GOTHIC GREEN ROMANTICISM

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines three Gothic novels: *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe and *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen. In these three novels, the female heroines of each struggle against the patriarchal power structures of eighteenth-century society. Immersion in a natural environment strengthens these female Gothic heroines, aiding them to resist the will of male characters and to establish agency. Gothic nature is an ally to women, while Gothic urban settings act as a domain of oppression for both women and nature. The authors Ann Radcliffe and Jane Austen wrote active heroines who in turn influenced female readers. These novels and their heroines were an active influence on feminist thought and ideas in eighteenth-century England.

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DEDICATION

to

Simon and Elizabeth Wagstaffe

Chapter 1

Introduction

Green Gothic Romanticism

My focus for this thesis is to examine three pillars of Romanticism in works by female authors: gender, ecocriticism, and the Gothic. The three novels I will analyze are *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe and *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen. My research into these three areas revealed that although many scholars have studied various aspects of all three, there appears to be a gap when it comes to combining all three and how they work together. Therefore, I have applied myself to the task of discerning the roots of each and how they grow and develop into one. What I have discovered is that gender and ecocriticism have similar roots, as many prominent ecofeminist scholars argue, and that each theory is strengthened by its relationship to the other. Further, I have analyzed how gender and ecocriticism interact with the Gothic. I argue that Gothic feminism differs depending on the place that a female character occupies at any given time. When encapsulated by the patriarchal domestic sphere, male characters limit the freedom of female characters; however, when immersed in nature, nature empowers female characters to act. The bond between female characters and nature is mutually beneficial and non-coercive. More specifically, the female characters in these three novels have agency when they are immersed in what I call a "green space." Green space is any space in which nature and female characters empower one another to allow the female character to act in a way that resists existing patriarchal power structures in eighteenth-century England. There are select instances in the three novels in which Gothic nature enables female characters to act in a manner inconsistent to that which takes place in the patriarchal domestic sphere. In other words, dark nature empowers female characters and enhances their agency, aiding them to resist the will of

male characters. All of the chosen novels exhibit hints of female rebellion against eighteenth-century male-dominated society, which I argue influenced the female readership at the time. Ann Radcliffe and Jane Austen were instrumental in the development of modern-day feminism, and their influence as female authors is felt even today.

Romanticism, Gender, and Feminism

Mary Wollstonecraft was an influence on female authors of the eighteenth-century, and her work emphasized mental fortitude.

> Contending for the rights of woman, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue, for the truth must be common to all, or it will be inefficacious with respect to its influence on general practice. (Wollstonecraft 371)

Mary Wollstonecraft argues for women's education in her letter to Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord, as well as in her famous *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). A reknowned figure in feminist scholarship for her *Vindication*, Wollstonecraft urges people in eighteenth-century society to consider the education of young women as well as their male counterparts. She argues that "the more understanding women acquire, the more they will be attached to their duty" (372), suggesting that she is actually advocating for more societal control of women's thoughts and actions. Her rationale is as follows: unless women "comprehend [a woman's duty], unless their morals be fixed on the same immutable principle as those of man, no authority can make them discharge [their duty] in a virtuous manner" (372). In this invocation of "authority," Wollstonecraft seems to argue that men cannot force women to do as men please, and that to be able to control women, men must make them understand why they are being controlled. Preferably, however,

education of the oppressed does not actually cause that group to realize that being controlled is for the "greater good"; rather it gives the oppressed the tools and knowledge needed to dismantle their cages and fight back. Ultimately, Wollstonecraft knew that increased knowledge would lead to women's revolution; she advocated women's education for this reason rather than the one that she actually posits in her letter. Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* backs up this assessment in several ways.

Firstly, Wollstonecraft argues that, throughout contemporary society, women's minds were not in a healthy state, comparing them to flowers that wilt before their time:

> One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers.... (373)

The phrase "barren blooming," of course, refers to Wollstonecraft's metaphor of the "hothouse plant," and is particularly interesting because it combines a metaphor about wombs and a metaphor of nature into one image. However, Wollstonecraft is referring to the mind when she talks about "barren[ness]," and she believes that education will create a hardier species of women. Men, she believes, are more interested in marrying women who appeal to their sensual desires, rather than marrying women who can exercise reason. Wollstonecraft refers to women in relation to men as "wives" and "mothers," seemingly suggesting that a woman cannot herself be considered a person without a connection to a man. However, such a strategy is understandable in that, for one, eighteenth-century society was not quite ready for that leap of logic yet, and two, it was frankly quite dangerous for a woman to be unaccompanied by a representative of the patriarchy, as seen for example in Frances Burney's novel *Evelina*, in which Evelina, separated from her group, is almost assaulted and then ends up in the company of prostitutes (Burney 234-5). Yet, the revolutionary core of what Wollstonecraft writes remains. The firm conviction that young women

and young men should have the same right to an equal education ultimately indicates that Wollstonecraft does not actually advocate for stricter controls over women by men. Further, since women should be partners rather than "alluring mistresses," they need to have minds equally sound to those of men.

Secondly, Wollstonecraft urges women to become stronger: "I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness..." (374) Wollstonecraft wants to ensure that women, who men assume to be weak because of their socially ingrained sensibility, become "stronger" in the eyes of men by casting away those feminine traits that make them appear weak. This aim has nothing to do with the previously invoked "duty" towards society, and would in fact cause society to change.

Lastly, Wollstonecraft invokes the idea of gender and its associated differences: "I presume that *rational* men will excuse me for endeavouring to persuade [women] to become more masculine and respectable" (375). She questions the rationality of men by asserting that a rational man would understand her argument and agree with it. After all, it seems perfectly reasonable for women to want to better themselves and become equal in society. However, most rational men of the time feared that education and equal rights would upend their world of domination, and even if they could not find the words to describe their fear, they would still be afraid of this change and want to deny women the education that Wollstonecraft endorses. Wollstonecraft provides more gender-challenging provocations in her *Vindication*, arguing for example that "The word masculine is only a bugbear: there is little reason to fear that women will acquire too much courage or fortitude" (375), seemingly assuring men that women will still continue to rely on them for strength and support. However, this idea that women should become more masculine and less feminine still disrupted the gender dynamics of the eighteenth-century. Nowadays, feminists do

generally believe that a woman can be feminine and still be strong, and that choosing to be a housewife does not necessarily undermine a woman's feminism. Wollstonecraft's argument that one must become more masculine before becoming a strong woman does not mean that she wants women to become men. Her true goal was for gender roles and performativity to change. Wollstonecraft states: "Where is then the sexual difference, when the education has been the same? All the difference that I can discern, arises from the superior advantage of liberty, which enables [men] to see more of life" (382). Having said that women should become more masculine, Wollstonecraft then states that there *is no difference* between men and women with a similar level of education. She believes that women, having the same education as men, are equal, and that sex does not signify a fundamental difference between the two. Indeed, gender, having been performed in a similar manner, implies a negligible difference. Judith Butler states that "Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act,' but rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (Butler xii). Perhaps it is anachronistic to apply twenty-first century gender theory to eighteenth-century discourse; however, it seems to me that Butler is simply giving a name to something that has always existed. Of course, during Wollstonecraft's lifetime, the way gender was performed was far different from how gender is performed in modern times. And gender certainly was "performed," as indicated by the creation of "fainting couches" and the perception that crying could be a manly virtue.

Wollstonecraft's goal of inciting women to get an education was certainly reflected in contemporary literature. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily St. Aubert, Ann Radcliffe's heroine, is very well educated in everything from the arts to the sciences (Radcliffe, *Mysteries* 6). In fact, Radcliffe refers to her as a "genius," a descriptor of the mind rather than of the physical and sensual "barren blooming" qualities often sought out in young ladies of the middle and upper classes. Anne K. Mellor points out that women Romantic authors often followed the

Wollstonecraftian tenet that rationality is more important than sentimentality: "women Romantic writers tended to celebrate, not the achievements of the imagination nor the overflow of powerful feelings, but rather the workings of the rational mind, a mind relocated – in a gesture of revolutionary gender implication – in the female as well as the male body" (A. Mellor 2). This statement is, broadly speaking, true. Not only is Emily St. Aubert well-educated and clever, but so are a great number of Jane Austen's heroines such as Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* and Elinor Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility.* Even Catherine Morland, the heroine of *Northanger Abbey*, must learn that rationality has primacy over feeling. Alan Richardson agrees with Mellor, arguing that "Literary women had been relegated for too long to the realm of sentiment; they were becoming far less interested in cultivating further refinements of sensibility than in demonstrating their claims to common sense" (21). This statement brings into question the idea that the Romantics were mainly concerned with the masculine individual who wanders in nature searching for a muse to facilitate his outpouring of emotion. Women, as both Mellor and Richardson note, were far more interested in being seen first as rational beings, and as people, as *citizens* of a nation. They had little time for wandering the English countryside – that activity was the prerogative of privileged male poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

The discussion of gender comes up explicitly in Jane Austen's novel *Northanger Abbey* during which Catherine Morland, her friend Eleanor Tilney, and the hero Henry Tilney take a walk together. In a general discussion of conventional historiography, Catherine complains about the "quarrels of popes and kings, with wars or pestilences, in every page; the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all..." (*Northanger Abbey* 79). Although Austen describes her as "occasionally stupid" (5), Catherine does have some very keen insights. She points out that her dislike of history, which she reads "as a duty," stems from the depicted men being useless and women being left out of the record almost entirely (79). This comment about the lack of women in

history books is something that twentieth-century feminists have also noted and criticized. Catherine not only points out this inequality, but she also notes insightfully that much of history must be a product of the historian's imaginitive invention (79). This critique is part of Catherine's pushing back against eighteenth-century patriarchal power structures.

However, a lot of Romantic writing seems to have done the opposite. Marlon B. Ross states that "The categories of gender, both in their lives and in their work, help the Romantics establish rites of passage toward poetic identity and toward masculine empowerment" (29). Ross argues that male Romantic poets create a masculine identity through the process of writing, which empowered them. Mellor agrees and adds to the conversation, arguing that "the obsession of the male Romantic poets with the principle of polarity... indicate[s that]... a binary model is already deeply implicated in 'masculine' Romanticism. The principle of polarity, of Fichte's ego versus non-ego, of thesis versus antithesis, requires the construction of an Other which is seen as a threat to the originating subject" (A. Mellor 3). Although I am hesitant to endorse the reductive and essentialist idea of masculine versus feminine modes of Romanticism, the binary model is indeed present in Romantic poetry, as is the female Other. One only has to look at the figure of the lamia, or snake-woman, present in poetry such as Coleridge's *Christabel* and Keats' *Lamia*, to see the monstrous feminine. This binary system of representation is very restricting, and even when male Romantic poets attempt to write outside the gender binary and blur gender roles, as Diane Long Hoeveler argues, they tend to fail: "The androgynous fantasy demanded that woman be essentially different from man and therefore a complementary force, but sexual differences institutionalized as gender roles have always been culturally understood as ideologies that justify inequality" (*Androgyny* 5-6). In short, Hoeveler suggests, the male poets actually reaffirm binary constructions of gender even when they attempt to deconstruct them by privileging an androgynous concept of human being. Hoeveler continues: "In the realm of images, the androgynous is unique in that it

attempts to meld masculine and feminine in a new and radically unique manner, and yet it is founded on the very stereotypes it seeks to destroy. Hence, it is inherently flawed and persistently fails in the poetry to translate successfully humanity's desire to escape the constraints of sexuality altogether" (*Androgyny* 7). This assertion questions how, exactly, a writer is supposed to step outside the realm of stereotypes and deconstruct gender roles. If one examines the gender roles in the Ann Radcliffe novels examined in this thesis (*The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*), one can see that Radcliffe does indeed blur gender roles by having the female heroine save the male hero, thereby reversing the conventional rescuing knight/damsel-in-distress romance dichotomy. In the process, however, her heroines Adeline and Emily retain their "femaleness" and do not become more "butch" or "manly" as a result. In order to ascertain how, exactly, one is to step outside eighteenth-century gender roles, one must first examine the representation of women more generally.

Speaking of the representation of women, Judith Butler notes that "On one hand, *representation* serves as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy to women as political subjects; on the other hand, representation is the normative function of a language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of women" (Butler 2). "Perhaps, paradoxically," she continues, "'representation' will be shown to make sense for feminism only when the subject of 'women' is nowhere presumed" (Butler 8). At first glance, these two assertions may not seem entirely helpful. Yes, it is necessary to represent women in order to give them societal power, but that representation may also be taken by an audience as the "one true" representation of an entire gender; otherwise that representation may distort what a reader sees as "female." So, how is one to represent a woman without succumbing to a pitfall such as the one described above? The answer, according to Butler, is that one must not have a predetermined idea of what a woman is or is not. Gender roles are so

ingrained in society that this task might seem monumental. Radcliffe's representations of women are likely somewhat coloured by her own perception of what a woman is or is not, but is it up to the author or the reader to determine how one perceives these female characters? Elaine Showalter points out that "It has been difficult for critics to consider women novelists and women's literature theoretically because of their tendency to project and expand their own culture-bound stereotypes of femininity, and to see in women's writing an eternal opposition of biological and aesthetic creativity" (7). This assertion is true, but it is equally true that it is difficult to represent a woman in one's writing without falling into stereotypes. I believe, however, that when Radcliffe crafted her characters Adeline and Emily, she did not say to herself, "I am writing these women specifically to question gender roles by having them do the 'man's job' of the rescuing knight." On the contrary, I think she probably said to herself, "I think it is sometimes a woman's job to rescue herself and do what is necessary to keep herself and her beloved alive and prosperous." It is the reader or critic who decides that Theodore is unmanly because Adeline rescues him. So where does that leave us, in this thesis? This is a question to keep in mind while we traverse the gothic wilds of France, Italy, and England.

Women and the Gothic

Many scholars have argued about female characters and how Gothic authors treat them in their novels. My argument is that Gothic heroines such as Adeline and Emily are actually active heroines who struggle against the confines of patriarchy in order to control their own destiny.

> The Gothic novel is transparently formulaic.... Anyone who has read even a single example of the genre will be familiar with its typical ingredients: the dilapidated castle, the winding corridors and dungeons, the distressed maiden, the pursuing, avaracious, and usually 'elderly' villain, the sublime landscapes, peculiar weather,

> spectres, bodies, banditti – not to mention discovered manuscripts, guttering candles, or mysterious groans. (Miles 2-3)

Such is the description of the Gothic genre by Robert Miles, author of *The Great Enchantress*, which examines the life and work of Ann Radcliffe. Radcliffe's books fit this description almost exactly, right down to the "discovered manuscripts." However, if one examines the Gothic, specifically the Gothic as written by women authors, one will find that it is much more complex than a simple list of stereotypical attributes might suggest. Some scholars claim that the Gothic is indeed rather simplistic: "The Gothic is escapist fiction that explores the threshold between the real and the supernatural, between what is knowable and what is known" (Fay 108). The idea that the Gothic is merely escapist fiction is clearly reductive, suggesting that its mainly female writers are only capable of creating so-called escapist fiction. However, there is also the argument that the Gothic represents female fears about patriarchal society. To quote Miles, "The conflicts of Radcliffe's romances are less those of tyrannical fathers versus craven daughters and more a case of a new, liberal order set up in opposition to a regressive, feudal 'patriarchal' one" (Miles 5). Radcliffe's novels set up spaces in which female characters attempt to resist the power of patriarchal forces at work in society. The first major way that Radcliffe and other Gothic women writers use the Gothic to question patriarchal power can be seen in Elizabeth Fay's observation that "The Gothic's inversion of major and minor roles for the protagonist makes it unusual as a Romantic genre and at the same time representative of the questions about gender and limitations, patriarchy and institutional control, that are at the heart of the Romantic movement and Romantic culture" (Fay 109). The fact that a woman takes the centre stage in each of Radcliffe's novels, that a woman is the main protagonist, poses a challenge to male-authored novels and poetry that elevate the male voice and experience. E.J. Clery adds to this conversation by saying that "The common picture we have of women writers in the Romantic period is one of concealment,

restraint, fear of criticism, self-censorship" (1). When one considers that Jane Austen habitually concealed herself in her drawing room to write, hidden even from the inquiring gaze of her own servants (Currey 25-7), one can see where this idea was born. Being a woman novelist was something new and frightening; even Ann Radcliffe published her first two novels anonymously. As Clery notes, "Gothic literature sees women writers at their most pushy and argumentative" (3). This assertive representational space that women created for themselves allowed them to explore the ideas of societal oppression, helping them to move forward towards emancipation in British society.

Not everyone agrees with this assessment of Gothic literature, however. Speaking of Gothic fiction, Diane Long Hoeveler contends that

> White bourgeois women writers have not simply been the passive victims of male-created constructions but rather have constructed themselves as victims of their own literature... [T]hey have frequently depicted themselves, as have men, as manipulative, passive-aggressive, masochistic, and sadistic. In short, the female gothic novelist constructs female characters who masquerade as professional girl-women caught up in an elaborate game of playacting for the benefit of an obsessive and controlling male *gaze.* (*Feminism* 4)

Hoeveler argues that women wrote Gothic fiction in a manner that tended to affirm and perpetuate men's control of women. The idea that women are not genuine, that they are "playacting" and "manipulative," and that they create fiction in order to fulfill a male desire, is problematic. As Clery points out above, a woman writer in the Romantic era often had to hide or censor herself in order to protect herself in a society that abhorred the idea of women thinking freely or acting in a way contrary to societal rules. Consider the life of Mary Wollstonecraft, whose name was dragged through the dirt in an attempt to silence her. The fact that she had a child outside of marriage was

used to discredit her name and her teachings. Wollstonecraft was a woman ahead of her time, and, ultimately, her reputation in eighteenth-century society was destroyed because of this progressive tendency (369). In a conservative, androcentric society, Romantic women writers had to be careful how they expressed their ideas. While it is true that women writers had to be extremely chary of male readers and critics, such a stance did not necessarily mean that they pandered to them. To suggest that women acted like puppets in order to gain male approval is, I believe, actively hostile to women and their effort to gain equal rights while fighting the patriarchy. Women writers, including gothic novelists, were warriors of words, and their protagonists' thoughts and actions signified of a desire for freedom.

Into Nature

A thorough understanding of the ways that scholars conceptualize nature is an important factor in analyzing the ways that authors such as Radcliffe and Austen write about natural environments.

> The problem with the Gothic is that, at one level, 'nature' is a more contested term as it is one which (at least in its post-Radcliffean guise) appears to participate in a language of estrangement rather than belonging. (Smith and Hughes 2)

Andrew Smith and William Hughes argue that the Gothic does to nature what patriarchy does to women: subjecting it to a process of Othering. This assessment is a fair one in some ways, as the Gothic and patriarchy are undeniably connected, at least in women's writing. However, particularly in the works of Ann Radcliffe, there is a connection between nature and women that is beneficial to both. Smith and Hughes continue: "The Romantic Gothic... does the ecological in a different way to the Romantics, but its presumptive dystopianism illustrates how nature becomes constituted in the Gothic as a space of crisis which conceptually creates a point of contact with the ecological" (3). When I think of "dystopianism" and the Romantic, I generally think of William

Blake and the "satanic mills" (line 8) in the preface to *Milton,* the horrifying imagery of the serpent in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (plate 18, line 137) and the society of control in *The Book of Thel* (plate 1, lines 1-2). In Blake's poems, the dystopian imagery is clear, and the space which nature occupies is certainly a "space of crisis." However, in the novels of Ann Radcliffe or Jane Austen, nature and "green space" are not seen as spaces of crisis unless one believes that these spaces, and the gendered conflict carried out within them, constitute a "crisis." For a male reader, perhaps, this conflict is a crisis of sorts, as this space represents women's resistance against men's societal power. However, for a female reader, I contend that this "green space" is a space of triumph. This space is a point at which the ecological informs the struggle against the patriarchy for both women and nature. As Lisa Kroger says, "Whether it is a feeling of creativity and renewal or even an indication of the potential of evil in someone, the environment is alive as it responds to these characters who reside within its boundaries" (19). I especially enjoy Kroger's assertion that "the environment is alive," as it attributes agency to nature and its interactions with humanity. Nature's agency affects both male and female characters in Radcliffe's novels. We are told, for example, that Emily St. Aubert's father "loved the soothing hour, when the last tints of light die away; when the stars, one by one, tremble through aether, and are reflected on the dark mirror of the waters; that hour, which of all others, inspires the mind with pensive tenderness, and often elevates it to sublime contemplation" (*Udolpho* 4-5). It is important to note that the nature in which St. Aubert here immerses himself is *dark* nature. He loves the "dark mirrors" and the "last tints of light" of "the soothing hour." This nature is not the bright, smiling pastoral that other Romantic authors generally write about. Rather, it is is the dark pastoral, a space in which nature gives St. Aubert a strange peace of mind, one of "sublime contemplation." In her book *Topographies of the Sacred*, Kate Rigby says: "In order to regain a sense of nature's agency, I will... consider how specific landscapes are shown by romantic writers to actively call forth the

feelings and ideas traced in their literature: here the initiative lies with the phenomenon not with the gaze, repositioning the poet as recipient rather than as producer" (13). In the cases of St. Aubert and Emily, this "active calling forth" of feelings and ideas suggests an active, agentive nature. Similarly, in the case of Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest*, nature often revives and restores female characters' health. As this thesis will demonstrate, however, the nature that revives Adeline is "everyday" nature, a sort of benevolent view of the natural environment, whereas Emily and St. Aubert often contemplate dark nature and the sublime.

In the field of ecocriticism, there is a tendency among scholars to esteem nature in a way that is problematic. Timothy Morton states that "Putting something called Nature on a pedestal and admiring it from afar does for the environment what patriarchy does for the figure of Woman. It is a paradoxical act of sadistic admiration" (*Ecology without Nature* 5). Morton calls out ecocriticism for its tendency to objectify nature in an economy of violence similar to patriarchy's objectification of women. Ecocritics must be careful when they are making their arguments that they are not simply using nature for their own ends. However benevolent the intentions of ecocritics may be, the instrumentalization of nature is often still being undertaken. Nature deserves a reciprocal relationship with humanity; as Jonathan Bate points out, "if 'the nonhuman' is to do something for us, we must do something for it – not least give it space, allow it to continue to exist" (*Romantic Ecology* 56). Although humans do have a relationship with nature, the relationship often assumes a passive role for nature. For example, humans often create spaces in which nature is protected and allowed to grow and prosper as it will. Humans also have a creative-destructive cyclical relationship with nature, for example, in which humans will deforest a space in order to use trees as a resource, after which they will replant it. The action of replanting is active, but so is the destruction of the harvested forest. Humans have agency, and we must use this agency to produce a more reciprocal, less anthropocentric, relationship with nature. As Morton argues "The point [of

ecological discourse] is to go against the grain of dominant, normative ideas about nature, but to do so in the name of sentient beings suffering under catastrophic environmental conditions" (*Ecology without Nature* 12). Morton, like many ecocritics, questions "What is nature?" If we do not assume a conventional concept of nature, just as Judith Butler does not assume the pre-given nature of women, then what is nature? Morton answers this question by asserting that "One of the basic problems with nature is that it could be considered either a *substance*, as a squishy thing in itself, or as *essence*, as an abstract principle that transcends the material realm and even the realm of representation" (*Ecology without Nature* 16). Once again, the idea of representation is key, this time in reference to nature. Writers represent nature in so many ways, as do theorists, but as Morton aptly notes "nature in itself flickers between things – it is both/and or neither/nor" (*Ecology without Nature* 18). In this thesis on Gothic Green Romanticism, I aim to examine the complexity of nature in its many representational guises.

To quote prominent Romantic ecocritic James C. McKusick "There is more to 'Nature' than cold, hard objects, and there is more to 'Literature' than pure, isolated images of the natural world" (15). This statement suggests a simple agreement between Morton and McKusick: yes, nature is complex in its own existence as something alive that encompasses our globe, but there is more to it than that. Literature is also more complex than a series of images strung together. There are several things to keep in mind: "First, the concept of Nature is capacious enough to contain both nature-as-ground and nature-as-construct" (McKusick 16); and "Second, the disjunction between Nature and Culture rests upon an unexamined premise that the social production of human behaviour is entirely distinct from the means by which the 'lower animals' learn to hunt, hide, play, and fight" (16). Nature-as-ground sounds like part of a dichotomy that separates the real and physical from the abstract and intangible, but nature is more robust than that. What is nature, and how does one separate the physicality of nature from its representational construction? This

question relates directly to McKusick's second point, which is that humans try to draw a line between nature and humans, when really, humans are animals endowed with many of the same biological attributes and instincts as other animals. Bate argues that "Everything is linked to everything else, and most importantly, the human mind must be linked to the natural environment" (*Romantic Ecology* 66). This view of nature is holistic, emphasizing "the interconnectedness of things." While I do not deny that humanity is indeed connected to nature in some ways, in others there is a very harsh disconnection. Where do we draw the line, and should it be drawn at all? The real question is this: how does the drawing of lines and construction of boundaries both physical and conceptual benefit nature? Or, more pertinently, *do* these things benefit nature? Where do humans fit into this tangled web of theory and practice?

To begin to answer such questions, let us first consider nature and its relationship to humanity. Kevin Hutchings gives us a starting point in his book *Imagining Nature*:

> I am concerned with what [Jonathan] Dollimore loosely refers to as the critical "process of 'recovering' nature". At the same time, however, I am aware of the impossibility of this task, for any attempt at such "recovery" of nature presupposes that nature's non-human essence can indeed be made available to human understanding. Hence while my research has been motivated in part by my desire to catch a glimpse of nature's irreducable otherness, its ultimate aim involves not the "recovery" of nature but the more humble task of re-evaluating nature's status as a cultural concept. (3)

The idea that one can "recover" nature, as Hutchings points out, is indeed an impossible task, not to mention a potentially oppressive one. The idea the humanity can "recover" nature suggests in its very language that nature was ours to begin with to use as we pleased. It sounds like a line out of an old war film when the heroes speak of "recovering lost ground." This idea reduces nature to

land which humans own, can parcel up, take from people and regain with violence if subsequently lost. Hutchings also makes the point that non-human nature cannot be fully known by humans, as it cannot speak for itself and its method of communication cannot be easily translated into human discourse. What *do* we know of nature? This question is one that Hutchings raises, along with "how do we conceptualize nature?"

Early ecocritic Jonathan Bate argues "'Nature is a term that needs to be contested, not rejected" (*Romantic Ecology* 56). Quoting Alan Liu (for whom physical nature is displaced by its social constructions), he writes that "It is profoundly unhelpful to say *'There is no nature'* at a time when our most urgent need is to address and redress the consequences of human civilization's insatiable desire to consume the products of the earth" (56). Both of Bate's books, *Romantic Ecology* and *The Song of the Earth*, concern themselves greatly with environmentalism and environmental history, giving a riot of examples showing how humanity has mistreated nature in the name of technology and progress. However, when Bate says "Nature is a term that needs to be contested," he does not continue that thought into a reconceptualization of nature. Rather, he simply privileges nature's physical reality. Morton's book, on the other hand, "is inspired by the way in which deconstruction searches out, with ruthless and brilliant intensity, points of contradiction and deep hesitation in systems of meaning" (Morton, *Ecology without Nature* 6). Nature, ecology, pastoral, sublime, "green spaces" – all of these terms need to be contested. I do not necessarily endorse the idea of definition; in fact, I agree with Morton when he says that he is "not afraid of nonidentity" (13). Definitions tend towards consolidation, and identity is oftentimes fluid.

Bate explores the idea of culture in *The Song of the Earth*, finding that the term "culture" changes meaning over the course of the Industrial Revolution, and demonstrating that it shows up in many Romantic era novels meaning something entirely different from what it came to mean in

the twenty-first century. For example, he notes the definition of "a cultivated field or piece of land" as one of the definitions of "culture." "For Austen," he argues, "'culture' is located in a landscape and a mode of agriculture, not merely in manners and aesthetics" (*Song of the* Earth 7). The idea that "culture" is also located in the earth and is not necessarily separate from nature needs to be explored. The term "culture" or "cultivated" then refers to a piece of land that humans have altered in some way. The divide between meanings of the word "culture" starts to widen when one considers the term "culture" versus the term "landscape," which is more of an aesthetic term. For Bate "Landscaping is... a symptom of the growing division between the aesthetic and the agricultural senses of the word 'culture'" (11-12). Since both Austen's and Radcliffe's sense of aesthetics is one in which natural landscapes are allowed to grow as they would without excessive human interference or "landscaping," I can see how these authors define "culture" as "cultivated land." Consider, for example, Mr. Darcy's Pemberley estate, which Austen describes in *Pride and Prejudice*:

> It was a large, handsome stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills; – and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. (185)

In this passage, Elizabeth is delighted because of Mr. Darcy's approach to landscaping, where his estate's grounds are not made to look artificial, but keep their natural appearance. Austen implies that this taste is part of the reason that Elizabeth begins to see a different side of the previously repulsive Mr. Darcy. Like Radcliffe, who emphasizes the moral uprightness of those characters who are in tune with nature, Austen references Mr. Darcy's taste in landscape as an early

indication to readers and Elizabeth alike that he is not as he first seems. As Hutchings notes in reference to a famous passage from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, "The potential goodness or evil that may arise from the things of nature depends to a great extent on human appropriations of the natural" (*Imagining Nature* 15). Morality in this sense is bound up in the natural, and how humans treat nature. For Hutchings therefore, "An ideologically aware ecological criticism must not only relentlessly question the regulative uses to which nature is put in society; it must also reflect on its *own* status as a discursive practice" (8).

Hence, the question returns to the forefront: how are we as humans using nature, even when we are studying ecocriticism in an attempt to understand and question humanity's knowledge of nature? In his book *Romantic Ecologies and Colonial Cultures*, Hutchings says "we must acknowledge that Green Romanticism – or any other form of "green" criticism – is patently *not* a non-abstract, non-metaphorical mode of analysis, notwithstanding its admirable insistence upon the importance of material reality" (*Romantic Ecologies* 5). Even an ecocritic's examination of literature is in some ways contained in the same trap as writers of nature: nature is in some ways an abstract idea even if it is also physical, and our knowledge of it is often metaphorical. Our ideas of nature are already influenced by those who came before us. Rigby points out that "With the notable exception of the work of Timothy Morton, the major ecocritical studies of romanticism to date have tended to be readings 'along' rather than 'against' the grain" (2). This observation is one that ecocritics need to take into account while analyzing works of fiction that involve nature and which to try to challenge ideas of nature ingrained in society.

Ecofeminism and Dark Nature

The conceptual combination of ecocriticism and feminism and their further relationship to the dark side of nature inform the way in which female characters interact with a Gothic natural

environment.

"Do not be afraid" (Morton, *Dark Ecology* 5).

Timothy Morton gives readers this advice when talking about "dark ecology," a concept he mobilizes to inform his claim that "the idea of nature is getting in the way of properly ecological forms of culture, philosophy, politics, and art" (Morton, *Ecology without Nature* 1). Morton proposes to "address this paradox by considering art above all else" (1). In my own understanding, dark ecology addresses the idea that nature as a concept prevents us as ecocritics from seeing the real problems in our society. The same advice about dark ecology – not to be afraid – could apply to ecofeminism[1] and its Gothic combinations. Many different theories of nature and genre combine and recombine, informing one another, building up and crashing together like waves on a beach. There is no need to be afraid of this fluid complexity – we will explore it together.

Karen J. Warren explains ecofeminism in this way: "According to ecological feminists (ecofeminists), important connections exist between the treatment of women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and the treatment of nonhuman nature on the other" ("Empirical Data" 3). These connections derive from the fact that the oppressors of all these groups are very often white men – colonisers, enslavers, takers. As a group, white men often take from all these groups and give very little back in return. Warren asserts that ecofeminism is important to the feminist movement because it "helps one understand the status and plight of women cross-culturally" (4). Often the oppression of women also affects the land, and how the land is treated affects the women living there. According to Warren, "Establishing the nature of these connections, particularly what I call women-nature connections, and determining which are potentially liberating for both women and nonhuman nature, is a major project of ecofeminist philosophy" (3). As Val Plumwood points

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[1] For reasons of space and scope, I limit my focus in this thesis to one specific strand of ecofeminism which delineates parallels between man's dominion of nature and man's domination of women.

out, not all feminists agree with ecofeminsm: "It is not surprising that many feminists regard with some suspicion the view expressed by a growing number of women who describe themselves as 'ecofeminists'":

> There may be something to be said *in favour* of women's connectedness with nature. The very idea of a feminine connection with nature seems to many to be regressive and insulting, summoning up images of women as earth mothers, as passive reproductive animals, contented cows immersed in the body and in the unreflective experiencing of life. (Plumwood 20)

This idea is not at all what present-day ecofeminism is about. However, there was one point in ecofeminist history at which ecofeminism did indeed veer wildly off track.

Janet Biehl writes about this critical moment in her book *Finding Our Way*. Although she speaks of the promise of ecofeminism as a source of liberation, she laments how first-wave ecofeminism has disappointed her: "But recent ecofeminist literature does not fulfill this promise at all. It has not drawn on the best of previous social theory, but instead works in a realm outside it, even rejecting it as 'male' or 'masculine'" (Biehl 1). Rejection of anything deemed conventionally "male" or "masculine" does not actually help anyone, and in fact probably hurts women who are "butch" or queer. Rather than being rational, women who believe in the need for such a rejection seem like the image of an ostrich with its head in the sand. Biehl also complains that first-wave "Ecofeminism has... become a force for irrationalism, most obviously in its embrace of goddess worship, its glorification of the early Neolithic, and its emphasis on metaphors and myths" (2). A movement thus described is not one that seems helpful to women or nature in any way. Carolyn Merchant also addresses this movement, suggesting that "Nature and women could be liberated through the recognition of Gaia as both the earth and the female aspect of godhead coupled with the removal of patriarchal constructions of 'women as Other and men as

godlike and inherently superior'" (*Earthcare* 4). Merchant describes the hopes of the movement, which centre around the image of the earth goddess, Gaia; but she also describes the problem: "Yet, however unifying, Gaia is also a problematic image for both environmentalists and feminists... If Gaia is a self-regulating homeostatic system, then 'she' can correct problems caused by humans or even find humans expendable" (4). This idea would remove the onus on humanity to try to live more sustainably, letting humans "off the hook" as it were. Humans wouldn't have to think up complex theories and challenge nature stereotypes if the feminine Gaia system were already in control.

As Warren observes, "Feminist philosophers claim that some of the most important feminist issues are *conceptual* ones: these issues concern how one conceptualizes such mainstay philosophical notions as reason and rationality, ethics, and what it is to be human" ("Power and Promise" 20). The very idea of humanity is often questioned when it comes to the human-nature dichotomy present in society. What makes us human, and (how) does this human makeup make us superior to non-human nature? Plumwood weighs in by saying that the very assumption of human superiority "takes as unproblematic what is not unproblematic, the concept of the human itself, which has in turn been constructed in the framework of exclusion, denial, and denigration of the feminine sphere, the natural sphere and the sphere associated with subsistence" (Plumwood 22). The very idea of humanity, of civilization, is a conceptual construct, and the way it was constructed is problematic for women and nature. Mary Mellor points out that deep ecologists[2] (most of whom are male) have a similar problem: "Ecofeminists have put sex/gender divisions within humanity at the heart of their analysis, and this puts them into direct conflict with many deep ecologists, despite the fact that both perspectives take a 'deep' approach to human-nature

[2] Deep ecology is an ecological philosophy that values nature as a holistic global community and which looks at environmentalism in a "deep" way (seeing the things of nature as inherently valuable) as opposed to the "shallow" environmentalism which only values nature in its utilitarian use to human beings.

relations" (M. Mellor 138). The sex and gender divide in society is crucial to the ecofeminist deconstruction of human-nature relations. Mary Mellor also points out that "Although it is not always explicitly stated, human-nature relations are idealized as the lone figure in the open and wild landscape. This figure is not always male, but is unlikely to be ill, infirm, in a wheelchair or holding the hand of a small child" (M. Mellor 139). Such a generalizing view of human-nature relations is problematic in several ways, not least of which is because the normative relationship is inaccessible to so many diverse groups of people.

Contrary to many Romantic depictions, Carolyn Merchant tells us that nature is not just benign and benevolent: "another opposing image of nature was also prevalent: wild and uncontrollable nature that could render violence, storms, droughts, and general chaos... The second image, nature as disorder, called forth an important modern idea, that of power over nature" (*Death of Nature* 2). This wild nature is also what I want to address, the seemingly adverse nature that calls forth this modern idea of trying to control our environment. Nature cannot be controlled. It is a messy concept and process that spills over into everything else, even humanity despite our efforts to keep it separate and boxed away. What I want to do is find out how these various pieces fit together. So far, I've covered some combinations of different concepts, such as ecofeminism, the EcoGothic, and Gothic feminism. Now how might these diverse concepts be combined as a mode of critical inquiry?

I have established that there is a link between the Gothic (as written by women) and patriarchal power structures. I have also established that there are some ways in which women and nature are oppressed that are similar. Furthermore, I have shown that Gothic nature provides a space in which women and nature can resist patriarchal power structures. How the Gothic functions is different when it comes to different kinds of environment. When the Gothic is set in a domestic space, it reflects the fear of women and patriarchal structures at work in eighteenth-

century society. However, in "green space" – which I define as any space where nature can function with agency, whether that be a wild space, such as a forest, or a cultivated space, such as a garden – it functions to empower women, as I shall demonstrate in the following chapters. Nature's function in differently domesticated spaces is something I will explore. This functioning of nature, this expression of agency, and the ways in which women, nature and the Gothic function together, is my focus in this thesis. Kroger leaves us with this quotation: "Just as nature is always reclaiming its space, as seen in the crumbling ruins so prevalent in the Gothic, it will always be victorious in the end" (Kroger 26). My chosen novels, *The Romance of the Forest, The Mysteries of Udolpho,* and *Northanger Abbey* all demonstrate in different ways how a female protagonist moves through space, both domestic and "green." I will argue that while traversing "green space," the three novels' female protagonists are empowered to resist the ways that patriarchal power structures try to push them in certain directions, both through male characters' actions and through actions deemed socially acceptable for women.

The Chapters

Each chapter in this thesis corresponds to the analyzation of how a female character interacts with the natural environment in one Gothic novel.

To begin, I first turn to *The Romance of the Forest* by Ann Radcliffe. While this novel is not her earliest literary work, it does give readers an idea of the major themes and ideas that preoccupied its author during the early part of her career. Radcliffe is very aware of the function of characters and how different relationships between characters can comprise an argument. In this chapter, I will also examine how Radcliffe portrays the male characters of Monsieur LaMotte, the Marquis de Montalt, and Theodore La Luc, focusing on the ways in which these characters interact with the female protagonist Adeline. In this chapter I examine Gothic feminism as it relates to

Adeline's situations and interactions and defend Adeline against allegations that she is a conventionally gendered, passive figure in the novel. I also explain the significance of agentic green space as it relates to Adeline's interactions with the novel's male characters.

My second chapter investigates Radcliffe's most famous novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. This chapter continues my analysis of gothic feminism and its relationship to Emily St. Aubert, the protagonist, while also examining the interactions between Emily and three different male characters: her benevolent father, St. Aubert; the villainous Montoni; and the hapless hero, Valancourt. I also explore Emily's psychological state while she is imprisoned in the castle of Udolpho, considering in particular how the gothic edifice affects her actions and interactions. Emily also traverses green space in a manner that enables her to resist patriarchal power structures.

Lastly, I examine *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen, which, while not strictly Gothic, engages what I will call the "mundane" Gothic. The "mundane" Gothic is different from traditional representations of the Gothic in that it emphasizes everyday realities, while the traditional Gothic depicts highly imaginative, fantastic events. In this chapter, I will examine Catherine Morland's interactions with several of the novel's male characters within different versions of green space. These male characters include the two "villains," General Tilney and John Thorpe, as well as the hero, Henry Tilney. Two of these spaces may be considered green spaces that have been cultivated, such as the space traversed during the carriage ride in which Catherine is "abducted" by John Thorpe, as well as the garden through which Catherine subsequently walks with Eleanor Tilney. This chapter also examines the implications of female solidarity in green spaces, showing how this solidarity provides an enhanced sense of women's agency.

Let us begin.

Chapter 2

Gothic Nature and Female Power: Agency of Women and Nature in *The Romance of the Forest*

> The scene before her soothed her mind, and exalted her thoughts to the great Author of Nature... she wiped the tears from her eyes... and her mind, losing the feelings which had lately oppressed it, became tranquil and composed. (Radcliffe, *Romance* 22)

Introduction

In *The Romance of the Forest*, a young woman named Adeline is the main character, and it is her actions around which my argument centres. Over the course of the novel, Adeline becomes more powerful because of her reciprocal relationship with nature. Adeline's connection with nature gives her the strength to not only resist the will of male characters, but to sway the course of many character's actions. Even her fear carries her forward rather than immobilizing her. The character of Adeline is just the beginning of Ann Radcliffe's writing journey, which gives eighteenth-century female readership an active heroine to emulate.

The Romance of the Forest (1791) was Ann Radcliffe's third novel, one of her earlier works, and the one which established her writing genius. While not as popular as her later novels *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), it was, in its day, much admired by reviewers (Chard ix). Discussions of *The Romance of the Forest* have taken readers to studies of gender, sexuality, psychology, economics and, of course, the Gothic. This chapter will focus mainly on marrying the Gothic and ecofeminism in order to examine the significance of these two fields both separately and together. Before commencing the main discussion, I will first open with a brief analysis of ecofeminism and the protagonist Adeline's connection to nature as well as a

short summary of the relevant points of the novel. The next part of this chapter will focus on the character Monsieur La Motte and the Gothic edifice. The Gothic building is important because its analysis sheds light on the culture versus nature dichotomy present in eighteenth-century thought. In this section of the chapter, I will also discuss theology and sentimentality. This discussion is important because of the way that eighteenth-century society, and Radcliffe herself to some extent, equated nature and spirituality. The second section will examine the way that Adeline and the novel's male characters interact, and how Adeline arouses different feelings in these men. In the third section, I will discuss Adeline's interactions with the Marquis, the novel's main villain, while also thoroughly examining the ideas of Gothic feminism and ecofeminism. There are many scholars who have already weighed in on this issue, some arguing that Adeline and other Gothic female characters challenge the patriarchal power structures and some asserting that Adeline is a passive figure in the novel. The last part of the third section will discuss the role of parents, both paternal and maternal figures, a discussion related to the preceding consideration of Gothic feminism. The last section will focus on the heroic character of Theodore, and his father La Luc. Here I will examine the picturesque, the beautiful, and the sublime. Radcliffe depicts landscapes throughout the novel to comment on politics and women's place in society. In the last section, I will also examine the pastoral, which is Radcliffe's preferred social paradise. It is in a pastoral space that Adeline and Theodore eventually settle, and the reader is left to assume that they are happy and contented in this space.

The Gothic works in interesting ways in this text, and is a complex aspect of both nature and society. At times, the Gothic is an aspect of society, and is part of the patriarchal power structure at work, limiting Adeline and her power; at others it aids Adeline and gives her power against the patriarchal, and sometimes it works with nature, which gives nature agency against anthropocentric society. The type of nature that helps Adeline push against the Gothic patriarchal

power structures at work is the "everyday" type of nature and not necessarily Gothic nature, which has its own power.

According to Australian ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood, "A feminist account of the domination of nature presents an essential but difficult... frontier of feminist theory, all the more testing and controversial because the problematic of nature has been so closely interwoven with that of gender" (1). Broadly put, ecofeminism turns on the idea that nature and women are oppressed in similar ways by patriarchal power systems. Ecofeminists have several differing opinions on whether or not this relationship between nature and women is detrimental to either environmentalism or feminism. According to one perspective, "As long as we perceive women as closer to nature within a model which perceives nature to be on the one hand mechanical, and on the other hand semihuman, and in both cases legitimately exploitable, then we will see women as a resource, and both women and the environment will suffer" (Roach 57). This argument assumes that feminism is actually hurt by connecting women to nature, but it does not address the idea that environmentalism and feminism could both benefit from the other movement's activism. One might ask: how is this argument related to Ann Radcliffe's novel *The Romance of the Forest*? Karen J. Warren suggests that "One sort of alleged connection between feminism and the environment discussed by ecological feminist philosophers is primarily historical" (Warren xi). Warren goes on to explain that by "primarily historical" she means that events in ancient and modern history involve the twin domination of both women and the environment, and that this connection is also causal (Warren xi). This assertion comes from Warren's extensive list of ways in which feminism and the environment are connected. The fact that one connection between feminism and the environment is historical suggests that novels from previous centuries are important to understanding how society sees this issue at present. In fact, Gothic novels provide a bridge between the historical and the modern.

Written in 1971, *The Romance of the Forest* is set in seventeenth-century century France. Radcliffe presents the story as pseudo-historical:

> Whoever has read Guyot de Pitaval, the most faithful of those writers who record the proceedings in the Parliamentary Courts of Paris, during the seventeenth century, must surely remember the striking story of Pierre de la Motte, and the Marquis Phillipe de Montalt: let all such, therefore, be informed, that the person here introduced to their notice was that individual Pierre de la Motte. (Radcliffe, *Romance* 1-2)

Here Radcliffe suggests that this story is a history, and that the extraordinary court case which takes place near the end of the novel was an actual occurrence. By presenting this story as historical, Radcliffe gives the appearance of factual legitimacy to the arguments she makes over the course of the story. Moreover, there is a precedent for presenting a Gothic novel as a history, since the first Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), was originally presented as a translated history and later revealed to be fiction. When Radcliffe tells her audience that her fiction is actually a history, she encourages them to transport themselves imaginatively to a time and place far away from the present in order to relate her arguments. By presenting Adeline as a historical figure rather than a character of fiction, Radcliffe gives female readers a sense not only that the danger male characters represent to Adeline and women is real, but she also suggests that Adeline's agency is real rather than fictitious.

Examining the following passage from *The Romance of the Forest*, one can clearly see the connection between Adeline and the natural world: "The balmy freshness of the air, which breathed the first pure essence of vegetation; and the gentle warmth of the sun, whose beams vivified every hue of nature, and opened every floweret of spring, revived Adeline, and inspired her with life and health" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 13). Adeline is clearly revived by her time spent in nature, and her connection to the natural world appears uncoercive. Another passage shows that

Adeline is in fact new to the natural world: "With Adeline the charms of external nature were heightened by those of novelty: she had seldom seen the grandeur of an extensive prospect, or the magnificence of a wide horizon – and not often the picturesque beauties of more confined scenery" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 9). This passage suggests that Adeline, who has not previously had the privilege of communing with nature, is drawn to nature from the moment she perceives it. Adeline's connection with nature is immediate, as if she and nature share a magnetic attraction that draws them to one another. Although these ideas address the ecofeminist aspect of my study, this thesis examines both ecofeminism and the Gothic. Writing of ecofeminism and the gothic together, Tom J. Hillard notes that "many of the oft-cited historical and cultural studies of human perceptions of nature have acknowledged a ... strain of darkness, a fundamental violence and danger inherent in the natural world" (691). It is just this idea that I would like to discuss in this chapter: that the Gothic and nature are interconnected, and that in Radcliffe's novel nature is not always smiling. It is important to acknowledge the darker side of nature, as such an acknowledgement not only gives nature nuance and a many-faceted image, but it also addresses how characters in the novel react to Gothic nature.

Summary of the Novel

The world of *The Romance of the Forest* that Adeline inhabits is one in which she has no power to act in her own interests. The male characters of the novel treat her as a possession, and they pass her from person to person without thought to her own wishes. Adeline comes into contact with three important male characters in the novel. The first is Pierre de la Motte, who, in effect, rescues her from a precarious situation in which Du Bosse, a criminal hired by her evil uncle, has received orders to murder her. The La Mottes have fled Paris in an attempt to escape a massive debt that Pierre accrued. The city of Paris corrupted La Motte’s moral character, but Adeline's plight

ultimately moves him to the extent that he agrees to help her. The second male character is the Marquis de Montalt. Over the course of the novel, Adeline discovers that this evil Marquis actually murdered his brother in order to take possession of his title and estates. Further, the murdered brother turns out to be Adeline's father! Throughout the story, the usurping Marquis poses a constant danger to Adeline. The last male character is Theodore, one of the Marquis' chevaliers. Theodore falls in love with Adeline, and he attempts to help her escape from the Marquis' evil designs on her. During this attempt, he fights and wounds the Marquis, who is his superior officer. Theodore is now in trouble with the law, and the King's men arrest him. Adeline changes throughout the journey she undergoes, and although she encounters many dangers, she persists in her travels. She travels from Paris, to the ruined abbey, and from there, all the way to distant Savoy, where she meets Theodore's father, La Luc. During her journey, Adeline grows and develops, in large part because of her connection with the natural environment. Upon discovering that Theodore is in danger of execution for his crimes, she returns to Paris in order to plea for his life. When she arrives in Paris, she finds out that her friends the La Mottes are in jail as well. During the trial of La Motte, two witnesses come forward to confess their part in a plot by the evil Marquis to murder his brother (Adeline's father) and take over his title. This confession leads to the Marquis committing suicide by poison. Before dying, however, the Marquis tells the true story of what occurred. Through his confession, he establishes Adeline as the true heiress of his brother's titles and estates. The King of France then restores Adeline to her proper place, and Adeline immediately uses her newfound status to beg for the lives of Theodore and La Motte. As a result, the King frees Theodore and lowers La Motte's sentence from death to banishment. Adeline and Theodore marry and retire to the pastoral paradise of Leloncourt to live happily thereafter.

Gothic feminism

This discussion of Gothic feminism details the various arguments of scholars about Gothic heroines and their actions, and how they relate to feminist values. I argue that Adeline, while not a perfect feminist figure, is not meant to pander to patriarchal viewpoints. According to Diane Long Hoeveler, "The first characteristic of the female gothic novel is that it is based on the premise that men are intrinsically and inherently violent and aggressive, and as such, to be feared by women" (*Gothic Feminism* 53). While the villainous Marquis de Montalt is indeed violent in his attempts to gain status and power, this is not true of all the male characters in the novel. As previously mentioned, La Motte is the first man to be introduced, and although his morality is blackened by urban culture and society, he has not sunk so low as the murderous Marquis. He is moved by Adeline and rescues her in the first chapter, if the act of passively allowing her to come with him counts as "rescuing" her. For a time, Adeline relies on La Motte for protection. Also, various other male characters in the novel are also non-violent towards Adeline and other women; in fact, male characters such as Theodore La Luc and Louis de La Motte strive to help and protect Adeline. The only other aggressive character in the novel is Theodore, and he is violent on behalf of Adeline rather than towards her. I do not want to absolve the male characters of the wrongs done to female characters by the patriarchal structure of society. Even benevolent male characters benefit from a society which systematically favours them. As Hoeveler states, "The typical female gothic novel presents a blameless heroine triumphing through a variety of passive-aggressive strategies over a male-created system of oppression and corruption, the 'patriarchy'" (*Gothic Feminism* 9). And yet, *The Romance of the Forest* presents Adeline as a far more active heroine than Hoeveler suggests here. Adeline, on a number of occasions, is very active: making plans to escape the Marquis and braving the dark forest at night in order to do so; arguing with doctors; climbing out of windows in pleasure palaces; and most importantly of all, begging the King of France to spare the lives of

Theodore and La Motte. Hoeveler continues: "The names and identities of all these men ... are less significant than the fact that Adeline exists in this novel as a fetish of femininity, an exchange commodity passed between powerful men who use her as a pawn in their own vaguely homosocial schemes" (*Gothic Feminism* 71). Contrary to Hoeveler's statement, my argument is that Radcliffe grants Adeline as much power as possible in the world of the novel. Adeline works with what power she has, and resists playing the pawn in the game started by the Marquis de Montalt. She uses her power of sentimentality and morality to gain allies in La Motte and his son Louis. Theodore fights the Marquis physically on her behalf. She uses the power of her mind to save Theodore on one occasion, and the power of her beauty to manipulate the King. According to Hoeveler's rather cynical reading, "The message that this ideology peddled fostered a form of passivity in women, a fatalism that the mainstream feminist would be loathe to recognize today" ("Female Gothic Posture" 31). In contrast to this view, I argue that Adeline moves through her landscape as actively as possible (as I will demonstrate in later sections of this chapter). Whereas Hoeveler decries Gothic novels in general and *The Romance of the Forest* in particular as not feminist, I argue that the novel's presentation of women is more complex.

My argument is that Radcliffe's writing in this novel suggests that Adeline walks the line between being an outright feminist figure and a character whose purpose is to placate readers who are still firmly entrenched in the arms of patriarchal society. Adeline, as I have already noted, is said to be intrinsically good. Her heart is one that upholds morality, and she is a figure that inspires others to goodness as well. One example of this inspiration is when she speaks for La Motte at his trial. Radcliffe describes this scene thus:

> [Adeline's] kindness operated so powerfully upon his heart, which had been betrayed through weakness rather than natural depravity, and awakened so keen a remorse for the injuries he had once meditated against a benefactress so noble, that

> his former habits became odious to him, and his character gradually recovered the hue which it would probably have always worn had he never been exposed to the tempting dissipations of Paris. (Radcliffe, *Romance* 353-4)

Adeline's kindness inspires La Motte not only to have remorse for his past actions, but in fact it inspires a reversal of moral character in him. Adeline's gift of moral suasion is extremely powerful in this scene, showing that she has the power and agency to affect change in other characters, even, and especially, male characters. The culture of Paris is a part of patriarchal society, which the reader sees has poisoned La Motte. A product of the patriarchal structure, La Motte changes due to Adeline's influence. Mayhew suggests that "Radcliffe highlights the tensions in paternalism, while finally reverting to an endorsement of a more benevolent version of the same ideology" (584). While less drastic than Hoeveler's, Mayhew's argument suggests that Radcliffe accepts the patriarchal power structure. He argues that while Radcliffe's writing suggests the need for patriarchy to change, her belief is that it is still the system that should ultimately be in control. This is a much more nuanced argument, and one I am more inclined to explore. Certainly, La Motte's immorality is a learned behaviour, as the words "former habits" tell a story of performativity. By "performativity," I mean that by repetition of an action, La Motte learns to become immoral. Radcliffe suggests in the above-quoted passage that La Motte does not share the "natural depravity" that perhaps the Marquis does. When Adeline encourages change in his character, Adeline affects not only La Motte, but society as well. Radcliffe's writing to some extent reflects Mayhew's argument that she wanted to transform paternal society.

Adeline eventually marries Theodore, and their lives continue happily: "Their former lives afforded an example of trials well endured – and their present, of virtues greatly rewarded; and this reward they continued to deserve – for not to themselves was their happiness contracted, but diffused to all who came within the sphere of their influence" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 363). Not only

do Adeline and Theodore work together, as Radcliffe's plural pronoun usage suggests, but their goodness still affects those around them. Radcliffe describes this as a "sphere of influence," which I argue extends to the natural world. A sphere can include the earth, the cycles of nature, in short the fullness of Adeline and Theodore's world. Blodgett says "[Radcliffe] is interesting precisely because she gives one some sense of the vast number of women of her day who were neither rebels nor slaves but rather had learned, like so many women even now, to accommodate themselves to a patriarchal culture without yielding their belief in intrinsic female worth; therefore they could be responsive to feminist winds of change without being swept away by them" (Blodgett). I think this statement is far closer to the truth of the matter than those of Hoeveler and Mayhew. The idea that Adeline is a passive character because she marries Theodore at the end and settles down is somewhat erroneous. Some scholars may argue that because Adeline marries Theodore, she ultimately accepts her place as wife and therefore a subordinate position in relation to her husband. I would argue against this idea because marriage is not in itself anti-feminist. I know many married women who would disagree that their marriage to a man somehow endorses the patriarchal societal structure. Theodore and Adeline work together to create a marriage which functions both in terms of Radcliffe's endorsement of women's agency and fulfillment of societal expectations.

The Gothic Edifice

The male character Pierre de la Motte compares himself to a dilapidated Gothic structure, highlighting the way in which patriarchal society itself is falling apart, torn down by feminized nature. The first part of the book takes place primarily in the crumbling abbey in which La Motte decides to hide his family. This is Radcliffe's description of the abbey as La Motte first comes upon it:

> He approached, and perceived the Gothic remains of an abbey: it stood on a kind of rude lawn, over-shadowed by high and spreading trees, which seemed coeval with the building, and diffused a romantic gloom around. The greater part of the pile appeared to be sinking into ruins, and that, which had withstood the ravages of time, shewed the remaining features of the fabric more awful in decay. The lofty battlements, thickly enwreathed with ivy, were half-demolished, and become the residence of birds of prey. Huge fragments of the eastern tower, which was almost demolished, lay scattered amid the high grass, that waved slowly to the breeze. 'The thistle shook its lonely head; the moss whistled to the wind.' (Radcliffe, *Romance* 15)

The first thing to note in this description is that the building and the trees have a similar age of origin, which means that while one has fallen into decrepitude, the other has flourished. In fact, the building has crumbled into ruin, and nature seems to be taking over. Ivy overgrows the ruins, and parts of the building are now aeries for birds of prey. Nature is actually causing the edifice to crumble away, and time's progression enables nature to flourish while it tears down the building. There is something very Gothic in this description. The dark imagery of civilization being invaded and consumed by nature demonstrates that nature is not benign or necessarily friendly, but in fact might have an appetite for humankind and its works. La Motte, coming to a distinct realization, muses "The comparison between himself and the gradation of decay, which these columns exhibited, was but too obvious and affecting" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 16). As if this relation was not obvious enough, La Motte himself points out his similarity to the building. It should be noted that La Motte is a character who represents the corroding of virtue due to man's immersion in the city, the realm of culture. His reputation is almost beyond saving, and Radcliffe implies that the city itself has caused this corruption. So, to an extent, this particular building represents how mankind

has come to this decayed moral state through corruption by culture.

Kristen Girten, who argues that Radcliffe subverts the Burkean sublime by challenging Burke's assertion that a sublime object requires distance, points out:

> Radcliffe's novels teach readers how to achieve the sublime in the most difficult of circumstances. In doing so, they make widely available both the sublime and also what the sublime represents—most importantly, freedom. Thus, with her gothic sublime, Radcliffe envisions a democratic aesthetic philosophy while suggesting a democratic political philosophy. (Girten 717)

Girten says that Radcliffe uses the Gothic edifice to achieve sublimity, bringing it closer both physically and emotionally in order to allow her female characters to access it as well as male characters. She continues thus: "Within the walls of the gothic edifice, Radcliffe demonstrates that individuals have the potential for, and indeed the right to, the power to define and pursue the fulfillment of their own desires, even when such desires run counter to the tyrannies of patriarchal history and tradition" (Girten 718). Girten also suggests that in her writing Radcliffe advocated for a more "democratic political philosophy" through the gothic sublime (718). This description suggests that both women and nature not only have their own agency within patriarchal society, but that they can use this agency to pull that society down. As mentioned earlier, nature is not always smiling in Radcliffe's novels. One should not assume the benevolent character of women and the environment, because without anyone noticing, they might come back and tear down the entire system, stone by stone.

Furthermore, referring back to the description of the abbey, there is a mention of a thistle and moss. The mention of the thistle that "shook its lonely head" and the moss that "whistled to the wind" (a quotation from James MacPherson's Ossian poem “Carathon”) shows a strong sense of anthropomorphism. As Onno Oerlemans notes, anthropomorphism functions "to ascribe human

characteristics of emotion or thought to animal appearance, behaviour, and consciousness" (68). Although moss and thistles are not strictly speaking animals, the definition here can be applied to nature as a whole as well. In Radcliffe's description, the thistle and the moss take on human characteristics, which brings us back to the idea that human society uses nature to further its own agenda. This anthropomorphism complicates the matter of ecofeminism within Radcliffe's text. In order to discuss this problem, one first needs to be aware that the Gothic edifice is often equated with patriarchal power. As Girten says, "Scholars tend to assume that the meaning of the gothic edifice is as consistent as its presence: regularly viewed as a phallic representation of patriarchy, it has come to be seen as an agent and, thus, [a] symbol of women's domestic captivity and subjugation" (714). Thus, the dichotomy between masculine culture and feminine nature is established early on in the novel. However, it is problematic to suggests that Radcliffe uses anthropomorphism to describe nature because of any connection to anthropocentric values. To explain further, anthropomorphism is a trope authors use to humanize organisms and environments in order to render them familiar and non-alien. However, this method of connecting to nature is problematic because it forces nature into a paradigm that humans define. Anthropomorphism is a way to define nature by humans and for humans, which is very anthropocentric. Does anthropomorphism bring nature closer to humanity, or does it actually drive it further away, even oppressing nature? Oppression might seem like an idea that goes beyond what anthropomorphism actually does, but I argue that by trying to put nature into an easily definable box so that humans can understand it, humans oppress nature through the confinement of ideas. So the question is, to what extent did Radcliffe oppress nature to accomplish her own purpose of allowing women to rebel against patriarchy? This question will be discussed at length presently.

Nature and the Divine

Adeline reveres nature as one of God's creations, but does not equate God with nature. Radcliffe discusses the ideas of God and nature, and how those two concepts relate to each other. The reader sees Adeline as being in tune with nature; at one point "The scene before her soothed her mind, and exalted her thoughts to the great Author of Nature; she uttered an involuntary prayer..." (Radcliffe, *Romance* 22). It is interesting that in this scene, Adeline calls God an author, likening Him to a writer – one such as Radcliffe herself even. Perhaps Radcliffe noted how authors, like God, create their own worlds. In any event, immersion in nature inspires Adeline's spirituality. However, it should be recognized that although nature does bring out her spirituality, at no point does Adeline equate nature itself with God. Like herself, nature is created by God, but it is not therefore equated to the divine. Mayhew notes that "It is clear, then, that Radcliffe's invocations of nature are to be distinguished from those of deists, but it is also noticeable that it is the everyday course of nature which leads to reflections on God, rather than extreme natural events" (Mayhew 601). What Mayhew means in this passage is that Radcliffe writes about nature in a way that does not conflate God and nature, but neither should the reader completely separate the two. Mayhew also notes that it is everyday nature that revives Adeline – not Gothic nature. He argues that there is a theological reason behind the long natural descriptions that Radcliffe uses: "Clearly, Radcliffe found her landscape descriptions meaningful, although many of her contemporaries did not: the meaning lies in the theological purpose which many of those descriptions demonstrate" (598). Radcliffe's heroine is aware of this connection: "Adeline, who never suffered any good to pass unnoticed, because it came attended with evil, forgot for a while the desolation of the abbey in the beauty of the adjacent scenery" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 25). For Adeline, nature serves to keep her spirits uplifted in a way similar to that of prayer. She may find that the abbey is oppressive and constricting, but by looking out at nature, she can make sure that her own moral compass remains

properly aligned.

It should also be noted that Adeline does not necessarily endorse Roman Catholicism and its sense of organized religion. According to Adeline "Too long I had been immured in the walls of a cloister, and too much had I seen of the sullen misery of its votaries, not to feel disgust at the prospect of being added to their number" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 36). Adeline sees those who participate in this system as miserable, also arguably realizing that this facet of religion is part of the patriarchal order. Thus the reader can see nature and Adeline's own personal spirituality as good and the systematic structure of organized religion as comparatively bad. Mayhew notes that "Radcliffe's emphasis on the natural as proof of the divine could be part of a deist strategy of conflating the two ... but the novels specifically work against such a position" (600). Adeline and other characters in the novel such as La Luc call God "the Author of Nature" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 22), thereby acknowledging that although God created nature, the two are not the same. So although Adeline does see nature as a source of good, it is not necessarily divine in and of itself. Adeline actually says "'Father of good, who made this glorious scene! I resign myself to thy hands: thou wilt support me under my present sorrows and protect me from future evil'" (22). As the reader knows, evil does indeed befall Adeline, and she must protect herself in any way she can. I would suggest that although she asks God for His divine intervention in her life, Adeline must rely on her own powers to overcome calamity. Adeline is able to handle these situations as they arise, and her powers occur as if naturally. Radcliffe describes Adeline thus: "She had genius... the captivations of her beauty were heightened by the grace and simplicity of her manners, and confirmed by the intrinsic value of a heart 'that might be shrin'd in crystal'" (29). Adeline's powers of beauty, manner, and morality are depicted as "intrinsic" to her nature. She does not learn how to be beautiful, she is naturally so – just as God made her. God does not need to intervene in her life; He made her capable of handling its events. God created both nature and Adeline, and their

connection, which gives Adeline strength, is also a gift of the divine. However, the connection between Adeline and nature is not one that patriarchal culture and urban society nourishes. Radcliffe seems to want to divorce the idea of spirituality from the realm of culture altogether. In almost every scene in which spirituality is portrayed, Adeline is within the realm of nature.

There is one question that I would like to address, which is how Adeline's communion with nature in a spiritual sense relates to ecofeminism: is she exploiting nature for her own purpose? According to Rosemary Ruether, "the l9th century feminists did not question an anthropocentric world view in which man and woman together were created to dominate and rule over the non-human creation. It is only with the deepening of feminist theology in ecofeminism that there has been a questioning of patriarchal cosmology and recognition of the need to grapple with the whole structure of the Christian story, and not just with gender relations in its anthropology" (27). Ruether's remarks suggest that Radcliffe is among those who would see human domination over nature as something that is divinely condoned. The story of Genesis, after all, is about the dominion of man over the natural world. The verse that speaks to this dominion reads:

> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. (*King James Bible,* Genesis 1:26-28)

Genesis clearly states that “man” is to have dominion over the earth and every living being in nature. God creates a hierarchy – first man, then woman, then nature. He specifically tells Adam and Eve to "subdue" nature, which suggests that humans are meant to be dictators over nature.

However, as already discussed in the previous paragraphs on the Gothic edifice, Radcliffe does not portray nature as under the dominion of man or humankind in general. In fact, the world of man is symbolized by the decaying Abbey being pulled down by Gothic nature. This image directly opposes the one depicted in the Bible, suggesting that humankind is actually not the pinnacle of creation. In fact, a nature reducing man's creations to rubble suggests that those whom human society encapsulates are lower in Radcliffe's hierarchy than people like Adeline, who have a connection to nature. I would argue that Radcliffe portrays Adeline and nature as being equal, and that her writing suggests that Adeline is not nature's oppressor. Rather, her communing with nature is what makes her morally superior to most of the novel's other characters. However, the question still remains: does Adeline exploit nature by using it as her moral compass and by rejuvenating herself through immersion in it? Plumwood points out "The ecological self can be viewed as a type of relational self, one which includes the goal of the flourishing of earth others and the earth community among its own primary ends, and hence respects or cares for these others for their own sake" (154). In other words, one has to give back to the earth and to care for it for the sake of the earth itself. Is there a reciprocal relationship between Adeline and nature? We see that Adeline uses nature to rejuvenate herself, but does she do the same for nature? From the way that Radcliffe writes, I do not believe that she sees this relationship as exploitation in the same way that English society exploited nature for its natural resources. In one instance, Adeline is approached by a young deer: "Her favourite little fawn distinguished Adeline, and came bounding towards her with strong marks of joy" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 63). This passage suggests that Adeline also gives this fawn, a representative of nature, joy in return, and that animals, can, in fact, feel joy. This is an interesting passage, as Radcliffe attributes feelings to animals, suggesting that nature can feel in a way similar to that of humans. On one hand, this portrayal can be seen as anthropomorphic, because humans do not know whether animals feel in the same way as humans do. Humans can

only infer that animals have feelings by watching their actions and reactions to stimuli. However, if Radcliffe is trying to bridge a gap, portraying animals as relating to humans in an anthropomorphic way accomplishes more than it exploits. Perhaps this means that there *is* a reciprocal relationship, and that as Adeline is rejuvenated by nature, her presence also gives something back in return.

Sentimentality and Nature

Adeline's connection with nature relates to sentimentality as well as to morality, making Adeline the most moral figure in the novel and main influence on male characters. In this section, I will discuss how Adeline's presence affects nature as well as men, specifically the three figures of La Motte, the Marquis, and La Luc. Johnson argues that "Sentimentality... blurs gender in such a way as to enlarge Adeline's powers" (75). Sentimentality works in the novel to make Adeline more masculine and men more feminine, and in the society of the eighteenth-century, this reversal makes Adeline more powerful. This model is somewhat similar to the roles of Emily and Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Johnson continues: "Clearly the conduct of all three men [La Motte, Marquis de Montalt, and La Luc] is 'suggested by feeling' and their moral development is to be measured by their passionate receptivity to Adeline herself" (75). This insight suggests that sentimentality aids in the creation of morality. Adeline is the epitome of morality in this novel; unlike the novel's male characters, she never errs in choosing to do the right thing. When La Motte first meets Adeline, his sentimentality aids him in saving her life: "Notwithstanding his present agitation, he found it impossible to contemplate the beauty and distress of the object before him with indifference" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 5). In other words, sentimentality gives La Motte the ability to see past his own trials and to see Adeline's distress. Nevertheless, La Motte sees Adeline as an "object" rather than a "subject," which suggests that La Motte does not see Adeline as a

person at this point in the novel. Perhaps her beauty and distress, which evoke feeling in La Motte, allow him to overcome his sense of Adeline as a mere object. Adeline has not yet proven herself to have agency. The consideration that La Motte shows Adeline continues even after she falls ill and La Motte's escape from justice is put in peril: "The beauty and innocence of Adeline had overcome the disadvantageous circumstances under which she had been introduced to him, and he now gave less consideration to the inconvenience she might hereafter occasion him, than to the hope of her recovery" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 12). Adeline affects him in a way that appeals to his masculinity; however, she also brings conventionally feminine feelings to the surface, revealing his more caring nature. Johnson notes that "Virtuous manhood is defined by the kind and degree of its responsiveness to women, and the crime the novel deplores is the murder of a woman" (74). When the Marquis wants La Motte to murder Adeline, the latter thinks over the situation carefully: "When he considered the innocence and the helplessness of Adeline, her orphan state, her former affectionate conduct, and her confidence in his protection, his heart melted with compassion for the distress he had already occasioned her..." (Radcliffe, *Romance* 227). She has moved him in such a way that he hesitates to follow the Marquis' order. He is morally corrupt in some ways, but not to the point that he would murder her. Katherine Richards compares Adeline to the famous eighteenth-century actress Sarah Siddons, arguing that feminine performance conveys agency: "In other words, while Adeline does look, sound, and emote the way an actress like Siddons might, she also has the powerful ability to make the people around her literally *feel* something, to *move* her audience kinesthetically" (86). Adeline's feminine performance literally moves the men around her, compelling them to action. E.J. Clery posits that sentimentality, morality, and nature are connected: "Radcliffe herself implicitly complicates the rule [that villains are uncultured brutes] when she gives certain villains a fine taste in music or art. That is why response to nature is the ultimate test for Radcliffe; only a sensibility uncorrupted by city life and social conventions is

capable of it" (61). Radcliffe's idea of someone who is truly moral is someone who can sympathetically respond to nature and femininity. La Motte reacts favourably to Adeline's femininity, with sentimentality, but his corruption by the city taints his actions. Adeline is the most moral of all the characters of the book because of her ability to connect with nature.

Parental Figures

The patriarchal urban Gothic and the feminized natural environment act as parents to Adeline. This section of the chapter will focus on Adeline and the parental figures represented in the novel. Of the man she erroneously believes to be her father at the beginning of the novel, Adeline says "'Since he can forget,' said I, 'the affection of a parent and condemn his child without remorse to wretchedness and despair – the bond of filial and parental duty no longer subsists between us – he has himself dissolved it, and I will yet struggle for liberty and life'" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 37). Adeline believes that her father abandoned her and had her taken away by ruffians, when in fact her real father was murdered long before. Hoeveler notes that "The first and most peculiar concern in these early female gothics is the anxiety that a young, nubile woman faces when confronted with the central novelistic dilemma: whether to marry an odious man of her father's choice or be forced into a convent" (*Gothic Feminism* 52). Adeline is almost forced into a convent early in the novel, but she refuses – a significant exercise of agency. At another point, the Marquis de Montalt attempts to marry her, which she also refuses. Although it was not his choice to abandon her, Adeline's real father's absence is what leads to these two events. However, where her father falls to the machinations of the evil Marquis, Adeline triumphs in the end.

As for the mother figure, she is somewhat absent from the story. At the very least, there is no physical presence of a maternal figure; rather, the maternal haunts the heroine in her absence. Miles notes that "For Radcliffe's female characters, the absent maternal body is the ground of their

being" (106). Adeline's only maternal figure is Madame La Motte, who erroneously believes that Adeline is a competitor for her husband's affection. This situation between Adeline and Madame La Motte is similar to one that Wollstonecraft discusses, in which a mother and a daughter become rivals rather than friends (Wollstonecraft 394). Miles continues by arguing that the disinterested legal apparatus allows Adeline to triumph, rewarding her for her struggles with money and power. He points out that "Rather than moving towards the advent of the father as the decisive event in the formation of the heroines' identities, Radcliffe's plots balance the maternal against the patriarchal, the one linked to a unity her heroines have lost and can't recover, the other associated with prohibition, division, and deferral" (Miles 107). This is an interesting insight in that Adeline never had a maternal figure or a paternal figure growing up. The substitute-parental figures in her life, the La Mottes, are not the most desireable, and it is lucky that Adeline's morality discourages her from taking them for role models. If anything, her mother is nature, and her father is patriarchal society. What I mean by this idea is that Adeline's orphaned state allows for other entities to step in as parental figures. Figuratively, whereas nature becomes the mother that replenishes Adeline and allows her to grow, patriarchal society attempts to dominate her in the role of a father. Miles suggests that Adeline cannot recover the relationship to maternal figures; however, I believe the unity between mother and daughter that Miles describes as lacking is in fact present, and that if Adeline ever lost that unity, her immersion in nature would recover it.

Landscapes

Adeline's connection to nature depends on its aesthetic values and their related conceptualization as either feminine or masculine. In this final section of this chapter, I will examine Adeline's character in relation to landscapes and the aesthetics of the sublime, picturesque, and beautiful. Describing Radcliffe's work, Alice Davenport argues that "To create a disquieting mood and build

narrative tension Radcliffe references the picturesque as well as the sublime: a forlorn, desolate room; an isolated and ancient house; menacing, pistol-wielding ruffians; a dark, storm-drenched landscape" (83). In a scene in which a physically and mentally exhausted Adeline traverses the mountains in Savoy after escaping the Marquis, Radcliffe writes:

> Her spirits, thus weakened, the gloomy grandeur of the scenes which had so lately awakened emotions of delightful sublimity, now awed her into terror; she trembled at the sound of the torrents rolling among the cliffs and thundering in the vale below, and shrunk from the view of the precipices, which sometimes overhung the road, and at other times appeared beneath it. (Radcliffe, *Romance* 240)

In this scene, Adeline is actually in the scene which elicits feelings of terror in her. In his famous eighteenth-century treatise on the sublime and the beautiful, Sir Edmund Burke explains such feelings in this way: "When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience" (Burke 34). David Hume also comments on the sublime: "Now when any very distant object is presented to the imagination, we naturally reflect on the interposed distance, and by that means, conceiving something great and magnificent, receive the usual satisfaction" (Hume 199). In the scene quoted above, Adeline does not have the appropriate distance from the sublime to have any other feeling than terror, which is why when she sees the mountains from a distance she finds them sublime, but in this scene finds them terrible. The precipices are all around her, above her and under her, surrounding her. In such close proximity, Adeline is not refreshed by nature – in fact, the opposite is probably true; she finds it a draining experience to travel through the mountains. This is another aspect of Gothic nature – Adeline's connection to nature is not all-encompassing, and not all aspects of nature nurture her. Looking back at my discussion of theology, we have to remember that God created this nature as

well as the everyday natural scenes by which Adeline is replenished. I would also like to note that nature has agency in some ways. In a discussion of agency Kevin Hutchings observes that ecocritics often embrace "the idea that non-human creatures and environments have the active capacity to influence human thought and behavior" (190). Whereas nature actively moves Adeline when she is in green space, in most scenes it is Adeline who moves others in the story. Nature overwhelms Adeline, and her terror of nature in this scene suggests that nature has more than one way to move her. I would like to note that although Adeline is afraid of nature in this scene, she is not frozen or made inactive by her fear – she continues to traverse the mountains in spite of it, and nature allows her passage.

However, the mountains do not inspire terror in La Luc, Theodore's father and Adeline's host, after she escapes from the Marquis, when he travels through them: "Often he [La Luc] retired to the deep solitude of the mountains, and amid their solemn and tremendous scenery would brood over the remembrance of times past, and resign himself to the luxury of grief" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 246). La Luc is someone who, like Adeline, is moved by nature. However, he finds solace after the death of his wife in the sublime rather than the picturesque. William Gilpin, the famous landscape and aesthetic theorist, suggests that "To make an object in a peculiar manner picturesque, there must be a proportion of roughness... which in an object simply beautiful is unnecessary" (25) and also that "Sublimity alone cannot make an object picturesque... unless it's [sic] form, it's [sic] colour, or it's [sic] accompaniments have some form of beauty" (43). In this sense, the picturesque is a mixture of the sublime and the beautiful, something in between the two. It should also be noted here that distance from the sublime, both physical and emotional, is not required for La Luc. Radcliffe describes the loss of La Luc's wife, and his changed character: "This event threw a tincture of soft and interesting melancholy over his character, which remained when time had mellowed the remembrance which occasioned it" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 245). His

feelings after the loss of his wife are forever changed, and his character remains melancholy. Adela Pinch explores the differences in types of feeling, arguing that "The Radcliffean gothic's double-edged attitude toward extravagant feeling – both indulgent and disciplinarian – reminds us that the politics of feeling in the gothic decade of the 1790's often turned on precisely such claims to distinguish excessive from 'natural' feelings" (109). How does one distinguish such emotions? Are La Luc's feelings excessive because of their indulgent nature? I find it interesting that Pinch associates the idea of "natural" feelings with Gothic ideas of sublimity. Radcliffe plays with the politics of feeling by offering the reader various ways of looking from different perspectives. Are feelings "natural" because they are evoked by nature? Or the Gothic? What about the Gothic and nature in conjunction? According to the novel, after La Luc returns from excursions into sublime nature he is "always more placid and contented" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 246). This emotional change suggests that La Luc's feelings tend towards the natural rather than the excessive. If Radliffe changed the location of La Luc's grief and put him in a pastoral setting or within the walls of a building, would his response change? I suggest that Radcliffe's placing of La Luc is intentional, that she deliberately evokes the sublime and the natural world to connect with La Luc's feelings of grief.

Adeline also travels through scenery that might be described as picturesque. One such picturesque scene the narrator describes thus: "At some little distance [Adeline and the La Lucs] perceived the ruins of a fabric which had once been a castle; it stood almost on a point of rock that overhung a deep valley; and its broken turrets rising from among the woods that embosomed it, heightened the picturesque beauty of the object" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 264). It seems to me that the line between the sublime and the picturesque is not obvious all the time, and that something that is sublime might also be considered picturesque. Charles Kostelnick argues that "The acts of exercising the imagination and of feeling through the eyes are the basic subjective operations of

the mind in Gilpin's picturesque perception" (36). Kostelnick is correct in this assessment, as the narrator of the novel continues from the previous quotation: "The edifice invited curiosity... For some time they were lost in meditation" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 264). The picturesque beauty of the scene invites the viewer to dwell on profound thoughts and imaginative curiosity. Nature often revives Adeline's spirits as well as inspiring her thoughts. While immersing herself in the nature outside the ruined abbey, she creates a poem about a lily, comparing the flower to herself:

> Sweet child of Spring! like thee, in sorrow's shade
>
> Full oft I mourn in tears, and droop forlorn:
>
> And O! like thine, may light my glooms pervade,
>
> And Sorrow fly before Joy's living morn! (Radcliffe, *Romance* 76)

This direct comparison demonstrates that Adeline sees the connection between herself and nature, and that nature inspires her emotions. It should also be noted that Adeline calls the flower a "child of Spring," suggesting that nature is a mother both to the flower and to herself. As Miles points out, "'Picturesque' nature nurtures the heroine; this nature is a substitute for the maternal; and both the heroine's creativity and her identity are strengthened by it" (124). This insight brings us back to the idea that nature is a maternal figure in Adeline's life, and that while Adeline's birth mother is absent, nature as a maternal presence still persists.

Lastly, Adeline's agency is evident when she immerses herself in nature. After the La Motte party reaches the ruined abbey, Adeline often takes long, solitary walks in the natural environment around the abbey. One such walk Radcliffe describes as follows: "The beauty of the hour invited her to walk, and she went forth into the forest to taste the sweets of morning" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 75). The structure of the sentence implies that nature itself invites her to walk and immerse herself in the forest. This sentence speaks of the agency of nature as well as of Adeline. Adeline wanders by herself in nature, without a male character to act as a protector or

chaperone. It is at this point that she meets her love interest Theodore – while alone in the forest. To quote John Whale, "Gilpin suggests that the Picturesque traveller is a surrogate explorer. Appetite is here promiscuous, roving, pluralistic – a libertine freedom which seems to lack the compulsive, and potentially tragic, quest for origins and consequent terminations, which are to be found in Romantic poetry" (176). As one of the aforementioned "picturesque travellers," Adeline is an active participant rather than a passive observer of landscapes. She is not passive when she wanders to different places; rather, she is an explorer of landscapes, and her travels through natural spaces allow her a freedom that she can never experience within the walls of the abbey, or in the city. Whale suggests that such a traveller as Adeline has a "libertine freedom." While Adeline is certainly not a libertine by any stretch of the imagination, she does walk through the woods alone and meets a strange man there, an act that pushes the boundaries of propriety for eighteenth-century readers.

Last of all, Adeline eventually settles with her husband Theodore in pastoral Leloncourt. This pastoral space is set between the sublime Alps and the urban society of the outside world – in other words, between society and culture on one hand and wild nature on the other. This liminal space is a threshold between the two: close enough to nature that Adeline still feels empowered, but not in the sublime depths of the mountains, which (as previously mentioned) can be terrifying. The chateau's environs at Leloncourt are described thus: "Behind the chateau rose a tuft of pines, and in front a gentle declivity, covered with verdure and flowers, extended to the lake, whose waters flowed even with the grass, and gave freshness to the acacias that waved over its surface. Flowering shrubs, intermingled with mountain ash, cypress, and evergreen oak, marked the boundary of the garden" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 248). When one considers that the cypress and flowering shrubs are domesticated garden plants, and the mountain ash and oak are trees that grow in the wild, the garden's spacial liminality is clear. The reference to the "boundary of the garden"

suggests the significance of this space as borderland between the two spaces of the urban environment and the wilderness. It is in this pastoral space that Adeline and Theodore find the most pleasing of all landscapes that the two have traversed, and where they settle down. This space seems to exist outside of time and place, suggesting that it will never change no matter how much urbanization takes place outside of Leloncourt. One scene in particular suggests that a pastoral space such as the one Adeline and Theodore settle in allows them to act as equals: the scene at the end in which all of the characters dance together by moonlight. La Luc says, "'let the good people who have so heartily welcomed us home be called in too... they shall all partake our happiness" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 361). The fact that all the characters dance together without any gender or class boundaries in place suggests that in this space the separation between domestic and public spheres is breaking down. Kate Ellis argues, "The rural endings of the Radcliffian Gothic move away not only from the industrial economy being created by the bourgeoisie but also from the extremes of the accompanying ideology of separate spheres" (Ellis). Ellis's remark suggests that the "separate spheres" of the domestic and the public, otherwise known as the realm of the woman and the realm of the man, are not important in Leloncourt, and that the rural setting is something of an equalizer. The characters in this scene are still immersed in the natural world, the kind of nature that replenishes Adeline's spirits and gives her strength. However, she is outside the realm of the Gothic, and also outside of Gothic nature. Is it because Adeline has found everything that she requires that she no longer needs Gothic nature to give her agency? She has left the realm of Gothic terror and also the world of oppressive male control. Adeline is safe for now in her little bubble away from the terrors and horrors of the world beyond. However, there are more women out in that world still imprisoned in the same patriarchal system that Adeline has escaped. For Adeline, this is a happy ending, but the horror still lurks out there, beyond Leloncourt's comfortable reaches.

Conclusion

At the novel's conclusion, Adeline manages to reach a place where she is happy and content, and that place is still within the nature that nurtures her and helps her to grow. Adeline is still connected to nature in this way; however, she is not the same dynamic Adeline that existed outside of Leloncourt, who traversed natural scenery and exercised her own agency within those natural spaces. I argue that while Adeline is something of a feminist figure while in green spaces imbued with the Gothic, she fails in her duty of solidarity to other women and also to the world of nature beyond Leloncourt, which is also being slowly colonized by androcentric society. While Adeline is not an ecofeminist or a feminist in the terms of modern-day society, she nevertheless asserts her powers in any way she can and traverses the terrain in a way similar to a man. Perhaps Wollstonecraft would consider Adeline to be a strong female character for her time. I would suggest that Radcliffe deliberately created Adeline to be an active heroine, and that Radcliffe truly is "The Great Enchantress" (Miles 10).

Chapter 3

Traversing the Landscape: The Empowerment of Women and Nature in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

> This thought, instead of overcoming her with despondency, roused all the latent powers of her fortitude into action... (*Udolpho* 379)

Introduction

The character of Emily St. Aubert is a further step in Ann Radcliffe's development of active female heroines. Emily, much like Adeline de Montalt, enhances her power through immersion in nature. Her imprisonment in the castle of Udolpho, and to a further extent, her imprisonment by the patriarchy, causes her psychological stress. Emily resists through her connection to Gothic nature and successfully escapes from her captor because of this connection. Emily is a further evolved version of Adeline, and loses none of her femininity through her increased strength and active role in the storyline.

The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) was one of Ann Radcliffe's most popular novels among readers of eighteenth-century society and remains so among readers and scholars of the twenty-first century. The previous chapter focusing on *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) delved into such issues as feminism, the Gothic, and the environment. This chapter will focus on similar issues but will also examine the psyche of Emily St. Aubert, the heroine of the story. First, before I begin my interpretation of the text, I will give a short summary of the novel to help clarify my main points. After this summary, I will elucidate the importance of eighteenth-century feminism in this text, covering Mary Wollstonecraft and her ideas of feminism, as well as interactions that Emily has with male characters in the story. In particular, I will consider interactions Emily has with her

father, the antagonist Montoni, and the hero and love interest, Valancourt. I will also briefly examine the role of the castle of Udolpho from a feminist perspective. Next, I will talk about Emily's psyche in relation to the Gothic and explore how the events of the story affect her mind and imagination. I will also examine the "explained Gothic," which occurs when Radcliffe shows the readers a supernatural event and then later gives it a mundane and reasonable explanation. Having explored the psychology behind Emily's actions, I will then examine identity and the Gothic before considering the ways in which the Gothic and the sublime inform Emily's interaction with the villainous Montoni. Lastly, I will explore how Emily traverses landscapes and interacts with the environment outside the castle of Udolpho. This final section also investigates the idea of identity and the way in which Emily interacts with male characters. Emily immerses herself in green environments in order to escape the patriarchal confines of the domestic sphere. Emily's relationship with nature is reciprocal, providing a significant contrast to most of human society's one-sided relationships. Anthropocentric society attempts to control nature, and also uses nature as a means of industrial production. By "anthropocentric," I mean that society largely ignores the needs of nature itself, and that everything to do with nature, from industry to literature and art, centres around how nature can benefit society. Green space, particularly Gothic sublime green space, allows Emily to traverse the landscape and to escape Montoni, thus empowering her.

Summary of the Novel

The novel begins with Emily and her father, St. Aubert, traversing the grand Pyrenees after the death of Emily's mother. It is at this time that Emily meets her love interest, Valancourt, and the three of them travel together and admire the beauty of the surrounding scenery. Emily's father takes great pains to impress upon Emily the importance of not succumbing to an excess of emotion. However, this warning against indulgence in romantic sensibility does not help Emily in

her further trials. St. Aubert dies, leaving the orphaned Emily to be taken in by Madame Cheron, her aunt. Madame Cheron then marries the antagonist of the story, Montoni, an Italian nobleman. Montoni takes Emily and his new wife to Italy, where Emily is courted by Count Morano. When Emily refuses Morano, Montoni promises Morano that Emily will marry him. However, before the nuptials happen, Montoni whisks Madame Montoni and Emily away to his castle, Udolpho, a mountain stronghold. It is here, in this gothic castle, that Emily experiences many terrifying trials, including the death of her aunt who has been locked away in a tower by her husband, a terrifying chase through the castle by Montoni's men who wish to sexually assault her, as well as a kidnapping attempt by the licentious Morano. Emily does not heed her father's past words, and allows her mind to become excessively stressed by her trials. This psychological stress causes Emily to see a contorted version of a monstrous Montoni, capable of any evil. She is given a brief reprieve when Montoni sends her to Tuscany with his servants, but upon her return to Udolpho, he forces her to sign papers which allow him to take over her aunt's estates. With the help of her servants and the mysterious prisoner Du Pont, Emily escapes from Udolpho, eventually staying with Count de Villefort and his daughter, Lady Blanche, where she receives a letter telling her of Montoni's death. Returning to her aunt's estates in Tholouse, Emily discovers that her beloved Valancourt has lost all his money in Paris. Believing he has become a fallen figure due to his time in the city's corrupting environment, Emily refuses him. Eventually, however, Emily finds out the true story behind Valancourt's time in Paris and ultimately marries him.

Gothic Feminism

Although Emily is not a feminist heroine in the eyes of modern-day feminism, she still caused female readers to begin changing their perspectives on the actions that women were allowed to make and their roles in society. In the previous chapter, I considered Diane Hoeveler's claim that

Gothic heroines are passive characters who do not actively pursue their own destinies, arguing that this claim fails to account for the gothic novel's complexities. Hoeveler says this of Radcliffe's heroines: "In order to discover the ideological impetus of these texts we have to look for meaning in the entire network of cultural discourses that swirl around the heroine, a sort of black hole of meaning herself, oblivious almost all the time of the social, political, religious, and economic issues pulsating in all directions around her" (*Gothic Feminism* 55). Hoeveler compares heroines such as Adeline de Montalt in *The Romance of the Forest* and Emily St. Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to black holes, as if these female characters are mere objects surrounded by active participants, but this assertion is to misinterpret the physics of black holes. First of all, one must consider that a black hole is part of nature, albeit part of nature well beyond the boundaries of Earth's biosphere. Secondly, a black hole is not simply that which is described by its name. There are myriad of forces working on a black hole, and the phenomenon itself is something to be respected. In reality, black holes are quite active – they exert immense gravitational forces on objects that swirl around them, eventually pulling them in. Continuing to argue against the agency of female characters in Radcliffe's novels, Hoeveler says "But as several critics have noted, these women are all the same woman; only their dress style slightly distinguishes one from another" (*Gothic Feminism* 55). Hoeveler argues that the female characters are indistinguishable, making them less effective. However, the argument can be made that any similarities between these female heroines can be put down to the fact that Radcliffe is using stock characters, which are often deployed in eighteenth-century literature. Frances Burney, in particular, uses stock characters very effectively in her novels. Radcliffe, however, does not use the traditional stock character in her novels; she has created her own version of stock characters in the form of the active female heroine. Along with other eighteenth-century novelists, Radcliffe used stock characters to make an argument, allowing the interactions between characters to speak for them. Hoeveler goes on in this

vein: "The lesson that Gothic feminism teaches is that the meek shall inherit the Gothic earth; the Female Gothic heroine always triumphs in the end because melodramas are constructed that way" ("Female Gothic Posture" 31). Remarkably, Hoeveler denies the agency of the female Gothic heroine by calling Emily, the heroine who traverses the great Apennine mountains and defies the banditti leader Montoni, "meek." In contradiction to most of her work, Hoeveler then says that middle-class women "learned to take their worst nightmares of abuse, their real and imagined scenes of persecution and objectification, and shape them instead into sagas of revenge and triumph. They learned, in short, to use a new discourse system to empower themselves" (*Gothic Feminism* 102). In other words, although Hoeveler's middle-class women are largely passive and meek, this "discourse system" on Gothic feminism empowers them and makes them feel as if they can also make a difference, creating role models in literature for female readers to emulate. Hoeveler is not entirely wrong given that middle-class women readers took inspiration from these female characters, except I argue that these characters are not meek or passive at all.

I argue more along the lines of Robert Miles, who says "I do not mean to suggest that we are to take Radcliffe as a cryptic radical intent on smuggling in a subversive tract under the noses of censorious male readers. What I want to draw attention to, rather, is the way the text undermines – indeed, constantly makes issue of – what it is we are to understand as 'real,' with the consequence that the differences between the literal and the figurative begin to blur" (116). Here, Miles is talking about Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest*, but the suggestion that Radcliffe deliberately blurs the line between literal and figurative, thereby complicating the narrative and enriching the character and psychology of the female heroines, applies to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as well. Miles uses the example of Adeline looking into a mirror and fearing that another unknown face will look back (Miles 116). A similar instance in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* occurs when Emily and Dorothee are in the chamber where Ludovico later disappears and see "the

apparition of a human countenance" (*Udolpho* 536). This "apparition" is an instance of the "explained Gothic" insofar as it haunts Emily until the mysterious "countenance" is later explained as the face of one of the banditti who broke into the chamber and later kidnaps Ludovico. Until Emily discovers the truth, the question remains whether what she sees is real or a product of her unruly imagination.

Emily's psyche is an important part of Gothic feminism and the "explained Gothic," as scholars debate Emily's rationality and susceptibility to emotion. Another scholar, Donald Bruce, says "In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* liberty is infringed by physical confinement, by misplaced sensibility, by superstition, and female subservience" (Bruce 303). In his use of the passive voice, Bruce seems to imply that female liberty itself is also passive in the novel, and that this passivity is both cause and symptom of the loss of liberty. In other words, women are largely at fault for their own oppression. Claudia L. Johnson weighs in: "The 'mysteries' narrated in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* – the many stories about dying, murdered, abandoned, and otherwise wronged women which Emily hears, imagines, and exemplifies – are presented finally *not* as cumulative evidence of male oppression, but as misrecognitions borne of excess of the wrong, pathological, female sort, and accordingly are demoted to 'superstitious' tales believed only by credulous servants, paranoid maidens, and (for a time) spellbound readers" (97). Johnson argues that Emily exaggerates the wrongs male characters have done to female characters, and that Radcliffe treats Emily's psychological torment as superstition. The fact remains that many stories told throughout the novel involving men wronging women in some way *are* evidence of oppression; however, this oppression is veiled behind Emily's psychological suffering. Perhaps Radcliffe portrays the treatment of women here in a manner similar to Emily's reaction to one of these "superstitious" tales, when she pulls aside the black veil and sees a waxen figure which she immediately misinterprets as a real decaying body. Emily's mistake is that her imagination creates a real dead

body out of a facsimile. So, does it follow that Emily merely imagines the wrongs done to women as well? Is Radcliffe's portrayal of the oppression of women overblown? Perhaps the Gothic does make the suffering of women seem incredible, but the oppression that real-life women of the eighteenth century endured was very real. Johnson argues "On one hand the plot of *Udolpho* multiplies instances of the injuries done to women and, by inviting us to sympathize with their distress, allows that their suffering enhances the moral respect due to them. Yet on the other... the plot denies that these women are being injured in the first place, and figures their sensitivity as culpable, our sympathy as misplaced, the novel as misread" (102). Not unlike Bruce's comment, Johnson shows that in a societal context, women are often blamed for their own victimization through whatever mental acrobatics are required.

Emily and Valancourt

Although Emily marries Valancourt, she does not necessarily submit herself to his will; in fact, Emily herself has already changed the world in which she lives. Emily is not a mere object that other forces act upon but a force in and of herself, just like the black hole to which Hoeveler compares her. There are several instances in which she asserts herself and is an active agent in the novel. Although in her heart she wants to marry Valancourt, the orphaned Emily follows her head – her rationality. In response to Valancourt's courtship, she says

> "I will be ingenuous with you, for I know you will understand, and allow for my situation; you will consider it as proof of my – my esteem that I am so. Though I live here in what was my father's house, I live here alone. I have, alas! no longer a parent – a parent whose presence might sanction your visits. It is unnecessary for me to point out the impropriety of my receiving them." (*Udolpho* 107)

This is not the last time that Emily finds it necessary to turn down Valancourt's visits, and later, his

proposals for her hand. This refusal is not just an answer to a question, but also an assertion of her own will. By rationalizing her response, Emily shows reason to the over-emotional Valancourt, but frames her refusal as a display of her esteem for him – and of her obedience to patriarchal convention that would require paternal "sanction" for Valancourt's courtship. Heidi Giles points out that "Though Emily and Valancourt do eventually marry, it is only after Emily spends a significant amount of time suffering as she keeps her painful resolve to wait for a marriage acceptable to both herself and society" (78). Emily wants to marry Valancourt; indeed she loves him. However, she still must follow society's rules, and instead of shaming herself in the eyes of her peers, she keeps her resolve to wait. As Giles continues, such "a 'resolve' suggests a multiplicity of choices that, through individual effort, is worked into a single course of action: one choice is preferred while many are discarded. Thus, [Radcliffe] can use this language to empower [her] heroines while still emphasizing the sacrifice – the potential dissolution and disintegration of identity – that lurks behind every resolve" (Giles 77). The rationality that Emily provides in her refusal of Valancourt's hand empowers her choice. She has a choice – she can refuse him and stay within the boundaries of acceptable society, or she can elope with him. Whereas an emotional response would favour the second choice, Emily keeps her head. This is a lesson that her father sought to teach her, and although in some cases she does not follow his advice, in others, his influence is obvious. Another instance of her assertion of will is her continuing refusal to sign over her aunt's estates to Montoni. Emily says "The strength of my mind is equal to the justice of my cause... I can endure with fortitude, when it is in resistance of oppression" (*Udolpho* 381). Emily knows that Montoni can make her life miserable, as he did in his cruel treatment of her aunt, and yet she is willing to bear these atrocities in order to preserve her property – a palpable sign of her independence – from usurpation by a male oppressor. In this scene, at least, Emily is exactly the type of daughter that St. Aubert raised her to be.

Emily and her Father

Emily's resistance to her father's orders cause her harm in some ways, but in others, it frees her more than any other action she might have taken. Emily's relationship with her father changes during the course of the story: in the beginning, she obeys him in all things and esteems him above all others; however, as the story progresses, Emily is confused by troubling secrets her father has kept from her. Emily learns that in his past, her father had an unspecified relationship with a mysterious woman. She finds evidence of this secret in letters that her father tells her to burn and in a miniature picture that her father looks at when he thinks Emily is not looking. This evidence causes Emily to doubt her father's honour and the fidelity of her parents' relationship. St. Aubert tries to mould Emily into his idealized woman: "In short, St. Aubert sought to create in his daughter his opposite – a manly woman. If he is the ideal feminized and sensitive man, she must be the perfectly masculinized and sensible woman" (Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism* 89-90). Attempting to mould her character, St. Aubert impresses a lesson upon Emily:

> "I have endeavoured to teach you, from the earliest youth, the duty of self-command; I have pointed out to you the great importance of it through life, not only as it preserves us in the various and dangerous temptations that call us from rectitude and virtue, yet which, extended beyond a certain boundary, are vicious, for their consequence is evil. All excess is vicious; even that sorrow, which is amiable in its origin, becomes a selfish and unjust passion, if indulged at the expense of our duties..." (*Udolpho* 20)

In this passage, St. Aubert tells Emily that excess of emotion leads to evil consequences, even if that emotion is rooted in good. The fact that St. Aubert tries to teach Emily "self-command" is notable, as women were not generally thought of as rational beings during the eighteenth-century. As Miles observes, however, "The image of St. Aubert's anti-patriarchal retreat is as tenuous as the

mask of his own probity at the moment of Emily's troubling glance into her father's secret history" (Miles 145). St. Aubert teaches Emily to be a woman with self-command, but when she discovers that he might not have been telling her the whole truth and that he has a "secret history," he makes her doubt his other teachings. In response, she allows emotion to overcome her rationality during her time in the castle of Udolpho. This passage also implies a subtle critique of the idea that St. Aubert is a friend to women, as his faithfulness to his wife is brought into doubt by a picture that Emily sees in his possession. Despite his good intentions, St. Aubert should be added to the list of men in the novel who wrong women. The doubt that Emily has is compounded by her interactions with her subsequent male guardian, Montoni: "If such a “good” father [as St. Aubert] throws disappointments in Emily's way with pedagogical intent and watches with *seeming* indifference her tears and struggles, the male authority figure who succeeds him after Emily is orphaned (the requisite state for Gothic heroines) replaces appearance with substance" (Spacks). The way in which St. Aubert chooses to teach Emily might seem to be harsh, however good his pedagogical intentions. Is St. Aubert one of the men who cause women suffering, and where should we situate him on the spectrum of patriarchy in comparison to Montoni? To the extent that St. Aubert causes Emily torment, I would suggest that although he does hurt Emily with his secrets and family history, this is a passive form of harm compared to Montoni's active attempts to steal her land and money.

Emily and Montoni

Emily takes her position on rationality and emotion in response to her father St. Aubert and Montoni's actions. After St. Aubert's death, Montoni becomes Emily's new masculine authority figure. "In fact, after the death of her father," as Koç and Güvenç observe, "Emily’s new parents are the two 'patriarchal' figures, representing the new masculine capitalist order" (Koç and Güvenç

39). The other patriarchal figure who Koç and Güvenç reference is Mme Montoni. Radcliffe critiques this state of affairs through the actions of both of Emily's new parental figures. Almost immediately upon marrying Montoni, Madame Montoni forbids the match between Emily and Valancourt, with the explanation that "the Signor had forbade the connection, considering it to be greatly inferior to what Emily might reasonably expect" (*Udolpho* 144). In this instance, Madame Montoni means that Valancourt lacks position and wealth, which is greatly desired in the proto-capitalist society of the time. Koç and Güvenç continue: "By depicting Montoni and Mme Cheron from the pseudo aristocracy as the representatives of the capitalist system, Radcliffe covertly criticizes middle class people and their capitalist paradigm" (40). This statement is a strange one to make, as middle-class people were the main readers of Radcliffe's novels, and as mentioned previously, Hoeveler notes that the middle-class women of eighteenth-century society took strength and courage from Radcliffe's portrayal of Emily. Montoni is certainly an object of Radcliffe's critique as "He assumes, among other paternal prerogatives, that of disposing of her in marriage for his own advantage. Emily's imperative need to resist him educates her more successfully than her benign true father could have done" (Spacks). Montoni attempts to force Emily to marry Count Morano, but Emily refuses, resisting his impulse to "dispose" of her as he sees fit. Madame Montoni takes umbrage at this refusal, urging Emily to "get rid of all those fantastic notions about love, and this ridiculous pride, and be something like a reasonable creature" (*Udolpho* 221). The fact that Madame Montoni urges Emily to be "reasonable" is interesting given that her father had also told her to be rational. To be sure, Emily asserts her willpower in her continued refusal of Count Morano's hand, but she does so for an emotional reason: her love of Valancourt. She chooses Valancourt, and has decided that she will not be happy with anyone else. So is this a rational decision or an emotional one? To some extent, I believe it is both reasonable *and* emotional, as one does not necessarily exclude the other. Even in the twenty-first century,

patriarchal society frames reason and emotion as dichotomous terms in order to undermine women's resistance and use their very reasonable anger against them. Radcliffe recognizes this dichotomy for what it is: an attempt to silence women. Therefore, when she writes her female characters, she does not show them as solely rational beings but as emotional ones as well, because to do otherwise would only solidify a harmful societal viewpoint.

Rationality and Emotion

Rationality and emotion are concepts that, on first inspection, seem to be opposites, but upon further inspection, actually work together to create new and interesting situations. Emily herself is a fascinating mix of rationality and emotion, and I argue that this mixture of the two traits creates a more dynamic character, one who has the ability to transgress and transcend boundaries. Blodgett examines Emily's nature, arguing that "it is noteworthy that Emily St. Aubert ... conforms in significant ways to Wollstonecraft's *desiderata* for women. Given that she is also unlike her immediate predecessor in Radcliffe's fiction, Adeline of *The Romance of the Forest* (1791)... Radcliffe may have been reacting to a new and inspiring stimulus" (Blodgett). Blodgett disagrees with Hoeveler here, stating that Adeline and Emily are unlike one another to the point that some new influence is suspected. Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was published in 1792, in the years intervening between the publications of Radcliffe's two novels. While I argue in my previous chapter that Adeline is not necessarily a passive character, Emily has a new character trait which shines through in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Wollstonecraft states in her *Vindication* that she has "a profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of misery I deplore" (373). The *Vindication* continues: "The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state; for like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty;

and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade..." (373). Wollstonecraft argues that women should have a similar education to that of men, and that women, who were considered creatures of emotion in the late eighteenth-century, should think rationally. In the novel, Emily encapsulates this ideal by being educated in a broad range of disciplines: "St. Aubert cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care. He gave her a general view of the sciences, and an exact acquaintance with every part of elegant literature. He taught her Latin and English, chiefly that she might understand the sublimity of their best poets" (*Udolpho* 6). It was certainly not a common practice during the eighteenth century to educate women in science, but Emily gains a general knowledge of the subject. However, Emily is also educated in poetry, particularly English poetry which the narrator describes as "sublime." The very description of the poetry as "sublime" brings to mind the emotional Romantic poets, although the Romantic period of English literature was only just beginning at the time that Radcliffe was publishing. Katherine McGee points out that "While Montoni is self-serving, Valancourt acts according to Emily's wishes. Radcliffe thus does not necessarily critique the existence of the patriarchal (and parallel hierarchical system) so much as she points out that it must act differently—it must be affective—in order to be effective" (25). Emily's choice when it comes to suitors is Valancourt, a sensitive man who acts as a partner to Emily rather than as an overlord such as Montoni. It is true that Radcliffe does not necessarily critique the patriarchal power structure in an attempt to tear it down completely. Rather, she puts the impetus on both men and women to change themselves and the way society acts towards women.

Solidarity between Female Characters

The last issue to discuss when it comes to feminism is female solidarity, in particular the relationships between female characters in the novel. Upon introduction, Emily and Blanche de

Villefort seem like almost the same character, but the two evolve beyond that, becoming two women who will work together to accomplish their goals. Emma Dominguez-Rue observes, "According to patriarchal stereotypes of femininity, relationships among women can never involve co-operation and solidarity: their unequal position in society results in mutual jealousy, competition for male attention, and identity only in relation to men" (129). Wollstonecraft says something similar in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*:

> But supposing, no very improbable conjecture, that a being only taught to please must still find her happiness in pleasing; what an example of folly, not to say vice, will she be to her innocent daughters! The mother will be lost in the coquette, and, instead of making friends of her daughters, view them with eyes askance, for they are rivals—rivals more cruel than any other, because they invite a comparison, and drive her from the throne of beauty, who has never thought of a seat on the bench of reason. (Wollstonecraft 394)

Wollstonecraft's argument is that the patriarchal system raises women to compete with one another for male attention, when a mother's true duty should be to teach her daughters to think rationally. In light of this insight, there are two central female characters whose relationships with Emily are worth comparing: Madame Cheron (later Montoni) and Blanche de Villefort. (Emily's mother is not a significant player when it comes to this subject.) As for Madame Montoni, it is obvious that she has no sense of female solidarity, and that her aims are purely selfish. Her every action in the novel speaks to this selfishness, from trying to force Emily to marry against her will to refusing to sign over her estates in Tholouse to her husband. However, Madame Montoni's actions do not stop Emily from attempting to reach out to her in solidarity. When Montoni announces that Madame Montoni will be shut away in the east turret, Emily "fell at his feet, and, with tears of terror, supplicated for her aunt" (*Udolpho* 305). It may be that Emily's "tears of terror" are motivated by a selfish fear that she will be left alone without her aunt as a guardian, but her character suggests

otherwise. She is terrified on behalf of her aunt and supplicates in order to spare her aunt torment. In order to hear news of her aunt, Emily even agrees to meet a man called Barnardine on the ramparts in secret, putting herself at risk for her aunt's sake. Emily certainly shows that she is ready and willing to exert herself for the sake of other women.

The second main female character, Blanche de Villefort, is the daughter of the Count de Villefort, whose estates house Emily for some time after a storm overtakes the ship her party is aboard on their way toward Narbonne, near the abbey of St. Claire. Radcliffe describes the first meeting of Emily and Blanche thus: "The unaffected kindness of Blanche and the lively joy she expressed on the escape of the strangers [Emily, her maid Annette, her servant Ludovico, and fellow prisoner Du Pont], for whom her pity had been so much interested, gradually revived Emily's languid spirits" (*Udolpho* 487). Until this point in the novel, it is usually nature that revives Emily's spirits. Blanche and Emily are revived in similar ways by nature, and could almost be the same person in their personalities. The two of them are immediately drawn to each other, and even have a double wedding at the end. This friendship between the two shows that Radcliffe imagines the possibility of woman-centred relationships that eschew the need to fight over male attention.

The Gothic Edifice

The Gothic edifice that Emily encounters in this novel is the castle of Udolpho, which seems to act as not only a character with agency, but also as an ally of patriarchy. Having examined Gothic feminism in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, I now move on to the Gothic mode itself, more specifically Radcliffe's depiction of the Gothic edifice. In the last chapter, I spoke of the ruined abbey as a structure symbolizing the crumbling of the patriarchy. In this section of the present chapter, I will expound upon the castle of Udolpho, and its relationship to Emily's confinement. The castle itself

is described thus: "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* 227). Emily describes the castle as if it were a king or a monarch of some kind, much like its owner Montoni. The castle seems in this instance to be like a person. She sees that Montoni and the castle are alike from the very start, and that the castle is something of an extension of Montoni and his power over herself and her aunt. LaCote says of the Gothic edifice: "The anthropomorphism of the structure begins with the choice of the adjectives that qualify it, and which are similar to those we would use to describe a person" (203). Udolpho Castle's anthropomorphic depiction is similar to that of the castle of Ortranto in the famous Gothic novel by Horace Walpole, where the castle itself is part of the story and is almost like a character in the novel. Emily notes these features of Udolpho as her party arrives:

> Another gate delivered them into the second court, grass-grown and more wild than the first, where, as she surveyed through the twilight its desolation – its lofty walls, overtopt with briony, moss and nightshade, and the embattled towers that rose above – long-suffering and murder came to her thoughts. (*Udolpho* 228)

It is interesting that nature in this passage is starting to overgrow the castle, much like the abbey in *The Romance of the Forest*. Even more interesting is that briony and nightshade are known to be species which are highly toxic, as if Udolpho is a place whose moral toxicity is shown through nature. Emily immediately gets a sense of foreboding: perhaps she can already tell that these walls will be the death of her aunt. She has no way of knowing at this point that she will also be a prisoner here, but she has a presentiment of future suffering.

Another facet of the castle of Udolpho is its association with the sublime. Kristen Girten notes that "Within its walls, she [Radcliffe] challenges the tendency of Burke and other eighteenth-century aesthetic philosophers to assign the prerequisites of physical and emotional distance to the

sublime. In contrast to this tendency, her variable portrayal of the gothic structure emphasizes that sublimity is a matter of perspective" (717). Girten's stance on the sublime is interesting because it suggests that Radcliffe is consciously using the sublime in a different way from influential scholars such as Edmund Burke. In the experience of the sublime, according to Burke, "when danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience" (34). According to Tom J. Hillard, "The reason that Gothic literature has been able to confront... depictions of excessive, socially reprehensible phenomena is that it typically relegates them to a time long ago and a place far away" (690). This distance allows readers and viewers of the sublime to enjoy pain and danger rather than feeling afraid and imperiled. However, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe uses the sublime in a different manner as suggested by Emily's first view of the castle: "Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object" (*Udolpho* 226-7). The "sublime object," in this instance, is quite close, and in fact ultimately encompasses Emily, engulfing her within itself. To what end does Radcliffe work to subvert the meaning of the sublime in this novel? What is it about the closeness of a sublime object that interests Radcliffe? I believe that this closeness is related to gender, in particular the contemporary tendency to see the sublime as masculine. As Anne Mellor says, "The sublime is associated with an experience of masculine empowerment; its contrasting term, the beautiful is associated with an experience of feminine nurturance, love, and sensuous relaxation" (85). The idea that the Burkean sublime and beautiful are distinctly gendered in this way is simplistic and uncompromising. By pushing these boundaries, Radcliffe deconstructs the conventional binary opposition between femininity and masculinity, placing men and women on a

complex spectrum of gender identity.

The Explained Gothic

The “explained Gothic” is a tool used to deconstruct the facade of the all-powerful patriarchy, giving its power a mundane and resistible explanation. Radcliffe plays with the boundaries of the sublime – and the opposition between masculine and feminine – in other ways. As previously noted, Hillard asserts that by placing pain and danger at a distance, the Gothic author is able to explore them. This assertion is true of *Udolpho* in that the year the tale takes place is 1584, and the place is Gascony in France, far away in space and time from London of 1794. This distance allows Radcliffe to explore themes that she otherwise would not be able to consider, such as the oppression of women. Koç and Güvenç claim that "Radcliffe’s *Udolpho* depicts a world in transition from feudalism to capitalism. In either system, there are two classes, the ruling and the ruled, the oppressor and the oppressed, always in struggle against each other in terms of gaining material and political power" (40). Significantly, however, this allegorical transition excludes women, who are the oppressed group whether one is talking about feudalism or capitalism. In the struggle between the feudal world of St. Aubert and the capitalist world of Montoni one can see that Emily is still under the rule of a man in either case. St. Aubert may be more benign and kind to those under his power than Montoni, but Emily is not free of the patriarchal power system in either situation. Although I noted earlier that St. Aubert teaches Emily to exercise reason rather than excessive emotion, thus diverging from patriarchal conventions that relegated women to the realm of the heart, St. Aubert remains a patriarchal authority figure. The difference between St. Aubert and Montoni has an effect on Emily: "As the mysteries of La Vallee and Udolpho elide the differences – in Emily's unconscious – between St. Aubert and Montoni, so her 'identity' (and the paternal authority on which it is based) comes under threat, a threat projected onto the world

around her as a sense of 'strangeness,' or, if you like, the supernatural" (Miles 146).

Miles interprets the threat against Emily's identity as a projection of the supernatural, which the novel occasionally undermines in its recourse to the "explained Gothic," as scholars such as Katherine Ding, Deidre Shauna Lynch, and Adela Pinch call Radcliffe's generic practice. As Katherine Ding defines it, the "explained Gothic" is "that which resolves the heroine's (and reader's) sublime terror with disappointingly ordinary causes" (550) – as, for example, when Ludovico disappears from a seemingly haunted room, and the cause behind his disappearance is later discovered to be a secret passage and a kidnapping by pirates. Radcliffe demonstrates that the patriarchy is a perfectly ordinary terror through the mundane explanation of the supernatural in both a literal and figurative sense. McGee argues "that Radcliffe's much-criticized explained supernatural occupies a liminal space between nature and culture" (21). McGee explores the idea that the supernatural exists between nature and culture in order to bridge the gap between human and nonhuman, using examples of how nature and culture exist and interact together to explain her argument (22). In *Udolpho*, the space between nature and culture is liminal – it is the space where an unseen presence sings a song in the night outside of the chateau of Count De Villefort, the space where Ludovico disappears when he stays overnight alone in a haunted room, a space that exists both in the mind and in nature – but it is unknowable by humans at the same time. Radcliffe uses the "explained Gothic" to take us to that space, showing the reader that, in fact, there is a simple explanation for our fears, and that the gap between nature and culture does not exist, since the two overlap and intertwine. The power of the patriarchy exists in this liminal space as well; it is where Radcliffe shows the reader how the patriarchal power structures are constructed, and how to deconstruct them. Radcliffe tells the reader that the Gothic is not a bogeyman; she lifts the veil to show us that our terror has a mundane cause that can be fought. The monster that lurks in the dark does not belong to nature, or the imagination; it is real and tangible – it is a person who

embodies the mundane horrors of patriarchal governance.

Terror versus Horror

Emily's actions within the castle of Udolpho are motivated by terror and frozen by horror. Emily reacts to her captivity and her following trials with a combination of terror and horror. In Radcliffe's novels, terror and horror are completely different states of mind: terror is a reaction to the Gothic sublime which "occupies and expands the mind" (U*dolpho 248)* to a state between fear and ecstasy and motivates the body to action; horror is a reaction to perceived danger which paralyzes the mind and body. In some cases, Emily imagines something far more terrible than could possibly exist, and in other cases she is entirely justified in her fear. Emily imagines, for example, that Montoni has hidden a body behind a black veil, but the supposed corpse turns out to be a waxen figure. At first, the mysterious black veil captivates Emily: "[the veil's] connection with the late lady of the castle, and the conversation with Annette, together with the circumstance of the veil, throwing mystery over the subject... excited a faint degree of terror" (*Udolpho* 248). In this instance, terror motivates Emily to go back to the black veil and lift it. However, her reaction to what she actually finds is one of horror, and Emily drops "senseless to the floor" (249). Pinch notes that "Emily's responses are inauthenticated: her willingness to find Montoni capable of the most horrid crimes is blamed for her delusion; and, as in other instances of Radcliffean demystification, the episode teaches a lesson about both the fallibility of individual senses and the need to discipline emotions" (113). As noted earlier, Emily's father took great pains to teach her to regulate her emotions; however, she fails in several ways to learn this lesson. As Blodgett observes, "Emily errs not only in imagining ghosts, murders, and incredible horrors (the most notable one is a presumable corpse hidden behind a black veil which turns out to be only a decayed waxen image crawling with worms) but also in attributing to Montoni a more sinister

personality than he actually has. He is not the monster her imagination creates but a mere brigand, a leader of condittieri with a useful mountain stronghold" (Blodgett). Emily herself is aware of these failings: "She blamed herself for suffering her romantic imagination to carry her so far beyond the bounds of probability, and determined to endeavour to check its rapid flights, lest they should sometimes extend into madness" (*Udolpho* 342). Her so-called "romantic imagination" is something that Jane Austen also comments on in the character of *Northanger Abbey*'s Catherine Morland, who also suffers from a delusional imagination. The fact that Emily compares her flights of fancy to a disorder of the brain is interesting, revealing her concern that her terror of Montoni and of the castle of Udolpho may impact her psychologically.

The discourse on Emily's imagination continues: "she was inclined to consider these suspicions as the extravagant exaggerations of a timid and harassed mind, and could not believe Montoni liable to such preposterous depravity as that of destroying, from one motive, his wife and her niece" (342). Emily, in spite of her mental fortitude, considers her mind as timid, as if society has trained her to believe that a feminine mind is timid by nature. The harassment her mind undergoes is extreme and strenuous, and the fact that Emily is able to pull herself back and think rationally proves the strength of her reason. In fact, she tells herself that her first thought, which is that Montoni is monstrous and tyrannical, is preposterous. As it turns out, Montoni *is* a tyrant who brings about the death of Emily's aunt through his actions, and he certainly has no qualms about the prospect of doing the same to Emily. Spacks notes that "the reader, male or female, is encouraged, like Emily, to dramatize a conviction of Montoni's badness by associating supernatural possibility with human evil" (Spacks). This insight highlights the fact that Radcliffe's explained Gothic, rather than pointing towards something actually supernatural, reveals an evil that is simply human – an evil which includes the oppression of women in various forms.

Gothic Nature

Another aspect of Radcliffe's Gothic discourse is her depiction of Gothic nature, in particular, the way in which Emily interacts with nature in order to assert her willpower. Benjamin A. Brabon writes that Radcliffe's "use of the sublime is especially ambiguous and contentious as it is often associated in her romances with masculinity and it acts as a threat to the heroine's trajectory through a landscape. Yet simultaneously, the Burkean model of the sublime that Radcliffe uses and supplements provides the potential for escape from the threat of patriarchy" (842). The sublime functions in this novel in many, sometimes contradictory, ways; however, I argue that Radcliffe conjoins the sublime and nature as a means to aid Emily in her escape in more than one sense. One form of escape is mental rather than physical, as Montoni imprisons Emily in Udolpho Castle. Birgitta Berglund observes that "Losing herself in the beauty of nature has been Emily's way of mentally escaping Montoni's tyranny even before her actual imprisonment" (Berglund 70). At one key point in the novel, for example, Emily is revived by sublime nature as

> From her casement she looked out upon the wild grandeur of the scene, closed nearly on all sides by alpine steeps, whose tops, peeping over each other, faded from the eye in misty hues, while the promontories below were dark with woods, that swept down to their base, and stretched along the narrow vallies. (*Udolpho* 241)

The nature that Emily looks upon in this passage conforms to the Burkean "sublime," and Emily takes comfort in viewing the scene. This comfort suggests a marked difference from Adeline's experience in *The Romance of the Forest*, as Adeline is revived only by everyday natural scenes. Emily is different: the sublime scenery does not frighten her as it does Adeline. While Adeline's bravery comes from traversing the wilds in order to escape the Marquis, Emily's is more dynamic. She is much more aware than Adeline of the cruelties of the patriarchal system, and she stands up

to them without the help of her deceased father or her lover Valancourt. To be sure, Emily does not escape the castle of Udolpho alone; rather, she enlists the help of Du Pont, Ludovico, and Annette in order to fulfill her mission. It is, however, *Emily's* mission, and it is her agency – revived as a result of the comfort she receives from her experience of the sublime – that brings everyone together to escape. Although Emily is disappointed upon the discovery that the prisoner whom she assumed to be Valancourt is actually Du Pont, she continues on her journey back to France. Nature influences her thoughts of Valancourt: "Emily's mind... was sunk after the various emotions it had suffered, into a kind of musing stillness, which the reposing beauty of the surrounding scene and the creeping murmur of the night-breeze among the foliage above contributed to prolong" (453). Emily mirrors nature in this passage, as her "stillness" and nature's "reposing" demonstrate their connection. The word "murmur" suggests that nature is talking to Emily, and that this communication allows her to think of her beloved without faltering into despondency, giving her strength once more.

Nature also gives Emily keen insight into the workings of patriarchal culture, particularly how class differences divide upper-class women and lower-class women. At a turning point in the novel, when St. Aubert receives a letter from Monsieur Quesnel and worries about the state of his wealth, Emily comforts him with his own words: "[poverty] cannot deaden our taste for the grand, and the beautiful, or deny us the means of indulging it; for the scenes of nature – those sublime spectacles, so infinitely superior to all artificial luxuries! are open for the enjoyment of the poor, as well as of the rich" (60). Emily speaks of their mutual connection to nature, demonstrating very succinctly that wealth and economy are aspects of a societal construct that confines a person only if one believes in such a boundary. Nature breaks down class boundaries, while culture and patriarchy uphold them. One such example is seen in a seemingly supernatural occurrence wherein the lower class of servants upholds superstition, while the upper class, particularly Emily, uses

reason to dispel fear. Remember that superstition and the supernatural are connected to the "explained Gothic" which Radcliffe uses to deconstruct patriarchal power structures. Annette, Emily's maid, tells her a tale of a ghost guarding a cannon on the ramparts, and Emily says "'but that does not prove, that an apparition guards it'" (255). Annette wholeheartedly believes this tale constructed by human culture whereas Emily asks for proof. Annette is distracted by the tales of ghosts and monsters, and therefore the veil of patriarchy is still over her eyes. Emily uncovers the truth and reality of the situation, allowing readers to see the oppressive nature of society. This class divide is important to note, as Emily has had the privilege of an education in order to learn critical thinking. The fact that Radcliffe introduces readers to the idea of intersectionality (here, the way class and gender issues intersect in *Udolpho*) centuries before the theory existed is fascinating. McGee notes this class difference by saying "Radcliffe uses character awareness of the supernatural to demonstrate potential for the type of responsibility and responsiveness she would have the upper class practice towards the lower class" (McGee 29). McGee's idea of what Radcliffe means by "responsibility" is, however, very patronizing and infantilizing towards the lower-class characters, suggesting that the upper class must "take care of" the lower class like children. Emily's earlier words, which dismiss the class divide as inconsequential to happiness and relate happiness to immersion in nature, are something of a paradox. Radcliffe's portrayal suggests that the lower classes hold a childlike belief in both the supernatural and the patriarchal system, which further implies that the lower-class servants need someone like Emily to lead them in order to escape patriarchal societal control and oppression. However, Emily believes that immersion in nature equalizes the class divide in terms of happiness. Eighteenth-century literature has a tendency to romanticize the lower class as having an idyllic life, and examples from pastoral spaces in which such an idyll is depicted are fairly common in Radcliffe's novels; however, it is also true that the upper-class characters who live in pastoral settings have idealized lives. The

lower-class characters tend to treat the upper-class characters with deference, even in these idyllic spaces, and in turn, the upper class mingles with the lower class, such as on the occasion of Emily and Blanche's double marriage. Radcliffe seems to be advocating for class boundaries to loosen, but not entirely disintegrate, and further suggests that the route to this harmony is through the leadership of an active female heroine.

Emily's father also has a close relationship with nature, which he shares with Emily early in the novel during their travels through the Pyrenees mountains. The narrator describes the surrounding landscape thus: "Here was shade, and the fresh water of a spring, that, gliding among the turf, under the trees, thence precipitated itself from rock to rock, till its dashing murmurs were lost in the abyss, though its white foam was long seen amid the darkness of the pines below" (*Udolpho* 29). Again, the nature that captivates St. Aubert and Emily has elements of the sublime, while words such as "shade" and "darkness" suggest dark nature. The landscape seems to fade away from their eyes, becoming "lost" to their sight. Barbara M. Benedict argues that "St. Aubert's 'transforming eye' makes the obscure landscape clear: he controls nature. Emily's tearful eye blurs the landscape, making nature unfamiliar. Surprised to find her father has felt as she has, thinking her feelings purely private, Emily follows the delusive sounds of the woods and the unsteady light: she is entranced by the *ignis fatuus* of false feeling, false reason" (373). Benedict's argument is that St. Aubert is more controlling than Emily due to his rationality. The landscape that Radcliffe describes fades from concrete in the foreground to obscure the farther away it is. Benedict says that St. Aubert sees these landscapes clearly and that he controls them. She also argues that Emily, with her so-called "tearful eye" cannot see the landscape clearly and therefore cannot understand it, thus bringing her feelings and her rationality into question. This argument is almost directly opposite to mine because Benedict argues that St. Aubert, who is part of the patriarchal power structure at play in eighteenth-century society, and who is also part of the anthropocentric system

which oppresses nature, is actually in control of nature. Her argument also takes away Emily's agency and discredits her on account of her emotions. Benedict continues: "[St. Aubert's] knowledge of nature, both physical and human, accounts for the sources of feelings and sights, explains Emily's experience as universal, and replaces awe with control" (373). Apparently, St. Aubert wields his knowledge like a weapon and uses it to oppress both nature and Emily. However, I argue that both St. Aubert and Emily respect nature and that the journey through the Pyrenees with Valancourt enables Emily to strengthen her relationship with both her father and with Valancourt. The following passage shows the feelings of St. Aubert: "All nature seemed to have awakened from death into life; the spirit of St. Aubert was renovated. His heart was full; he wept, and his thoughts ascended to the Great Creator" (*Udolpho* 36). Such a description demonstrates not only that St. Aubert reveres and respects nature, but also that nature raises emotions within him similar to those it inspires in Emily. He weeps, an action which Benedict attributes only to Emily in order to paint St. Aubert as a purely rational being and Emily as a purely emotional one. The truth of the matter is that the two of them evince a mixture of both rationality and emotion, wherein emotion does not necessarily cloud rationality. Both Emily and her father respect the landscape without trying to control it, which is important when it comes to Emily's reciprocal relationship with nature.

Agency of Female Characters and Nature

Emily's relationship to the landscape does not end here, however. Emily builds her own agency with the help of nature, and the combination creates two even more powerful entities. Both Emily and her father hold a high respect for nature, and their admiration is built upon these ethical feelings. During their early travels together, St. Aubert evinces such a relationship with nature:

> St. Aubert could not repent the having taken this fatiguing road... The wonderful

> sublimity and variety of the prospects repaid him for all this, and the enthusiasm, with which they were viewed by his young companions, heightened his own, and awakened a remembrance of all the delightful emotions of his early days, when the sublime charms of nature were first unveiled to him. (49)

This passage suggests that St. Aubert travels an arduous road for the sake of viewing nature, and nature repays his fatigue with its beauty. It seems like nature rewards him for his strenuous efforts, as if his visit is a pleasure to nature itself. His presence, and those of his companions Emily and Valancourt, is welcome in this space. St. Aubert's relationship with nature goes back to the days of his youth, and he sees his own early love and respect for nature reflected in his daughter and Valancourt. In a discussion of Gothic novels, Katherine Marie McGee notes that

> Characters who are viewed as the heroes, heroines, or otherwise admirable characters demonstrate an ability to value both nature and culture (physical and social constructs created by human beings) by acting responsibly towards other people as well as towards their natural surroundings; furthermore, they demonstrate an ability to respond to the feelings and needs of both the human and nonhuman nature. In particular, they demonstrate an understanding that they have a role in both nature and culture that does not involve self-serving domination of either, that the human and the nonhuman have a reciprocal relationship. (McGee 53)

McGee's comments are interesting in that they acknowledge agency in both women and nature without one usurping the other. Arguing that nature and women are seen as equal within the novel is a bold stance, as women, due to their roles in eighteenth-century anthropocentric society, can still be seen as oppressors of nature – or at least complicit with such oppression. There is, however, an instance at the Castle of Udolpho in which Emily believes nature itself causes the death of her aunt: "She had no doubt but that the violent change in the air, which the tempest

produced, had effected this fatal [change], on the exhausted frame of Madame Montoni" (375). However much nature is at fault for the worsening condition of Madame Montoni, Emily does not hold a grudge against it. She does not rail against the storm, nor does she blame nature for its role in this calamity. Rather, she states the simple fact that the storm affected her aunt and brought about her death. Whether this lack of blame arises from a dismissal of or respect for nature is not explained further in this scene. Brabon notes that "The relationship between Radcliffe's heroines and the landscapes they traverse is ambiguous, as ultimately, the independence they find through [the acquisition of] property leads them to maintain the patriarchal structures which they attempt to transcend" (843). Emily owns the property that her aunt relinquishes to her on her death, but when she marries Valancourt, the land becomes his under the rules governing the patriarchal system. Berglund compares Emily's relationship to her home with that of characters Radcliffe intends readers to view negatively: "In contrast to people like Monsieur Quesnel and Madame Cheron, who only see their homes as status symbols, which can be bought and sold, pulled down and rebuilt, the good people in Radcliffe's novels revere and value their homes" (37). Although Berglund is talking about the home itself, the physical structure of it, this respect extends to the land as well. Emily and Valancourt settle in a pastoral setting, La Vallee, a liminal space wherein (like all pastoral settings) nature and culture meet and mingle. Perhaps this liminal space can allow Emily and Valancourt to have an equal relationship in which they can respect each other as well as the land they live on.

Conclusion

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily has a unique relationship with the landscape she freely traverses on several occasions. She gains power through this relationship, and she gives nature its due respect. Although there are several scenes in which Emily gives in to her emotional side, this

surrender does not make her weak or irrational. She is an active character within the story and does not allow herself to be swept away by adverse circumstances, although at one point she is almost swept away by the sea. Radcliffe also acknowledges nature's agency in this novel, and gives Emily a way to fight back against patriarchal power. Emily defies Montoni, resolves to marry Valancourt only when she finds it socially acceptable, and ultimately learns the lesson her father taught her about the importance of exercising reason. Unlike Adeline in my previous chapter on *The Romance of the Forest*, Gothic nature revives Emily, leading to an interesting interpretation of the sublime, wherein it brings the separate spheres of gender closer together. Lastly, Emily defies the expectations of readers and finds happiness in her pastoral home with a lover who respects her and will treat her as an equal.

Chapter 4

Representing Female Agency: the Mundane Gothic and Green Spaces in *Northanger Abbey*

> From [the ages of] fifteen to seventeen, she was in training for a heroine. (Austen 7)

Introduction

The character of Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* serves Austen's purpose of highlighting the strength and solidarity of female characters while pointing out the flaws of patriarchal eighteenth-century society. First of all, Catherine is an active heroine from the very beginning, and although she is meant to parody some of the traits of traditional Gothic heroines such as Adeline and Emily, she keeps the traits that actually matter: strength, courage, and intelligence. Austen uses her parody to separate the extremes of the Gothic from the reality of patriarchal society. She strips away the elements that make the wrongs against women seem over-imaginative and bares them to the light.

Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* is a novel that parodies the form and function of Gothic novels, especially the works of Ann Radcliffe. Austen uses parody through the application of the "mundane Gothic," a mode of Gothic representation that is different from the conventional Gothic in key ways. The mundane Gothic critiques as well as pays homage to conventional Gothic texts. Whereas the mundane Gothic features "the real life horrors and terrors of society," the horrors associated with the conventional Gothic reveal elements of the fantastic and unimaginable. I will argue that the mundane Gothic exists in Austen's work in order to critique patriarchal power structures. The instances in which the mundane Gothic are at play highlight the existence of these structures and push back against them. This resistance is particularly evident in settings I refer to as "green spaces." Green spaces in this context are places in which the heroine Catherine Morland

is close to nature. I will examine three instances in which Catherine occupies a green space: the abortive drive to Clifton with John Thorpe, the walk on Beechen Cliff with Henry and Eleanor Tilney, and the garden walk with Eleanor Tilney at Northanger Abbey. During the drive to Clifton, there is a tension between the will of John Thorpe, a representative of the patriarchal power structure, and that of Catherine, whom Thorpe has effectively kidnapped against her will. Catherine resists Thorpe's will and, considering that his ultimate goal is to marry her, her resistance to him is successful. Although Henry Tilney is the hero of the story, during the walk on Beechen Cliff he is nevertheless also a representative of patriarchal power structures. In this scene, he, Catherine, and Eleanor engage in philosophical discussions as well as academic discussions as they walk, and the two young women push back against masculinist domination and assert feminist will. This resistance creates and strengthens a bond of solidarity between Catherine and Eleanor. Lastly, Catherine and Eleanor take a garden walk on the grounds of Northanger Abbey, choosing Eleanor's mother's favourite walk when the latter was alive. It is important here to note that General Tilney refuses to come with the two women on the walk, avoiding this green space altogether. Nevertheless, his presence, as well as the presence of Eleanor's mother, haunts this space. It is here that Catherine decides that General Tilney has a reprehensible character and that he did not love his wife, although she has not yet come to the conclusion that he is a murderer. At this point, Catherine is completely correct, although she later carries her imagination too far. When examining the three instances just described, this chapter will use an ecofeminist lens to focus on the tension created by female resistance to patriarchal power structures. In each of her three forays into green space, Catherine resists the power structures at play in her society, firstly by directly defying John Thorpe, secondly by actively questioning these structures in discussion with Henry Tilney, and lastly by coming to her own conclusions about General Tilney's tyranny.

Summary of the Novel

The novel begins with Catherine Morland and her family living in Fullerton, a village in Wiltshire where nothing fantastic or out of the ordinary ever befalls them. Mrs. Allen, whose husband owns most of the land around Fullerton, invites Catherine to go to Bath with her and her husband. Catherine accepts, and her parents acquiesce without any trepidation on their part. In Bath, Catherine meets two sets of siblings: Isabella and John Thorpe as well as Henry and Eleanor Tilney. She makes fast friends with Isabella, a woman whose only design is to marry the most eligible bachelor in Bath. Catherine almost immediately falls for Henry Tilney and makes friends with Eleanor as well. John Thorpe, much like his sister Isabella, wants to marry a wealthy heiress. He mistakes Catherine for such an heiress and attempts to separate her from the Tilneys through any means possible. Catherine makes plans to go on a walk with Henry and Eleanor, but it rains at the appointed time. At that point, the Thorpes and Catherine's brother James arrive, telling Catherine that they are going to Blaize Castle. The Thorpes convince Catherine that the Tilneys went out for a drive without her, succeeding through this lie in taking her with them. As they are all driving away, Catherine sees the Tilneys and tells John to stop. He does not listen to her, and although she reproaches him mightily, he succeeds in taking her away from the Tilneys. After the drive to Clifton, which terminates before they even get to see the castle, Catherine apologizes to the Tilneys and makes new plans for a walk with them. The Thorpes once again attempt to interfere, but this time Catherine, having learned her lesson, refuses to allow them. The Tilneys and Catherine thus manage to go for their walk on Beechen Cliff, where the three of them converse on philosophical subjects. Subsequently, General Tilney, Henry and Eleanor's father, having been told that Catherine is an heiress by John Thorpe, invites Catherine to their home, Northanger Abbey. Catherine once again accepts, and the party make their way to the abbey. Catherine is initially disappointed by Northanger Abbey, as she expects it to be more Gothic and

frightening. Nevertheless, while she is at Northanger, Catherine begins to suspect that General Tilney is a Gothic villain similar to Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and she begins to investigate her suspicions. Discovering her suspicions, Henry reawakens her sense of reason. She thus learns not to allow her imagination to run free and to keep her fantasies at bay. Soon after this turn of events, General Tilney abruptly sends her home in a carriage without an escort. Catherine later learns that the jealous John Thorpe told General Tilney that her family was destitute, and that the General reacted in anger. Henry then argues with his father and rides to Fullerton to ask for Catherine's hand in marriage. Catherine's parents refuse on the grounds that Henry's father does not give his permission. Subsequently, however, Eleanor marries a Viscount, and persuades her ambitious father to allow Henry and Catherine's marriage. Thus, the novel ends happily with Catherine's marriage.

Romantic Feminism

Catherine is an intriguing character in this novel not only because she challenges the patriarchal power structures of society, but because she is for the most part completely unaware of them. Perhaps she is a representative "woman" in this way, and not merely herself, in that as a collective, women did not necessarily realize that they were placed in this power structure and oppressed by it. At the time that Austen first wrote *Northanger Abbey* under the initial title *Susan* (1803), Mary Wollstonecraft had just published her famous *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Catherine may not be a perfect Wollstonecraftian role model when it comes to resisting patriarchal power structures in eighteenth-century England, especially when compared with the ideal woman in Wollstonecraft's literature, but as I will argue, Catherine does become more aware of the structures of control around her. In the beginning of the novel, however, she is so fixated on traditional Gothic sensationalism, that she completely misses the mundane Gothic. As Miriam

Fuller points out, "Her obsession with things grand and gothic blinds Catherine to the humbly gothic threats surrounding her. She is so comically absorbed in the possibility of experiencing improbable adventures that she doesn't expect or fails to realize when she experiences ordinary ones" (Fuller 94). Catherine's obsession with the Gothic may well stem from the very thing she struggles against in the mundane Gothic: the patriarchal power structure. Up until she leaves her parents' home for Bath, Catherine is completely surrounded by and encapsulated within the domestic sphere, the constricting sphere of female subjugation. Her desire to find her own adventure reflects the vicarious pleasure she takes in reading the adventures of the Gothic heroines, who are out in the world and develop their own sense of agency, that which Catherine also wishes to possess.

Catherine is also associated with nature. In fact, Mark Loveridge goes so far as to say that "Catherine is natural, unheroical: she is associated with the natural in several senses... At first she seems more of a species than an individual: general, unimproved female Nature" (Loveridge 5-6). This idea directly links Catherine and the idea of "woman" to the natural world, or as this chapter will suggest, green spaces. Joanne Cordóón adds to the conversation: "In delineating the difference between 'natural' and 'heroic' feelings, the narrator reveals the difference between her heroine, Catherine, who acts in a 'natural' way, and the other [standard, contemporary] fictional heroines, who act in a 'heroic' manner, heroic here meaning stilted, stereotypical, and wrong" (Cordóón 46). In her reference to "other fictional heroines," Cordóón suggests that the heroines of novels such as *The Romance of the Forest* or *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe are not "natural" or "female" at all, but rather something more monstrous, at least to those in control of or privileged by the patriarchal power structures. The term "monstrous" as it is used here means "a feminine entity which threatens the control of patriarchy." As Loveridge observes, "The narrative again becomes, like Catherine herself, a slightly unstable mixture of the natural and the absurd; or,

to use a different vocabulary, of the probable and the improbable" (Loveridge 5). Here Loveridge sets up the idea that Catherine herself is both natural and unnatural in her representation of "woman" and that the mundane Gothic happenings that occur are natural, or normal. It also suggests that Catherine's desire for female agency, reflected in her Gothic fantasies, is "unnatural." This is a reinforcement of the patriarchal structures that exist in Austen's society, and it goes against what I consider to be Austen's message, which is that women should resist patriarchal power structures to the best of their ability. This chapter will examine the novel's subtle but insistent resistance to these structures by examining through an ecofeminist lens the places where the oppressive mundane Gothic meets more liberatory green spaces.

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism has only recently come into existence as a mode of thought and resistance to societal power structures, blossoming into being in the mid to late 1970s (Diamond and Orenstein ix); it is therefore potentially anachronistic when it comes to examining eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society. As Mary Mellor says, however, "Ecofeminism is based on the claim that there is a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women" (Mellor 2). Since this chapter aims to examine how green spaces that Catherine enters affect the societal power structures of Austen's time, an ecofeminist approach will help to show how both these green spaces and Catherine as a representative "woman" are oppressed by men, and how Catherine rises to a point of resistance within these green spaces. Well-known ecofeminist scholar Val Plumwood says "that [W]estern culture has treated the human/nature relation as dualism and that this explains many of the problematic features of the [W]est's treatment of nature which underlie the environmental crisis, especially the [W]estern construction of human identity as 'outside' nature" (Plumwood 2). Here Plumwood suggests that

human beings are actually a part of nature, and that our separation from nature is a harmful societal construct. This suggestion is interesting, because normally it is women who are associated with nature; as Loveridge says of Catherine, she is more species than individual, and represents the connection between women and nature (Loveridge 5-6). Plumwood also notes that "the characteristics traditionally associated with dominant masculinism are also those used to define what is distinctively human" (Plumwood 25). This idea separates "man" and humanity from "woman" and nature, Othering both in a way similar to how the colonized are Othered in postcolonial theory. As Abdallah-Pretceille notes, "Othering consists of 'objectification of another person or group' or 'creating the other' which puts aside and ignores the complexity and subjectivity of the individual" (qtd. in Dervin). The idea that Catherine is a "species" Others her as an individual, and also Others women as a whole insofar as Catherine represents the "everywoman." Mary Mellor quotes Kate Soper, saying that "it was understandable that feminists would resist any perspective that seemed to argue for the ‘naturalness’ of nature because of the danger of endorsing ‘the naturalisation of sexual hierarchy’" (qtd. in Mellor 3). This idea is not a problem that Austen attempts overtly to tackle in her novel; nevertheless, she does, as I will argue, struggle against the bonds of patriarchal control.

The Mundane Gothic

The mundane Gothic demonstrates the terrors and horrors of Austen's society, revealing how they directly relate to patriarchal power structures. While he is lecturing Catherine about the dangerous excesses of her imagination, Henry Tilney says, "Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians" (Austen 145), suggesting that because he and Catherine live in modern England, the terrors and horrors of the Gothic cannot exist. This assertion would ring true with English readers of the time, who generally had a firm conviction

that England was safe and secure against any foreign invasion, whether that invasion be violent or benign. With the "Reign of Terror" happening in France during the time that Austen was writing, and French nobles fleeing to England for a safe haven, it would certainly seem that way. English Romantic Gothic writers almost always set their novels in a foreign country such as France or Italy in order to assuage the fears of their readers – a convention suggesting that there is no need to worry, that this event could never happen in England. Henry is horrified that Catherine could even consider the idea that his father, no matter how imposing and oppressive, could be the murderous tyrant she supposes him to be. Henry's father is both English and Christian; therefore, the nonsense in Catherine's head is not only foolish, but dangerous to the order of English society. The very idea that England is not immune to the horrors of continental Europe and beyond, that England could be successfully invaded, if only figuratively, could very well topple the entire British empire. Henry's alarm is very real, and his assertion that England is impenetrable is one born of fear. England must not be vulnerable in any way, not even to the fancy of a teenage girl.

However, he is certainly not correct, both in terms of the traditional Gothic as well as the mundane Gothic. Firstly, Catherine accidentally scares Eleanor during the walk on Beechen Hill, expressing a sense of fright reminiscent of conventional Gothic horror, by telling Eleanor that "something very shocking indeed, will soon come out in London" (Austen 81). Whereas Catherine is referring to the forthcoming publication of a Gothic novel, Eleanor mistakenly believes that what Catherine speaks of is a riot of some kind, a potentially violent disruption of the social order. There had previously been riots in England, such as the Gordon Riots of 1780. Edward Neill says that the Gordon Riots "had a limiting context and occasion, but they do in fact evoke the idea of a seething social discontent verging on outright insurrection after the frightening French model, challenging the idea that such depravity is self-evidently alien to the spirit of Englishness" (15). Neill addresses Henry's comment directly, pointing out that a societal terror such as a riot did, in

fact, happen in England, notwithstanding Henry's smug conviction that the nation is safe from such an occurrence. This riot brings the traditional Gothic directly to England, something that seems unimaginable and terrible but which could happen right in London, on domestic English soil. Considering that Gothic novels written by English authors are nearly always set in foreign countries, the Gordon Riots are especially shocking. Waldo S. Glock continues this thought, bringing attention not only to the traditional Gothic, but also to the mundane: "The answer Jane Austen provides is two-fold: such violence and insecurity can indeed arise, even in tranquil and law-abiding England, from the unrestrained fantasies of one's own mind and the terrors of the subconscious; or they can be caused by the heartless self-interest of a General Tilney who represents a society for whom money has replaced honor as a guiding principle" (Glock 42). Glock's point covers not only Catherine's overactive imagination, which causes Eleanor Tilney to believe that there will soon be a riot in London, but it also points to General Tilney's tyrannical control. This thought brings one directly to the point of the mundane Gothic, which shows the connection between mainstream societal horrors and the subtly oppressive violence of patriarchal control.

General Tilney's Oppressive Domestic Space

General Tilney represents the epitome of patriarchal control, although I will also examine the roles of John Thorpe and Henry Tilney. On his own estates, he assumes complete control of everything, right down to how time is spent by everyone present. Eleanor Tilney is very much aware of her father's controlling ways, "hint[ing at] her fear of being late" to Catherine before the two of them rush down to dinner. In fact, her "alarm [is] not wholly unfounded" as General Tilney is "pacing the drawing room, his watch in hand" (Austen 120). Eleanor knows that her father is obsessed with control, and she is afraid of disrupting it. In the novel's overall scheme, General Tilney's estate is a

microcosm of the British Empire, with the General representing patriarchal control over the people and the land within its boundaries. Indeed, the General acts like a commander of an army, moving his soldiers around his domain in any way he sees fit, and punishing any resistance against his control. Catherine is someone he comes to see as an interloper; ultimately assuming that she is poor and undeserving of his attentions, his reaction is to send her away. Notably, Catherine realizes from the very beginning that General Tilney is a tyrant. Her only real mistake is that she assumes he murdered his wife in the traditional Gothic fashion, in a dramatic and fantastic way. Otherwise, her instinct that he is a villain is correct, and it might be said that although she is in his domain, her mind is not held captive, and in fact resists his control. Eventually, even Eleanor breaks free of this control, first by insisting that Catherine write to her in spite of her father's prohibition and again when she marries the man whom she chooses. It is interesting that Eleanor is the first one to break free of her father's control, since her aristocratic marriage is the circumstance that allows her brother Henry to marry Catherine in the end despite the latter's lack of high social status. It is thus a female character's actions which allow the male character to be free from patriarchal control. This resistance shows that General Tilney's power – the power of patriarchy – is not absolute.

In his consumption of goods, General Tilney seeks to demonstrate a conqueror's grasp; the pineapple trees, brought to England, are a good example of this tendency. The pineapple trees and other colonial goods displayed in English homes showcase imperialist consumerism. English citizens demonstrate the iron grip Britain has on its colonies by having these items in their homes, as if they were trophies. Shinobu Minma comments on General Tilney's consumerist ways: "They were spurred on by acquisitiveness and snobbery, yet they pleaded the benefits of industrial progress and unabashedly imposed their materialist principles upon the nation. In this attitude Jane Austen discerned tyranny, similar in essence to the other political tyrannies of this period. General

Tilney's compelling materialism is an embodiment of this tyranny" (514-15). Such tyranny is consistent with the idea that General Tilney represents patriarchal control, and that this control is not only individual but is actually rooted in society, particularly in England's consumerism and control of its colonies. England is Tilney, and Tilney is England, or so thinks the General and others like him.

Interestingly, there is evidence in the novel that he is actually one of the "voluntary spies" (Austen 145) that Henry mentions in his conversation with Catherine, thereby introducing the idea of patriarchal nationalism. Robert Hopkins says that "Jane Austen's 'regulated hatred' is directed towards General Tilney as politicized man writ large, a pompous ass whose inquisitorial role engendering fear, distrust, and suspicions is thoroughly contemptible" (221). Hopkins suggests that Jane Austen has a "regulated hatred" towards General Tilney, not only noting that Austen hates what General Tilney represents, but also that she is very much aware of her construction of his character and wants the audience to despise him as well. Since General Tilney clearly represents patriarchal control, Austen is also subtly steering her reading audience towards an abhorrence of such tyranny. Paul Morrison states that "The point here is not simply that General Tilney recovers romance villainy in the realm of manners; rather, the realm of manners, the domestic parlor, reinscribes gothic incarceration in and as a generalized economy of surveillance" (11). Morrison is talking about General Tilney's utter control over his estate, which is his own domain, but his love of surveillance extends to the national level as well. I would like to hearken back to Hopkin's statement about General Tilney's "inquisitorial role." Hopkins argues that General Tilney is, in fact, a "voluntary spy," and that he reports back on his neighbors about their actions. In the novel, Austen mentions the role of pamphlets in keeping the General awake, as the General tells Catherine:

> "I have many pamphlets to finish... before I can close my eyes; and perhaps may be

> poring over the affairs of the nation for hours after you are asleep. Can either of us be more meetly employed? *My* eyes will be blinding for the good of others; and *yours* preparing by rest for future mischief." (Austen 138)

Here Austen indicates that the General has national affairs to attend to, which the General sees as a task promoting the greater good of the nation. Hopkins argues that these pamphlets are actually part of General Tilney's involvement in the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property, which was founded in 1792 by John Reeves (Hopkins 219). Hopkins directly states that "The habit of local citizens volunteering to spy and to survey pamphlet literature was established" during this period (219). This role of "voluntary spy" is supposed to sound reprehensible, suggesting a national tyranny of control over the population. By evoking such surveillance, Austen presents General Tilney as a mundane Gothic villain. However, Levine suggests that Catherine is actually the monster: "The final turn to the argument is this: our heroine, Catherine Morland, whose happiness is the controlling element in the novel's form, is a little, an incipient monster. The General, after all, only wants to keep her from doing what the parody suggests she should not do – rise from her class" (Levine 349). If this story were an imperial Gothic novel, one seen from the point of view of the patriarchal controller, perhaps Levine would be right. However, since this novel actually turns that idea on its head, General Tilney must be regarded as a mundane Gothic version of the monstrous, and Catherine as one who challenges the patriarchal power structures that he represents.

Green Spaces in *Northanger Abbey*

On several occasions in *Northanger Abbey*, Austen takes the reader and Catherine to green spaces that are located outside and apart from the domestic sphere of the household. Barbara Britton Wenner says, "The gaze upon the landscape means something quite different for a woman – author

or heroine – than it does for a man. When an eighteenth-century male with a background in the gentry gazes on the landscape, he frames it in a way that objectifies it and indicates its potential for control. When a woman gazes, she is imagining where she fits inside the landscape and how she can position herself to be helped by it" (Wenner 24). Here Wenner frames "woman," or Catherine specifically, as part of nature, suggesting that the patriarchy aims to control both "woman" and land in a similar fashion. In a similar vein, Stephen Bending talks about the role of gardens in shaping identity, saying that his book "starts from the assumption that the shaping of physical space is the shaping also of identity, and that gardens are microcosms, speaking of and reacting to a world beyond themselves" (1). Bending is talking about a specific type of green space, the English garden. He suggests that the role of such green space in shaping identity is important, and that it relates to the larger societal sphere. Developing this idea, he asserts moreover that gardens "are the locus for a recognisable complex of interconnected activities and concerns which range from solitude to sociability, from planning to planting, from politics to pleasure, and they carry a cultural freight on which individuals draw, or in which they can find themselves implicated and embroiled" (Bending 4). Gardens are spaces not only for retiring, but for a myriad of different uses. This paper will explore some of these activities which green spaces enable women to perform. Wenner notes that "Ultimate control of the landscape and the potential danger of a male presence there, trying to objectify women, converting them to property, are prominent themes" in Austen's writing (Wenner 34). When one reads a Jane Austen novel, it is true that there are many instances in which a green space is usurped by the presence of a male figure. One of these moments occurs when John Thorpe and Catherine drive towards Clifton, and it is the first instance of Catherine's presence in a green space that this chapter will examine.

Catherine and John Thorpe

Catherine's resistance of John Thorpe highlights the struggle women had when encountering men who felt entitled to their bodies. Fuller points out that the abortive drive to Clifton is actually a very Gothic moment in the text, not only highlighting the patriarchal power structures at play, but providing an example of conventional Gothic circumstance. "For Catherine," Fuller notes, "the threat of sexual violence is real, and it comes from the repulsive John Thorpe, who deceives and seduces her – through place, rather than person – in order to abduct her on the abortive drive to Clifton" (Fuller 95). In this scene, John Thorpe literally kidnaps Catherine. First, he convinces her – seduces her – away from her promised walk with Henry and Eleanor Tilney with a promise to take her to Blaize Castle and explore its long Gothic galleries and passages. Catherine asks, "What, is it really a castle, an old castle?" (Austen 60), betraying her earnest wish to explore Gothic ruins; Thorpe deceitfully assures her that it is such an edifice, when in fact, Blaize Castle was a recent construction and something of an architectural monstrosity. When upon seeing Henry and Eleanor in the street Catherine realizes that she has been deceived, she wants to go back to them, but Thorpe "smacked his whip, encouraged his horses, made odd noises, and drove on; and Catherine, angry and vexed as she was, having no power of getting away, was obliged to give up the point and submit. Her reproaches, however, were not spared" (Austen 62). Despite her wishes to return to the Tilneys, Thorpe refuses, taking Catherine away against her consent. This scene demonstrates the tensions between masculine domination and feminine will in two different senses. One is the literal sense in that Catherine is physically taken into the green space located on the route to Clifton when she wants to return to Bath. The other is more abstract in the sense that John Thorpe has secret plans to marry Catherine, using this green space to separate Catherine from Henry Tilney, the hero of the story, as well as from her friend Eleanor. This scene is somewhat extended, as her struggle with John Thorpe, which begins in this space, continues throughout the

novel. In the literal sense, it might seem as if Catherine comes out on the losing end of this battle, as she is unable to stop Thorpe from kidnapping her and from physically separating her from the hero and her ally Eleanor. However, Catherine pits her will against Thorpe's, and I believe that she is actually the victor when one considers the rest of the novel, especially the scenes that stem from this one.

One of those scenes in which Catherine once again resists John Thorpe occurs when he claims to have made excuses for Catherine in order to break another planned engagement with the Tilneys. In response, Catherine immediately protests, saying "Let me go, Mr. Thorpe; Isabella, do not hold me" (Austen 73) when the two of them attempt to stop her. Disturbingly, Thorpe's attempts to physically restrain Catherine remind one of the force he uses on his horses. In the scene in which Catherine first meets Thorpe, "the horse was immediately checked with a violence which almost threw him on his haunches" (Austen 29). Thorpe has a habit of being brutal with his horses, boasting that his own violent method of control makes him "the best coachman [in England]" (45). He attempts to check Catherine in the same way that he checks his horses – with physical abuse. However, Catherine refuses to allow Thorpe to stop her. She is very active in this scene; as Fuller says, "Significantly, Catherine's breaking away from her physical imprisonment coincides with her repeated assertion of will; she now allows neither her body nor her mind to be shackled" (Fuller 98). Both Thorpe and his sister Isabella attempt to hold Catherine in this scene, because their main goal is to see Catherine marry John, who erroneously believes that Catherine is a wealthy heiress. Isabella betrays the bonds of female solidarity in favour of self-interest, playing into the patriarchal power structures and allowing herself to be directed by them, as she also tries to marry Catherine's brother for money. This is the second attempt to separate Catherine from the Tilneys, whom the Thorpes see as more rich and powerful than themselves; therefore their only strategy is to make sure Catherine has no contact with such rivals. However, in this attempt they

fail at holding her, and Catherine is able to go to Eleanor Tilney and ensure their appointed walk on Beechen Cliff. It is not just that the Thorpes fail, but that Catherine successfully asserts her will and is able to escape their constricting hands. This scene stems directly from the first abortive drive in which she is kidnapped, and this time she breaks away entirely, both in body and mind, as Fuller mentions.

Ultimately, Catherine does not marry John Thorpe, and instead becomes engaged to Henry Tilney, with whom she had fallen in love from the beginning of their acquaintance. It is interesting, however, that her chance to go to Northanger Abbey would not have come about except for the interference of Thorpe. Thorpe, who is so certain of marrying Catherine, presents Catherine to General Tilney in a manner intended to inflate his own self-importance: "his vanity induced him to represent the family as yet more wealthy than his vanity and avarice had made him believe them" (Austen 181). Catherine's supposed dowry and connections are the only reasons that General Tilney is interested in her at all. When Thorpe is thwarted by Catherine's considerable willpower, he goes back on his former word and tells the General that the Morlands are "seeking to better themselves by wealthy connexions," calling them "a forward, bragging, scheming race" (Austen 183). Never mind that those words much better describe the Thorpes than the Morlands; John Thorpe's meddling ultimately provides the reason that Catherine is sent away from Northanger Abbey. As Nancy Yee puts it, "John Thorpe, pampered son of an indulgent mother, has been the 'ordinary' villain responsible for the whole Northanger debacle" (Yee). Unwittingly, John Thorpe initiates Catherine's journey to Northanger Abbey, and he brings her visit to an end as well, having an after-effect on Catherine in spite of her wishing otherwise. This circumstance simply demonstrates how the patriarchal power structure works, as John Thorpe still manages to influence what happens to Catherine in spite of her own agentic assertion of willpower. Thorpe also influences General Tilney, who is a mundane Gothic villain in his own right. These two

players in the societal power structure work off of one another, both scheming in an attempt to make wealthy connections through marriage. This entire line of thought goes back to the very instant in which Catherine is kidnapped and first asserts her will against Thorpe's, and although she does not realize it, this green space is where her willpower is first brought into play in the novel. This green space is also outside of the domestic sphere and somewhat distant from the constricting control of patriarchy, a space in which Catherine can act in her own interest. Catherine's connection to nature allows her to resist Thorpe's will and assert her own.

Catherine and Henry Tilney

Catherine's conversation with Henry Tilney demonstrates how men's thoughts and ideas often obscured the thoughts and ideas of women, which Catherine not only points out, but actively resists. The second green space this chapter will examine provides the setting for Catherine's walk on Beechen Hill with Henry and Eleanor Tilney. This space is related directly to the first, in that while she is within the first, Catherine is prevented from entering this second green space by John Thorpe. Once she is in this space, however, the focus shifts from Thorpe to Henry Tilney. Although he is the hero, and, as such, a much more sympathetic character than Thorpe, Henry is, for the purpose of my argument, still a part of the patriarchal power structure which, in this scene, Catherine and Eleanor resist. Of course, Austen presents this resistance as friendly banter, which takes the edge off of the tension present between masculine power and feminine will.

One of the interesting discussions that happens in this green space centres around gender dynamics, as Catherine discusses novel reading. She says, "But I really thought before, young men despised novels amazingly" to which Henry replies, "It is *amazingly*, it may well suggest *amazement* if they do – for they read nearly as many as women" (Austen 78). It is very interesting that Henry says "they" to refer to young men and not "we," his choice of pronouns suggesting that,

consciously or unconsciously, Austen does not place Henry in the same category as "man" in the way that Catherine is "woman." As Sarah Eason notes,

> There are numerous situations... in which Henry struggles to break free from... [normative] expectations in a performance of his own, as is clear from his conversation on muslins with Mrs. Allen, his teasing of Catherine, and his ultimate decision to marry her despite his father's disapproval. In his struggle between these performances, Henry becomes an off-kilter, ambiguous, and consequently marginalized character. (Eason)

Eason suggests that Henry does not fit into the eighteenth-century binary of gender performativity, a concept introduced by Judith Butler to explain how

> What we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body. In this way, it showed that what we take to be an "internal" feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts, an extreme, hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures. (Butler xv-xvi)

Here Butler theorizes that the gender binary opposition is upheld by repeated actions which reinforce it, and that gender is, as a result, a societal construct created and upheld by performance. "Masculine" and "feminine" are thus social constructs that function to control people's actions. Henry falls outside this gender binary construction because his performance is both masculine and feminine in the way that "masculine" and "feminine" are constructed by eighteenth-century society. The mundane Gothic, which is a representation of patriarchal control, affects both men and women, and in this instance, Eason argues that Henry Tilney also struggles against the mundane Gothic. Interestingly, E.J. Clery suggests that Catherine too fights against gender performance, noting "that this queering of Henry evidences Austen's keen recognition of the

social construction of gender and is complemented by the characterization of Catherine as learning the conventions of sentimental femininity after a childhood spent in traditionally masculine athletic pursuits" (Clery qtd. in Wyett 270). Clery's assertion suggests the possibility that Catherine also fails to fit into the gender binary when it comes to gender performativity. As Catherine and Henry's discussion of novel-reading depends on the gender performance of novel-reading as a feminine pursuit, it is interesting that Henry refutes the claim that only women read novels, asserting that men do so as well, even if they deny it. This discussion reinforces the idea that gender is performance, and that while it is acceptable for women to read novels, men have to pretend that they do not perform this conventionally feminine function.

This discussion of gendered reading habits continues as the three characters converse about history, which, unlike novel reading, is gendered as a masculine reading pursuit. Eleanor owns that she does read history, and Catherine says "I read it a little as a duty, but it tells me nothing that does not either vex or weary me... the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all" (Austen 79). Despite their interesting gender performances in this novel, Catherine still represents "woman" in many ways, and Henry remains a part of the structure of patriarchal control. This discussion of history elucidates an interesting argument about the oppression of women. Catherine objects to the virtual absence of women in historiography and actually brings it to Henry's attention, arguing that her lack of interest in history stems from the lack of male historians' interest in women's lives and narratives. As one knows in modern times, women did play important roles in history, and it is male historians who decided to leave women's stories out of the history books. It is also interesting that the discussion of history sounds like a philosophical discourse such as one might find in the works of Plato or Aristotle. Catherine says: "Yet I often think it odd that [history] should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be invention... and invention is what delights me in other books" (Austen 79). Catherine (and by extension, Austen) is quite correct in this assertion:

much contemporary historiography *was* invention, and in many cases it covered up any blunders made by the controlling patriarchal figures while censoring any stories of the accomplishments of women and minorities. The purpose of the invention of tales, in this case, appears designed to uphold the patriarchy, and as such, Catherine finds it dull. And yet, Eleanor responds by saying "I am fond of history – and am well contented to take the false with the true. In the principal facts [historians] have sources of intelligence in former histories and records, which may be as much depended on, I conclude, as any thing that does not actually pass under one's own observation" (Austen 79). This discussion of the merits of masculinist history is fascinating in that it comes out of the mouths of two women, whose discourse is philosophical in its own right. In philosophical works by men, such as *The Republic* by Plato, it is generally two men who engage in such discussions and debates, even about women. In one such passage, Socrates talks about women, relating them to dogs. He says: "'Ought female watchdogs to perform the same guard-duties as male, and watch and hunt and so on with them?'" (Plato 228). Plato answers, "They should share all duties, though we should treat the females as the weaker, the males as the stronger" (229). Although she might agree with part of the claim, Austen challenges, indeed reverses, this mode of dialogue by having two women discuss the merits of men's history, and with a man present.

The discussion between Catherine, Eleanor, and Henry continues as Henry attempts to teach Catherine about the picturesque aesthetic through which he perceives and interprets the landscape. In defining the picturesque, William Gilpin states:

> That we may examine picturesque objects with more ease, it may be useful to class them into the sublime, and the beautiful; tho in fact, this distinction is rather inaccurate. Sublimity alone cannot make an object picturesque. However grand the mountain, or the rock may be, it has no claim to this epithet, unless it's [sic] form, it's [sic] colour, or it's [sic] accompaniments have some degree of beauty. (42-43)

As the most influential aesthetician of the late eighteenth century, Gilpin describes the picturesque as a form of aesthetic that lies between the sublime and the beautiful. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, Edmund Burke had previously defined the beautiful and the sublime as opposites. Burke first describes the sublime as "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime" (Burke 36). He continues on to describe beauty in this way: "By beauty I mean, that quality or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it" (83). The combination of love and terror, or of pleasure and pain, as Burke puts it (36), comprises the picturesque. In Austen's novel, Catherine and Henry discuss the very green space within which they walk, including all its associations with the sublime and the beautiful. Austen notes of Catherine's understanding of the picturesque: "Catherine was so hopeful a scholar, that when they gained the top of Beechen Cliff, she voluntarily rejected the whole city of Bath, as unworthy to make part of a landscape" (Austen 81). The city of Bath has no part in the sublimity or beauty of nature except in parody. It is somewhat comical that Catherine rejects the entire city of Bath as inconsequential to the picturesque. Speaking of women's ignorance, and Catherine's in particular, Austen's narrator states that "To come with a well-informed mind, is to come with an inability of administering to the vanity of others... A woman especially, if she have the misfortune of knowing anything, should conceal it as well as she can" (Austen 81). In this case, Austen is being ironic, poking fun at the idea that women should have to feign ignorance for the sole purpose of making men feel good about themselves. And yet, in this scene, Catherine truly is ignorant, and Henry happily teaches her about natural aesthetics, providing a lesson she genuinely enjoys. However, the end point of this part of the conversation, being comical rather than serious, points to the facetiousness of Austen's previous comments about ignorance. Austen is, in a way,

mildly critiquing the masculinist idealized mastery of knowledge by making fun of it. Although Catherine goes along with this idea of the masculinist monopoly on knowledge, in fact, the narrator says "It was no effort to Catherine to believe that Henry Tilney could never be wrong" (Austen 83). Catherine provides Austen with a vehicle for making a gentle joke about men's ostensible superiority of intellect. This green space of Beechen Cliff helps to enable interesting philosophical discussions while also challenging notions of man's intelligence and woman's ignorance.

Catherine and General Tilney

Catherine's suspicions of General Tilney are wrong only to the extent that the General did not actively murder his wife, but his actions towards Catherine demonstrate that his treatment of women depends on their usefulness to him. This chapter will examine the garden path at Northanger Abbey, where Catherine and Eleanor wander through Eleanor's deceased mother's favourite walk. This space is, in a way, haunted by the absence of Eleanor's mother and by her memory. It should be noted that General Tilney completely avoids this green space for reasons upon which I will speculate. Perhaps he avoids the walk because of the memory of his wife, or perhaps he always abhorred it and that is the reason that Eleanor's mother chose this walk as her favourite. Wenner points out "that women can create private spaces within the landscape that offer them the power of knowledge gained through their own silent, and sometimes invisible, observation" (31). It is quite possible that Eleanor's mother chose this garden path as her own private space, and now that she is deceased, it has become Eleanor's private space away from General Tilney and his controlling temper. Wenner also argues that green spaces can be places of knowledge. Already in this chapter I have noted that Catherine and Eleanor have used green spaces to discuss philosophy and to further female knowledge and intelligence. The walk at

Northanger Abbey is described as "a narrow winding path through a thick grove of old Scotch firs; and Catherine, struck by its gloomy aspect, and eager to enter it, could not, even by the General's disapprobation, be kept from stepping forward" (Austen 131). Catherine is eager to enter this space because of its gloomy atmosphere, which is more Gothic than the rest of Northanger Abbey altogether. Perhaps the General's disapprobation also provides a motive for Catherine's eagerness, as liking something that the General dislikes is a possible way to resist his influence. Eleanor's mother also liked this walk, perhaps for the negative reasoning that General Tilney hated it, or perhaps because she simply enjoyed it. In any case, Catherine and Eleanor are able here to commune with another figure of female solidarity in the form of the latter's mother's spirited presence.

Significantly, it is within this space that Catherine first begins to suspect General Tilney of being a villain. She has not yet decided that he is actually a Gothic villain in the style of the evil Montoni in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (one of the books she had previously read at Isabella Thorpe's urging); however, she is certain of his tyranny in at least one respect. Contemplating Mrs. Tilney's relationship with her husband, Catherine becomes perplexed: "Of her unhappiness in marriage, she felt persuaded. The General certainly had been an unkind husband. He did not love her walk: – could he therefore have loved her?" (Austen 132). Catherine asks whether or not General Tilney could have loved his wife based on his lack of preference for the green space that she had loved. Given my argument that green space represents a place in which women can resist patriarchal control, and given that this is Eleanor's mother's particular green space, I can understand why General Tilney has an aversion to it. He is, above all else, a proponent of control over space and over people. According to T.R. Benis, "The setting of Northanger... is characterized by an authoritarian style of governance that renders any distinction between the estate and the environs in which it is embedded moot: General Tilney’s appetite for total control

over spaces and those who inhabit them extends beyond Northanger to envelop the neighborhood beyond" (180). General Tilney embodies the very values of the patriarchal society that controls Catherine and Eleanor, and which in the past controlled Eleanor's mother. Catherine finds the presence of General Tilney oppressive, as do both Eleanor and Henry. When she enters the green space, and General Tilney leaves, Catherine "was shocked to find how much her spirits were relieved by the separation" (Austen 131). It is not until his absence that she realizes how insidious his oppression is, and how much she did not notice it until he was gone. So this space becomes a kind of enclosed safe haven for female freedom from patriarchal control. Speaking of economy and how the marriage market is present throughout the narrative, Susan Zlotnick says: "*Northanger Abbey* simultaneously explores the marketplace and the novel as two discursive spaces that hold out the possibility of enhanced choice for women by seeming to model more assertive forms of agency than the mere right of refusal" (279). I argue that the green space of this walk that Eleanor's mother loved so much is also a space which promotes female agency.

Female agency is important in this novel when it comes to the resistance to patriarchal power structures embodied by General Tilney. The General's control extends not only to space but to time as well. As previously mentioned, General Tilney becomes agitated whenever his schedule is disrupted, especially by a woman's tardiness, as the novel shows when Catherine and Eleanor arrive late to dinner. The fact that General Tilney is waiting for them, watch in hand, speaks to his disciplined control. Katherine Kickel notes that "General Tilney’s use of a time discipline climate signals both an effort to improve his estate as well as his invocation of a new atmosphere of emotional self-regulation in his home, especially during his household’s private leisure moments" (Kickel 148). The General regulates time as a measure of discipline and control; it is a demonstration of his power over his own estates and land, as well as over the people who reside therein. If one reads this system as a microcosm for the larger English society, it demonstrates just

how tyrannical the control of the patriarchal system is to women, as well as to men like Henry. Once Catherine realizes the tyranny of the General, she "attempted no longer to hide from herself the nature of the feelings which, in spite of all his attentions, he had previously excited; and what had been terror and dislike before, was now absolute aversion" (Austen 132). Catherine realizes on her own what kind of man General Tilney is, and she decides on her own that she has an aversion to men like him. If one thinks of Catherine as a representative "woman" and the General as a representative of the patriarchal system, then the example of Catherine's actions throughout the novel shows female agency in not only coming to one's own conclusion, but also in making a decision based on that conclusion. In the end, Catherine admittedly goes too far, straying beyond the mundane Gothic and into an over-imaginative fantasy of the conventional Gothic, believing that the General has either shut away or murdered his wife in the manner of a villainous Montoni. However, in this instance, she is completely correct: the General is indeed a Gothic villain.

Female Solidarity

Catherine's resistance of men is strengthened or weakened not only by her occupancy of urban and natural places, but her relationship with other women. Throughout this examination of female agency, female intelligence, and female resistance and will, I have also gestured towards the idea of female solidarity. It is very important to notice that Catherine has two female friends: Eleanor Tilney and Isabella Thorpe. One friend, Isabella, abandons Catherine and female friendship and solidarity completely in the first instance that Catherine enters a green space with John Thorpe. He seduces and kidnaps Catherine, and his sister Isabella not only allows such behaviour, but encourages it, as she is on John's side. She is a figure that plays into the patriarchal power structures and tries to manipulate men from within this structure. Ultimately, she fails at this manipulation, leaving Bath empty handed. On the other hand, there is Eleanor, who joins

Catherine in her debates against her brother Henry, and who is equally aware of her father's tyranny over his household. Duquette says:

> Eleanor Tilney's strong friendship with Catherine is doubly remarkable due to its basis in philosophical discussions of landscape aesthetics. Their relationship begins with Eleanor's inclusion of Catherine in the walk to Beechen Cliff, continues with Eleanor's attention to the beauty of hyacinths, which comforts Catherine after her fearful night in the abbey, and culminates with Eleanor's shared memories of her mother during their walk through the fir grove, a shared experience of contemplative sublimity. (Duquette)

All of these instances in which Eleanor acts as a true friend to Catherine, in solidarity with her even against her own family members, occur within a green space. As Duquette says, the friendship between Catherine and Eleanor is remarkable in that it is a strong representation of female agency. Eleanor does not try to manipulate Catherine as Isabella does, instead enabling her to grow as a person in her own manner, allowing Catherine to voice her own opinions and arguments, and accepting Catherine's affection for her brother without either challenge or insinuation. These women would rather build each other up than tear each other down, and they do so in a manner unaffected by the machinations of the patriarchal power structures in place in their society.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Catherine is a representative of "woman" who embodies female agency, female intelligence, female resistance and willpower, and female solidarity. She is able to explore and embrace these characteristics through her entry into green spaces which allow a significant degree of freedom from patriarchal conventions and control. First, she enters green space when she resists

John Thorpe's will after he "kidnaps" her, and she succeeds in resisting his manipulative plot to marry her. Secondly, she takes a walk on Beechen Hill with Henry and Eleanor Tilney, where she defends female intelligence and undermines the common idea that women should be ignorant. Lastly, she enters the garden walk at Northanger Abbey with Eleanor, where she comes to the conclusion that General Tilney is a villain, and decides that she abhors him. In two of these green spaces, she finds a sense of female solidarity with Eleanor, and in one of them she is betrayed by Isabella. Miller notes: "Catherine realizes that the “horror” of her surrounding society is not that men directly murder their wives, but rather the far more commonplace truth that people marry for money and make their spouses miserable" (135). This assertion acknowledges the economic agenda of the patriarchal power system when it comes to marriage; it is part of the mundane Gothic, a literary form which demonstrates that the everyday terrors and horrors of Austen's society are directly related to patriarchal society. Scholars have debated to what extent Jane Austen can be considered a feminist writer. I argue that this novel demonstrates, through its use of the mundane Gothic and its association of women's agency with green spaces, that Austen works towards a similar liberatory goal to Mary Wollstonecraft, and that she does so through the thoughts and actions of Catherine Morland.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: EcoGothic Feminism

Active Heroines

The ways in which female authors such as Ann Radcliffe and Jane Austen shaped eighteenth-century society are numerous, and their influence continues to this day. These novels gave female readers active heroines, and not only are they strong and intelligent, but they are accepted by society as normal women. Their actions, while in some ways radical, do not prevent them from interacting with society or cause them to be ostracized. The importance of these novels to the development of feminist thought and action is something I argue in my thesis. Women readers who adore the active heroine are indebted to these authors for paving the way forward.

What is a woman? What is nature?

Both women and nature are conceptualized in similar ways, and some of those ways are reductive and essentialist.

> For the most part, feminist theory has assumed that there is some existing identity understood through the category of woman, who not only initiates feminist interests and goals within discourse, but constitutes the subject for whom political representation is pursued. (Butler 2)

Butler asks us to consider the question: what is a woman? How do we know when a writer is representing a woman, and how do we know that this representation is behaving as a woman? Now, this question is a trick, because many feminists suggest that there *is no way* for a woman to behave that constitutes "womanly" behaviour. But if there is no way in a woman's behaviour to know if she is a woman, then what is a woman?

Many people point immediately to biology. A woman has a woman's biological parts: we

know she is a woman because she had a uterus, a vagina, and other secondary sexual characteristics. I will respond with a resounding "NO." Women are not reducible to their biology; they are not clocks that tick along to a certain rhythm, that of menstruation, marriage, mating, and childbirth. Not only do I argue that women are not their pieces and parts, packaged up into parcels so that men can make sense of them, but I argue that not all women have those parts, and not all people who have those parts are women. The spectrum of sex and gender is diverse, and categorizations made on the basis of mere biology are completely essentialist. No one who really takes the issue of sex and gender seriously will give any consideration to the argument that biology is any indicator of either.

Women are not defined by their function, either, as Janet Biehl argues: "Somehow everything is in 'flux,' as philosophers have said – except women. Women's 'eternal' nature, whether biological or socially constructed, gives them a unique status among ecofeminists not only in the biosphere but in the entire cosmos" (25). The "eternal woman" is the idea that somehow, women are always women, no matter the time or place. This idea is completely false, as different times and places inform culture and society what women are expected to do, and what they actually do. If you consider the eighteenth century, middle-class women were supposed to look after the home and their children, and to attend to the needs of their husband. Although that role changed slowly, it became increasingly obsolete in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in which women were still, in part, expected to look after children, but to balance such activities with a full-time job. These roles are what society expects of women, but what do women actually do? We know that some Romantic-era women such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, Mary Robinson, and Charlotte Smith were writers and some also had children. However, the bare function of having children does not necessarily signify "woman" nor does looking after children in a nurturing way.

Biehl argues against the idea that "woman" is an "eternal" or universal construction of society. The stereotypes associated with the feminine include caring or nurturing, subservience to men, meekness, docility, chastity, passivity etc. If a woman depicted in a work of literature does not have these characteristics, then often scholars see her as breaking societal gender norms. However, the roles that women are assigned and how women actually act are completely different. Behaviour does not indicate sexual difference, and the fact that there are many ways in which people think that behaviour does, in fact, indicate that gender is problematic. This belief is indicative of normative gender roles and how society constructs gender norms.

In *The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *Northanger Abbey*, the female characters often "break" these gender norms, but this breaking of societal rules does not mean that these women are "manly" or more masculine. One example involves the way in which Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest* uses her new-found rank and her femininity in order to free Theodore and save him from execution. In traditional literary romance, the woman is usually the "damsel in distress" and the man is the "rescuing knight." Because Adeline and Theodore switch roles, critics have generally argued that Adeline has taken on the masculine role and that Theodore has become feminized because of his role as the one who needs rescuing. However, as Hoeveler argues, the way in which writers seek to break gender stereotypes actually subtly reinforces them (*Androgyny* 7). Society creates the roles, and we follow them. However, in order to break down gender roles, one has to let go of these things, because although role reversals might seem empowering, they only emphasize that there is, in fact, a role to be filled. Women and men are allowed to take on any role, and seeing them as playing a "masculine" or a "feminine" role, even if such roles are reversed, only strengthens societal norms and stereotypes.

In the same vein, nature, like gender, also comes with a set of rules and stereotypes, and nonhuman nature often plays an important role in literature. A sympathetic association with

nature, Radcliffe suggests, makes a person moral and provides them with a self that is more emotional. Austen's depiction of the philosophical discussion on Beechen Hill suggests a more rational association with nature. The nature-culture dichotomy is broken down into emotional and rational spheres respectively. Radcliffe's argument is that one needs access to both of these spheres to be a balanced person, but when it comes to the extremes of nature and culture, such as the wilds and the city, Radcliffe clearly equates the city with corruption, as seen in the downfall of the hero Valancourt when he visits Paris. The pastoral setting is the ideal setting in Radcliffe's eyes, a place where people can live peacefully between the wilds of nature and the ordered environs of the city. A passage from *The Romance of the Forest* highlights this ideal: "The chateau was almost encircled with woods, which formed a grand amphitheatre swept down to the water's edge, and abounded with wild and romantic walks. Here nature was suffered to sport in all her beautiful luxuriance, except where here, and there, the hand of art formed the foliage to admit a view of the blue waters of the lake, with the white sail that glided by, or of the distant mountains" (Radcliffe, *Romance* 362). In this passage, the wilderness almost overwhelms the scene, except for the fact that human hands have trimmed it back in order to reveal a view of the lake and mountains. This scene is Radcliffe's ideal meeting place between the sublime wilderness and the ugly and corrupt city. Such a setting implies minimal human domestication and cultivation, another value which Radcliffe upholds when she villifies Monsieur Quesnel in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* for his plans to destroy ancient chestnut trees in order to build a highly cultivated garden (13). Thus, Radcliffe's ideal setting also includes a space which humans have not destroyed in order to uphold their own ego.

Merchant's argument for the value of nature mirrors that of Radcliffe: "As long as the earth was considered to be alive and sensitive, it could be considered a breach of human ethical behaviour to carry out destructive acts against it" (*Death of Nature* 3). Nature is alive, and people

often downplay its alive-ness when it comes to tearing it down in order to build dams and motorways. Too few people want to consider the displacement of animal lives, seeing them as less important than the convenience and comfort of human ones. In the Western world, humans are often completely inhumane when it comes to our treatment of nature. There is no reciprocal relationship with nature when humans only exploit the natural for their own gain. From mining to taking selfies, many people in Western society see nature as a passive being and often dismiss it, or actively harm it, without any thought to how these actions damage their own surroundings.

The Romantic era embraces a different sort of sentiment when it comes to nature. Poets talk directly about how humans use nature, highlighting the ugliness of factories, coal-usage, and the adverse working conditions of the lower classes. The inner feelings of the Romantics towards nature, and how they value it, are different from how people in the twenty-first century see it. Britain nowadays is a place where nature needs to be protected and cordoned off, and still people invade these areas with their cars and their cameras. Perhaps a Romantic revival needs to be initiated before we can once again value nature in the same way the Romantics once did. Are some of the ways in which the Romantics saw nature problematic? Almost certainly. However, the aliveness of nature is apparent in their work, and their value of it, and their critique of humans' use of coal and industry, is obvious.

What is nature? According to Alan Liu, “As is clearest in such cases as forests, parks, or dales ... there is no nature, except as it is constituted by acts of political definition made possible by particular forms of government” (104). Nature is both something that exists tangibly and is also a construct that exists intangibly. Humans often try to give nature boundaries, but nature invariably creeps into even urban settings, poking up between cracks in sidewalks and invading domestic gardens. Defining something that does not allow itself to be contained is impossible in some ways, and telling someone what one means by "nature" is difficult to do in a succinct manner. Nature is

something that exists all around us, in everyone and everything. It is something you can touch with your hands and feel with your heart and soul. It is also something constructed in our minds, something humanity has written down in songs and poems, and also in novels by authors such as Ann Radcliffe and Jane Austen. It is more than that, too, some ineffable quality that is impossible to write down. Humans have, in many ways, ceased to see nature in this manner, and we oppress nature in a variety of ways.

As Warren states, "The exploitation of nature and animals is justified by feminizing them; the exploitation of women is justified by naturalizing them" ("Empirical Data" 12). This exploitation is only too obvious, as women are called "catty" or "foxy" in order to demean them, and nature is described as "virgin" land which men "penetrate." The goal of ecofeminism is to find a way to elevate both women and nature. The study of feminism can inform environmentalism, and environmentalism can inform feminism. Often, a connection to and reliance on nature gives women a cross-cultural understanding of how women in other places are oppressed (4). This connection is important for understanding how ecofeminism functions not just as a theory, but in practice.

EcoGothic Feminism

Literary theories can sometimes be so complex that it seems like they take up physical space in three or four dimensions, and connecting theories together can create a whole matrix of points that converge and then separate, only to converge again later. Feminism; the Gothic; ecology: all of these subjects are complex in and of themselves, and bringing them together tangles them up in such a way that untangling them becomes something of a task. However, this thesis attempts to begin this task and at least start us on a path that brings understanding to this interdisciplinary array of subjects.

My argument in this thesis has been that when a female character traverses green space, in some instances Gothic natural space, such space empowers them to act against the patriarchal power structures at work in eighteenth-century society. *The Romance of the Forest* gives us a taste of the Gothic as representative of the patriarchal, and everyday nature (not dark or Gothic nature) as representative of the green space that rejuvenates and empowers Adeline. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily gives us a glimpse of Gothic sublime green spaces and the power and agency they share with female characters. In *Northanger Abbey*, green space can sometimes be domestic, and the Gothic is actually the "mundane Gothic," which involves the everyday horrors and terrors of eighteenth-century British society.

The Romance of the Forest uses specifically conventional pastoral spaces when it comes to rejuvenating and restoring Adeline to health and strength. By "conventional pastoral," I mean that nature is gentle and nurturing, a benign entity. Nature still has agency in this form, as it actively restores and gives Adeline health. In this novel, the Gothic is definitely representative of patriarchal power structures. In fact, the ruined structure of the abbey in which Adeline finds herself staying represents the masculinist culture of "civilization" that is being slowly consumed and torn down by nature. Nature is very Gothic in this instance, a less benign agentic force that tears down the man-made structure in both a physical and metaphorical sense. In *Romance of the Forest*, nature restores Adeline, and Gothic patriarchy oppresses her. When Adeline does encounter dark, Gothic nature, it frightens her. This terror, which does not stop her from traversing the Gothic natural environment, is different from horror, which would have frozen her in place, thus preventing any exercise of agency. Ultimately, she is successful in rescuing Theodore and living in the perfect pastoral space which Radcliffe idealizes as a middle ground or meeting place between the human and the non-human, the domestic and the wild.

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily also finds nature restorative; however, she is restored

by the Gothic sublime nature. When she, her father, and Valancourt wander through the Pyrenees mountains, all three of them admire the scenery in which they are immersed. Emily also takes refuge in conventional pastoral nature, such as those green spaces surrounding her familial home of La Vallee; however, for the majority of the novel, she traverses sublime nature. It is definitely sublime nature which helps her when she fights back against Montoni's tyranny, as she finds a restorative solace in looking out her window at the mountains:

> She rose, and, to relieve her mind from the busy ideas, that tormented it, compelled herself to notice external objects. From her casement she looked out upon the wild grandeur of the scene, closed nearly on all sides by alpine steeps, whose tops, peeping over each other, faded from the eye in misty hues, while the promontories below were dark with woods, that swept down to their base, and stretched along the narrow vallies. (Radcliffe, *Mysteries* 241)

Her sublime experience in nature gives her strength not only to defy Montoni and resist him, but it also gives her the fortitude to remain resolved against marrying Valancourt until such a time that she can say yes without being in conflict with her own morals and those of society – morals that are complicit with patriarchy. Thus, the Gothic interacts both with patriarchal power structures and also with nature, functioning differently in these instances.

Northanger Abbey introduces the mundane Gothic through Catherine Morland, who is "in training for a heroine" (7) and wants to be the protagonist of a Gothic novel; and it is her overactive imagination that brings all sorts of problems down on her head. Catherine, too, is attracted to Gothic nature, or at least nature that appears to be Gothic in her imagination. At the novel's titular abbey, for example, there is "a winding path through a thick grove of old Scotch firs; and Catherine, struck by its gloomy aspect, and eager to enter it, could not, even by the General's disapprobation, be kept from stepping forward" (Austen, *Northanger Abbey* 131). In the

novel, Austen equates "traditional" Gothic with the imagination; like a lot of things that people imagine, Gothic occurrences are not real and would probably not happen. For all that Austen equates imagination and traditional Gothic, her work has a lot of similarities to Ann Radcliffe's, which Austen parodies. She uses the "mundane" Gothic to point out the ordinary terrors and horrors of eighteenth century society, and Radcliffe uses the traditional Gothic in a similar way. Even if Emily's situation, being locked far from home in a mouldering castle, would likely never happen to someone, her oppression by a male relative who threatens her with physical and sexual violence seems all too probable, the kind of situation real women face all the time. In *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine's mistaken belief that General Tilney has shut away or murdered his wife is not much less terrible than what really happens, when General Tilney sends Catherine away to travel alone at night without a chaperone across the English countryside. The fact that Catherine escapes this adventure unscathed does not make traveling alone less dangerous for a woman in the eighteenth century. Austen uses the mundane Gothic to point out that even without the traditional Gothic terrors and horrors, men still commit atrocities against women.

EcoGothic feminism demonstrates how ecological, gothic, and feminist modes of criticism interact in order to give women and nature more power, using the Gothic to amplify the effects. Radcliffe and Austen were no doubt aware that stating what they meant outright would be dangerous in more than one sense. However, their messages still resonate, even today. There are those, such as Robert Miles, who say that Radcliffe was *not* a radical feminist, and that she was not trying to communicate subtle messages to other women in her writing (Miles 5). However, her radical ideas still shine through in her writing, and those ideas were not necessarily the most palatable to the patriarchy either.

Moving Forward

When I talk about the field of EcoGothic feminism, I am talking about something that scholars can and will expand upon; however, there are very few scholars currently focused on this subject and even fewer sources to draw from directly. There is one book that I found helpful, *Ecogothic* (2013), which explores several different areas of environmental and Gothic literary theories in conjunction. Only a very limited number of scholars work in EcoGothic feminism in the Romantic era, and by "very limited," I mean that I have not been able to draw on any scholarship in this field for this thesis. I hope that my thesis will bring interest to this interdisciplinary field, and that by continuing with the study of EcoGothic feminism in Romantic literature, I will produce more such scholarship in the future.

There are so many extant works of literature that one could analyze through the critical lens of EcoGothic feminism. For example, there are several works by Hayao Miyazaki, the Japanese animator, to which scholars could apply this lens, particularly *Princess Mononoke*. The film *Princess Mononoke* is about a girl named San who was raised by wolf-gods and who is constantly at war with Irontown, a city that burns resources from the forest for its residents' livelihoods. There is work by Margaret Atwood that covers everything from dystopianism to the post-apocalyptic. There is *Monkey Beach* by Eden Robinson, which would bring issues of colonialism and race into the mix. The Canadian Gothic is full of possibilities for EcoGothic and feminist scholarship. The examples I could use are endless – where there is nature and conflict, there is an argument to be made.

Of course, there are many ways to expand on the study of EcoGothic feminism in the field of Romanticism as well. There are many works by male and female poets and novelists that can be explored using an EcoGothic feminist lens. Take the work of Mary Robinson, for example. In "The Poor Singing Dame," she writes about a woman who is wronged by men and avenged by a

sympathetic nature. There is also work by Charlotte Smith, including her sonnet "On Being Cautioned against Walking on an Headland Overlooking the Sea, Because it was Frequented by a Lunatic," which associates nature and the Gothic to question societal roles of men and women in eighteenth-century British society. Male authors such as William Blake and Samuel Taylor Coleridge address women's roles and female sexuality in poems such as Blake's *The Book of Thel* and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and Coleridge's *Christabel*. And of course, there are still more Ann Radcliffe novels to study, such as *The Italian*. Again, the possibilities for study are endless.

This field is one that is relatively new, which means that expanding its inquiry in new directions is the responsibility of upcoming scholars in the field of Romanticism. Personally, I aspire to be one of these scholars who adds something new to the field, and I hope that this thesis will contribute to that goal as well. To quote Ann Radcliffe, "The effort, however humble, has not been vain, nor is the writer unrewarded" (Radcliffe, *Mysteries* 672).

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