demanding of her “‘What do you know?’” (*Italian* 287). If the reader believes the characters are talking about murder and not rape, Radcliffe eliminates the possibility when she writes: “Sometimes, thinking that her hatred, or what to him would be still severer, her contempt, must be more tolerable than this gratitude, he almost resolved to undeceive her respecting his conduct, but as constantly and impatiently repelled the thought with horror, and finally determined to suffer her to account for his late extraordinary visit in the way she had chosen” (*Italian* 287). Openly lying about his intentions, Schedoni is not the only Radcliffe villain to be stopped during the act, but he is the only one to be confronted by the heroine both verbally and physically. After she thanks him for saving her, Ellena picks up the dagger from the floor, accosting him with it; she asks Schedoni, “‘Do you know to whom it belongs? and who brought it hither? Do you know too for what purpose it was

brought?'" (*Italian* 286). The dagger becomes a metaphor for Schedoni's penis, empowering Ellena by allowing the Gothic heroine to truly reverse the gender roles. No longer is she the secret of the castle, the woman raped and left to hide in the dungeons, for Schedoni and his attempted rape become the secret, and this role reversal gives Ellena power over the monk. Schedoni attempts to seize the dagger (the power) back from Ellena who has figuratively stolen his manhood in this scene, but before he can retrieve it, Ellena reveals his secret aloud; she tells him, "'O yes, I perceive you know too well... here, my father, *while I slept*'" (*Italian* 286). Ellena, by speaking this sentence, shames Schedoni, emasculating him by confronting him not only about his rape but his incestuous nature. Radcliffe, by giving Ellena power over the villain, allows her to fulfill what Emily and Adeline are unable to do: end the patriarchy. Despite it being later revealed that Schedoni is not actually Ellena's father, her empowerment over the villain is even more significant to the destruction of the patriarchy. Unlike Adeline and Emily, Ellena is able to free herself from her imprisonment whereas the other women rely on outside help from male characters.¹⁸ Radcliffe, by allowing Ellena to free herself, showcases the first and only true example of feminism being able to defeat the patriarchy.

Radcliffe's writing gives voice to eighteenth-century women and fights for mutual gender respect. She is not the Romantic writer critics label her as because of the supposed love stories she has penned, and she is more than an opportunistic Gothic author wishing for success and popularity; rather, she transcends both the Romantic and Gothic genres, and while her writing may contain both aspects, as argued by critics, she is simply a female author writing for the defense of women. Radcliffe's intention to write solely as a woman, for women, is expressed by Deidre Shauna Lynch in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*; she

¹⁸ After Ellena confronts Schedoni about raping her, he lets her go.

writes, “‘I perceive’ said Emily smiling, ‘that all old mansions are haunted.’ The smile prompts us to smile. It is as if Emily herself were amused by her creator’s hyperbolic plotting – and as if Radcliffe were anticipating her book’s future lampooning” (49). While the book itself does not disappear into oblivion, the Gothic genre, known by Radcliffe, does, and the author, by anticipating its waning popularity, makes her mark in literary history by acknowledging that her writing had to do more than include popular Gothic tropes, it had to have a lasting influence. Radcliffe’s works, in my opinion, will forever be relevant, feminine texts for her ability to transform not only the Gothic heroine, but the eighteenth-century woman in general. As quoted from Mary Poovey’s *The Proper Lady*, “A good wife should be like a Mirrour [sic] which hath no image of its own, but receives its stamp from the face that looks into it” (3). This quote perfectly applies to the mentality Radcliffe had regarding her female characters: a wife should be faceless and nameless, but a woman should not, and like the stamp Poovey refers to, Radcliffe endows her female characters with the same feminine ideologies she has for herself. Thus Radcliffe, through her heroines, allows her wish to end the patriarchal normative to resonate for years to come, and despite the author’s wish to be nothing more than “‘Mrs. Radcliffe’ on a title-page,” (Grant 118) her volumes continue to speak loudly.

Appendix

Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* is the story of Adeline, an orphan, who is placed under the guardianship of Pierre La Motte and his wife. The La Mottes, who are forced to leave their hometown of Paris, flee the city at dawn to avoid a confrontation with their creditors. The trio find shelter in a deserted abbey. After spending a month together, the family experiences a breach in their safety when Montalt, the very man who caused La Motte to flee from Paris, shows up at his property, the abbey. After meeting Adeline, Montalt agrees to let the La Mottes remain within the house, but only if La Motte will give him Adeline's hand in marriage. La Motte, who is later revealed as a coward and self-preserve, agrees to sacrifice Adeline's happiness for his own security and arranges the marriage. While Adeline is ignorant of the plan between Montalt and La Motte, she becomes wary of their new home after discovering a manuscript in one of the deserted bedrooms. With the help of a servant, Peter, and Theodore, a member of Montalt's gang, Adeline discovers the intentions of the Marquis, and attempts to run away. After her plan is discovered by Montalt, Adeline is returned to the abbey where he instructs La Motte to kill her for her impudence. La Motte cannot go through with the murder and lets Adeline go. The story ends when Adeline discovers that the man in the manuscript was her real father, the rightful owner of the abbey, and that Montalt, her uncle, commissioned his murder, and placed Adeline under the protection of one of his thieves in order to claim the family's estate. In the end, Adeline's riches are restored to her and she is free to marry her beloved, Theodore.

The Mysteries of Udolpho features Emily, an orphan, who struggles to free herself from the imprisoning Montoni. After her father's sudden death, Emily is forced to live with her aunt, Madame Cheron. Emily presses her aunt to allow her to marry Valancourt, whom she and her

father met while traveling. Madame is willing to allow Emily and Valancourt to marry, but their marriage is set aside for her aunt's own marriage to Count Montoni, a supposed man of wealth and power. With Montoni's entrance to the family, Emily's betrothal is ended in favor of one of her stepuncle's friends, Morano. After Montoni kills a man in a sword fight, he, his wife, and his niece seek refuge in Udolpho. As Emily begins to realize Montoni is not who he claims to be, she receives confirmation of his character when she finds out that he has murdered her aunt. Left alone without a female companion, Emily becomes sexually sought after within the house, and no one gives her more discomfort than the mysterious figure of Udolpho who makes frequent appearances in her bedroom. Radcliffe clearly labels the figure as a supernatural being, but eventually reveals his humanity at various points of the novel. The novel ends similarly to her other novels when Emily is freed from her confinement at Udolpho with the help of a servant, Ludvico, and she reunites with Valancourt and the two are married.

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