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Radcliffe's Reveries of the Social Walker

Character is very reconcilable with beauty.

—Thomas Whately, *Observations on
Modern Gardening* (1770)

MANY CRITICS—DAVID S. MIALL, Claudia L. Johnson, Harriet Blodgett and Robert Miles among them—have detected in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novels a critique of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's representation of female character.¹ In Robert Miles's 1995 biography of Radcliffe, he associates the novelist's critique most narrowly with one work of Rousseau's, *Émile* (1762). The choice of this "influential" work as a fountainhead for a problematic "discourse of modesty" relating to women makes Miles typical of recent conjectures concerning Radcliffe's encounter with Rousseau (116). Writing in 2000, David S. Miall goes beyond attributions of general influence to particular identifications when he ventures that "Radcliffe's reading of Rousseau's *Émile* is manifest in *The Romance of the Forest*, in which the character of La Luc is modeled on Rousseau's Savoyard vicar" (32). What no one has yet considered is that Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), a fiction pervaded by themes of botany and landscape appreciation, even landscape appropriation (in the form of Emily St. Aubert's paintings), may show

¹ See David S. Miall, "The Preceptor as Fiend: Radcliffe's Psychology of the Gothic," in *Jane Austen and Mary Shelley and Their Sisters*, ed. Laura Dabundo (Lanham, MD: UP of America, 2000) 31–43; Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivoocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s—Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995); Harriet Blodgett, "Emily Vindicated: Ann Radcliffe and Mary Wollstonecraft," *Weber Studies* 7.2 (Fall 1990): 46–61; and Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995).

Radcliffe's familiarity with Rousseau's last work, *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1778; 1782). Using the emergent discourse of the picturesque—a discourse unavailable to Rousseau—Radcliffe, I am proposing, models an androgynous vision of intellect, contesting the suppositions of the philosopher respecting spheres of male and female intelligence. Picturesque theory postulated the strong reciprocity of the inner with the outer world, and arguably assumed a broad commonality on this basis in men and women's experience. In Radcliffe's hands, picturesque doctrine supplies means of identifying in Rousseau an implicit vision of androgyny capable of rescuing him from attacks such as Mary Wollstonecraft's, without seconding his sexism. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* arguably tells the story of a woman raised according to Rousseau's precepts, capable in the end of inheriting what Radcliffe considers the best of Rousseau.

Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), though it praises aspects of Rousseau's thought, nevertheless mocks his preferences in the matter of "sexual character." Wollstonecraft focuses her critique on a creation of Rousseau's own manufacture—Sophia, from his novel *Émile*. Wollstonecraft argues:

The sensualist, indeed, has been the most dangerous of tyrants, and women have been duped by their lovers, as princes by their ministers, whilst dreaming that they reigned over them.

I now principally allude to Rousseau, for his character of Sophia is, undoubtedly, a captivating one, though it appears to me grossly unnatural; however, it is not the superstructure, but the foundation of her character, the principles on which her education was built, that I mean to attack; nay, warmly as I admire the genius of that able writer, whose opinions I shall often have occasion to cite, indignation always takes place of admiration, and the rigid frown of insulted virtue effaces the smile of complacency ... when I read his voluptuous reveries.²

² See Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Carol H. Poston (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975) 24–25.

Sophia, heroine of *Émile*, a fiction that treats the optimal education of human beings, bears a name that means "wisdom." Wollstonecraft derides the erotic bias that makes Rousseau dote on his heroine's "pretty foot" and emphasize the "enticing airs of his little favourite," rather than choose (as Sophia's name misleadingly promises he will choose) to explore her human capacity for wisdom.³ Rousseau does not adequately synthesize Sophia's exterior and interior merit. For Wollstonecraft, Sophia remains too much the titillating object of the Rousseau's masculine fascination, the compliant mistress of his imagination.

Toward the end of Rousseau's life, however, in his last book, *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1778), Rousseau presents himself as a different sort of sensualist, as altogether another kind of reverist. Rousseau is here not the sentimental lecher who imagined Sophia, but the dreamy dilettante of Linnaean botany and European landscape. Rousseau extols the rapture that the natural world—considered as a whole as well as in its component parts—may afford to those apprised of its excellences:

The more susceptible the observer's soul, the deeper his surrender to the bliss evoked by this harmony. At such times, a sweet and profound reverie engrosses his senses and, deliciously intoxicated, he loses himself in the immensity of this beautiful order, with which he has achieved identity.... My eyes wandered unceasingly from one thing to another, and I could not abstain among so great a variety of objects from noticing some that solicited my attention and detained it longer.

I savoured this recreation of the eyes, which relaxes and amuses the mind.... The nature of the objects contributes greatly to this diversion and heightens its seductiveness. Dulcet odours, vivid

³ Jean H. Hagstrum gives a more tolerant reading of Rousseau's *Émile* and the character of Sophia in *Sex and Sensibility* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980) 221–27. Hagstrum emphasizes the influence on Rousseau of a Miltonic model of "heterosexual friendship." Wollstonecraft and Radcliffe both promote a similar ideal, while taking issue with inherited—and culturally prestigious—masculine phrasings of it.

colours and the most elegant shapes seem to vie for the right to our attention. All by itself, love of pleasure persuades surrender to such delightful sensations.⁴

In its praise of attractive "objects," sensuality inflects Rousseau's writing here, without much focus on sex or sexual difference—except to the extent that nature in Rousseau may always ultimately be, like Mme de Warens, his first lover, at once maternal and voluptuous.⁵ In displacing filial affect onto nature, Rousseau coincides with Radcliffe's own Gothic disposition to imagine heroines bereft of mothers. Such heroines, according to Robert Miles, suffer an "impulse to revolve inwards into the self, into 'maternal' sensibility, into reverie and dream" (107). Like the historical Rousseau, the fictitious Emily St. Aubert has lost a mother early, before she forfeits a father. Yet, in practice, the Rousseau of *Les Rêveries* and Radcliffe's protagonist demonstrate a psychic systole and diastole, whereby reverie and inwardness alternate with empirical investigation of the outer world, under the congruent insistence of natural history and art. Insofar as he advocated amateur science, Rousseau believed in sexual equality. This allowance may give Radcliffe the grounds for her revision of the philosopher.

Rousseau believed that botany, specifically, might offer identical stimulus, identical consolation for women and men. His epistolary manual, *Huit lettres élémentaires sur la botanique* (1771–73), proves this by its having been composed expressly for Madeleine-Catherine Delessert and her daughter Marguerite-Madeleine, whom he hoped to recruit to his passion. His only prerequisites for pleasure in the identification of grasses, blossoms and moss are, apparently, plenty of leisure and a modicum of sensibility. As an affluent banker's widow and a feeling benefactor of Rousseau—she loaned the philosopher a house at Môtiers—Madame Delessert possessed both advantages. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, published just two years after Wollstonecraft's *Vindica-*

⁴ Throughout this essay, I translate from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, ed. S. de Sacy (Paris: Gallimard, 1972). All page numbers refer to this text. The present excerpt comes from pages 122–23.

⁵ The last chapter or "promenade" of *Les Rêveries*, never completed, celebrates this woman.

tion, may go some distance toward rehabilitating Rousseau as a philosopher for women, precisely by emphasizing the androgynous character of nature appreciation that Rousseau unostentatiously assumed.

Ingeniously revising Rousseau's sexual politics, Radcliffe patterns some of her characters' responses to nature on the philosopher's set-piece reveries. In this signal regard, it makes little difference to Radcliffe as a novelist whether her characters happen to be male or female. A morality based on aptitude for reverie and picturesque susceptibility assorts *Udolpho's* personnel. Radcliffe rates her characters according to their capacity to respond to natural objects—to what natural historians of the period termed *naturalia*. Rousseau notes in his *Réveries* that the basis of true reverie is "self-abandonment" (122). The reverist becomes one with "the immensity of [a] beautiful order"—an impersonal order, the kind of order that a taxonomist such as Carolus Linnaeus classified in his *Systema Naturae* (1735). This order consolidates the self, in that natural grandeur is apprehended as parts and whole simultaneously, neither particularity nor universality being cancelled, empirical order cohering with the aesthetic imperatives of magnitude and beauty. Radcliffe's eye, like Rousseau's, responds to "immensity," yet that same eye retains its Linnaean punctilio, often cataloguing plant communities accurately in *Udolpho*, a novel that, visiting valleys and mountains, explores habitats at diverse altitudes. Rousseau belongs to the lower, and Gothic to the higher elevations. Seconding the lofty place Rousseau assigns to responsiveness to nature, especially plants and views, Radcliffe seems to pioneer a fresh fashion of representing human subjectivity, as well as a fresh approach to reading Rousseau.

Like Rousseau, she endorses the inner life's integrity, experienced to the full in states of reverie. Rousseau, however, makes this privacy absolute. He claims his singularity right from the start of his *Réveries*: *Me voici donc seul sur la terre*, "Look at me, alone on earth" (35). Rousseau's social ostracism is the factor that precipitates his enquiry into selfhood: *Mais moi, détaché d'eux et de tous, que suis-je moi-même?*; "But I, detached from these people and from the whole world—who am I?" (35). Radcliffe deflects the rhetorical cul-de-sac of Rousseau's solipsism by assuming that, provided certain conditions have been satisfied, a person's inner life may become accessible to someone else. As a polemicist invested

fervidly in winning an audience and its approbation, Rousseau showed practical faith in the possibility of this kind of reciprocal penetrability. Creating *Udolpho's* imaginary society, Radcliffe further presumes that intimacy between lovers or among friends and family can lead to like-mindedness—especially when nature mediates for those who seek to deepen their intimacy.

For example, early in the novel, Radcliffe describes M. St. Aubert's delight in watching Emily and Valancourt botanize. *Herborisation* of just this kind fascinated and solaced Rousseau. As she describes Emily and Valancourt, Radcliffe characteristically blends place, mind and persons together: "They appeared like two lovers ... whose situation had secluded them from the frivolities of common life, whose ideas were simple and grand, like the landscapes among which they moved, and who knew no other happiness, than in the union of pure and affectionate hearts."⁶ The characters' mutual solitude conduces to their ideal union, their union in ideas, ideas "simple and grand," derived in anticipation of William Wordsworth from the surroundings through which they together move; "rural occupations," Wordsworth later claims, cause "the passions of men to be incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.... Such men hourly communicate with the best objects."⁷ St. Aubert admits to himself that his projection is excessively "romantic"; and soon after this idyll the Gothic figure of Montoni will powerfully obtrude himself, suspending the progress of M. Valancourt and Emily's vegetable love.

Regardless of this interruption, reverie on Rousseau's model, absorption in landscape and in *naturalia*, which seems at first to mandate relinquishment of self in favour of diffusion into the non-human world, expands, instead, paradoxically, possibilities for female selfhood. Conventionally, a woman must abnegate self in service of others. But men and women's identical self-abandonment in the contemplation of nature may bring them together, on an equal plane, consolidating the foundation for companionate happiness. That companionate happiness along Wollstonecraft's lines

⁶ Throughout the present essay, I use Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998); all page numbers refer to this text. The present excerpt comes from page 39.

⁷ William Wordsworth, "Preface to Lyrical Ballads," *Selected Poems and Prefaces by William Wordsworth*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965) 447.

is Emily's desideratum Robert Miles, among others, agrees (147). Early Rousseau may have doted on Sophia's "pretty foot," making her basest part a metonym of her beauty; yet—when the older Rousseau practised and discussed reverie—he articulated the grounds from which (without amputating or repudiating her foot) Sophia might achieve every profundity of the sexist philosopher.

In Radcliffe's shrewd interpretation of Rousseau, a man's or a woman's inner world coincides objectively and reproducibly with the outer world so long as he or she confronts nature with good taste, a keen eye, and a whole heart. Reproductions of the outer world are indeed sometimes literal, in the case of Emily's paintings and drawings: artwork materializes the contents of personal reverie, and exhibits them publicly. We can, then, participate deeply in our companions' reveries, provided only that we have the resources—adequate sensibility, sufficient wealth and leisure—to undertake such imaginative recreation. Thus a woman can redeem herself from Rousseau's derogation of her sex's intellectual powers, because her reverie differs inconsiderably from any admirable man's. Under the liberating aegis of reverie, a woman can, moreover, conjecture with near-perfect accuracy the course of a man's mental operations. Sex does not matter, for mind informed by similar experience is nearly transparent. By invoking the Rousseau who practised botany and reverie, a young woman might become, like Emily St. Aubert, an enfranchised acolyte of the best in Rousseau's philosophy, incorporating—though moving beyond—the surface attractions of Rousseau's Sophia.

Though Emily may be a rhetorical vehicle by means of whom the convictions of the senescent Rousseau might triumph over those of his younger self, Radcliffe's revision of the philosopher succeeds in part because it depends, also, on a doctrine external and subsequent to his. Ann Radcliffe could never have fully conceived of Emily's relative freedom had she not been conversant with the vocabulary of the picturesque. This vocabulary only attained its richest efflorescence after Rousseau's death, though as early as 1777 landscape theorists postulated a powerful reciprocation between the physiography of gardens and the intimate climate of the soul. Joseph Healey, for example, in his "Letters on the Beauties of Hagley, Envil, and the Leasowes," testifies to the rapt attention an

aesthete could lend, within the confines of a great garden, to the play of the outer and inner world. He describes his visit to the Leasowes as a psychological experience, in which the garden's designer, the late William Shenstone, though absent, "stood confessed on every object," whether a cascade, prospect or "the wild disorder of the numerous trees."⁸

Picturesque doctrine took this aptitude for inscribing natural objects with traces of human selfhood beyond the garden gate, and out into the world at large, where a controlling human intelligence could not always be divined in the disposition of things. What constituted a picturesque cascade, prospect or forest then lay preponderantly in the eye of the present beholder, with no necessary prior assumption of a designer, such as Shenstone, to authorize the assessment of natural beauties. Yet this enfranchised eye, delimiting the scene by imposing its own frame, testifying to the unique sensibility of the spectator, could share its determinations with a sympathetic other. British landscape theory and practice redeem Rousseau's solipsism on the shores of Lac Bienne. They make the picturesque a social event, if not in the first instance then in re-visitations of the kind William Wordsworth described in "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" (1798). This poem compares a past and solitary reverie with a reverie shared, occurring later; it dramatizes the inward framing of, and outward confrontation with, the same array of *naturalia*. "The picture of the mind" actually faces the landscape from which it originally sprang. The spaces explored by *Mysteries of Udolpho*, in their provocation of reverie (though not in their conformity to picturesque scene-construction), owe as much to Rousseau's influence, direct or at some near remove, as they do to the Gothic, its castles, its mountains.

Critics ordinarily classify the work as a Gothic novel, of course. Some notice the part that travelogue—an Italian journey—performs in the book. Jane Stabler has shown how the Italian picturesque offered, in the figures of *banditti*, proxies for women writers, whom Wollstonecraft significantly cast as literary "out-laws."⁹ Other critics acknowledge Ann Radcliffe's prominent will to dissolve rather than to fortify the many mysteries hinted at by her novel's title. The

⁸ See Wylie Sypher, ed., *Enlightened England* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1962) 691.

⁹ See Jane Stabler, "Taking Liberties: The Italian Picturesque in Women's Travel Writing," *European Romantic Review* 13.1 (Spring 2002): 17.

work usually nominated to inaugurate the genre of Gothic, Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), depends on the reader's playfully adopted faith in the efficacy of oracles and in the autonomous action of gargantuan statues. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* quite typically exposes what appears, at first, to be a shocking corpse as nothing more than a wax effigy. Radcliffe's is a rational world—even though, as in *Otranto*, violence and difficulties of family succession feature cardinally throughout *Udolpho*. But to comprehend the novel, to make sense of the place that it accords to the doctrine of the picturesque, a reader should return again to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and how his portrayal of natural objects and personal identity affects Radcliffe's representation of character.

To be sure, the novel may ultimately argue that (if Emily may stand as an exemplary case) no woman can become a self-respecting follower of Rousseau without undergoing the imaginary mortifications of the Gothic. To enjoy the benefits of a masculine education *à la* Rousseau, which Emily actually receives from her loving father, a woman must learn how to uphold them even when, her paternal tutor dead, she can no longer receive his reinforcement. Emily suffers protractedly from the caprice of the Italian Montoni, from the importunity of Count Morano. Yet she prevails. One of the novel's mysteries is surely Emily's success. Arguably, the picturesque aesthetic arms her with intellectual weaponry for comprehending and parrying the defects and designs of a daemonic figure such as Montoni. For picturesque doctrine, seemingly preoccupied only with taste, teaches how to judge a person's merit in the field of object relations. An adept equally of Rousseau and of the picturesque, Emily has earned, by the end of *Udolpho*, the right to take on her father's intellectual bequest, emblemized by his residence—its greenhouse and its library, two amenities often linked by the Rousseau of *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, and together furnishing an ideal union of sensual with intellectual stimulation.

The chief means of adapting Rousseau into a thinker salutary for women (or so *The Mysteries of Udolpho* implies) is to focus on a domain that the philosopher especially explores in his last work: the inextricability of the non-human world from the human intuition of self. Rousseau's beloved herbarium illustrates the centrality of this preoccupation to his mature thought. A second instance is the philosopher's expansive surrender to scenic reverie.

Rousseau's herbarium, his album of pressed botanical specimens, collects and compresses the world into the folds of personal memory. Plant leaves become the leaves of an autobiography:

All my botanical excursions, the diverse impressions made by the places where memorable objects confronted me, the ideas they have aroused in me, the incidents with which they have become mixed—all this has left me with impressions which are revived by the sight of the plants collected in those places.... This herbarium is like a diary of my expeditions, which makes me set out again with fresh delight, or like an optical device that places them once again before my eyes. (135–36)

The emotive power of this vegetable diary works only for its alienated compiler. Also solitary is the reverie that diffuses Rousseau's self into the world so that both coincide. Considering the pleasures derived from herbarium and reverie to be personal and valuable especially for that reason, the isolated Rousseau loves to record both the adherence of his self to a set of specimenal fragments and his self-inflation to comprehend, in reverie, the entire natural order of things. But, employing the additional cognitive aid furnished by picturesque theory—theory unavailable to Rousseau, at least in its elaborate 1790s version—Radcliffe manages to derive a more sociable corollary from Rousseau's research into the relations of the human and the non-human. If the world penetrates us all, then that single world should replenish and inform the minds of men and women alike.

Thus nature in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, organized by picturesque norms though available, too, for Rousseau-like reverie and taxonomic assortment, emancipates female intellect by registering, with almost scientific rigor, the degree to which many meditations have no gender. The contents of the mind depend on the external world and also on taste, a faculty without sex, though rife with ethical consequence and influenced by class. The tyrannical Italian Montoni, impressive, oppressive, embodies hypertrophied masculinity, Gothic manhood. His name has mountainous and therefore sublime, rather than picturesque, associations. That his "gloomy and sequestered" castle glowers in the Apennines suits his name,

his disposition (226). Masculinity immune to picturesque enthusiasm abstracts its powers culpably from reciprocal relations to both landscape and fellow human beings, dominating them like the Castle of Udolpho itself, which stands "silent, lonely and sublime ... the sovereign of the scene" (227). Montoni's seat of isolation shares with Rousseau its loneliness, but Rousseau can only achieve a measure of sovereignty by surrender to the scene or by attentive scrutiny of particular *naturalia*. Montoni exhibits imperviousness to both scenery and the loving scruple of botany.

M. Quesnel furnishes another example of defective manhood: a worldly type, "his aim had been consequence," Radcliffe's narrator tells us; "splendor was the object of his taste" (11). The noun "splendor" is an abstraction, even as Montoni's castle abstracts itself from the influence of locale; such abstract or abstracting objects threaten to eradicate concrete ones, including an immemorial chestnut tree, which M. Quesnel rapaciously exclaims "interrupt[s] my prospects" (13). By contrast, M. St. Aubert lengthily defends the same chestnut tree from the axe. A long-lived plant testifies to the permanence-in-change of any human dynasty; it also provides a hub for the social aspect of memory. M. St. Aubert's reminiscences may focus on solitary experiences, yet the essence of such experiences is expressible. Thus individual memory becomes, by proxy, the stuff of group recollection, even as an object revered in individual memory may be collectively visited, collectively appreciated—on the model provided by M. St. Aubert's chestnut tree. Wordsworth's Welsh River Wye above Tintern Abbey has similar properties, the fluent river assimilating the poet's to his sister's experience.

One sign of Emily's and her father's virtue is, in fact, their incapacity to ignore the sensual force of their natural environment. Although, elsewhere in the novel, their arduous travels have aggravated their appetite, Radcliffe nevertheless tells us, "It was some time before St. Aubert or Emily could withdraw their attention from the surrounding objects, so as to partake of their little repast" (29). Objects absorb people; people absorb objects. Radcliffe postulates an aesthetic-ethical metabolism, whereby a preferable kind of self is constituted through permeability to otherness. As for Montoni, he shuts himself off from his surroundings even more thoroughly than M. Quesnel, even abducting those whom he has selfishly engrossed into his opaque schemes, his ill-lit chambers, his "usurped

authority" (240). For Radcliffe and Emily, this obdurate self-enclosure makes his motives difficult to imagine. Unlike perspicuous M. Valancourt, Montoni is neither penetrated nor illuminated by the reflection of a common world. This withdrawal into himself, mirrored in his Piranesi-like castle and in the captivity to which he subjects Emily, lends him his aura of potency:

Sometimes the deep workings of his mind entirely abstracted him from surrounding objects, and threw a gloom over his visage that rendered it terrible.... Emily observed these written characters of his thoughts with deep interest, and not without some degree of awe, when she considered that she was entirely in his power. (192)

"To make anything very terrible," Edmund Burke remarks, "obscurity seems in general to be necessary"; and he associates such obscurity with "despotic governments."¹⁰ Emily must puzzle out, as best she can, the dark passions of Montoni, her personal tyrant. One law governing the universe of Radcliffe's novel is that an incomprehensible character will treat other characters incomprehendingly.

Montoni's occluded reveries disclaim the environment from which he has abstracted himself; he physically retreats (like the irresponsible Victor Frankenstein) into sterile mountains, behind baleful battlements. Montoni treats Emily as a possession—a thing rather than a person. Contrarily, M. St. Aubert happily anthropomorphizes a thing, a chestnut tree, incorporating it into his affective life and his family history: "You surely will not destroy that noble chesnut [sic]," he expostulates with M. Quesnel, "that noble chesnut, which has flourished for centuries, the glory of the estate! It was in its maturity when the present mansion was built. How often, in my youth, have I climbed among its broad branches, and sat embowered amidst a world of leaves" (13). In a Rousseau-like nesting of art into nature, M. St. Aubert recalls using the chestnut tree as both a library and a scenic prospect—the site of inwardness as well as the perch from which to launch into aesthetic prospect-

¹⁰ See Edmund Burke, "Of the Passion Caused by the Sublime," *Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful* (Lafayette, IN: Notre Dame UP, 1986) 58.

ing: "How often have I sat with a book in my hand, sometimes reading, and sometimes looking out between the branches upon the wide landscape." Rousseau spelled out his life in the pressed plant leaves of his memoiristic herbarium, the companion and support of his reveries; here M. St. Aubert, upheld by the limb of a living plant and enfolded in its foliage, alternately consults literature and the landscape, recollecting Rousseau's interleaving of subjective and objective worlds.

Montoni's fortifications, high among the leafless peaks of the Apennines, realize as architectural space a Gothic failure in the sphere of proper object relations. Picturesque mores dictate that full autonomy is impossible; that Montoni's self-enclosure is not tenable; and that Emily must, therefore, in the order of things, escape the castle and (in escaping) earn something close to an egalitarian love. Such love approximates the fraternal rather than the filial. Its object is young M. Valancourt, who must first painstakingly and willingly reproduce inside himself a facsimile of Emily's self—a subjectivity to be deduced from the outer world as well as from the evidences of Emily's habitation and artwork. Rousseau could construct a coherent autobiography and apologia from material proofs such as his herbarium preserved; Valancourt's task is to school himself in Emily, to build in himself an accurate apprehension of Emily's essence, through strategies borrowed from Rousseau and the picturesque.

Radcliffe imagines, then, that especially in the experience of landscape, good men and women may communicate and share even the more recondite of their insights—because subjectivity is, in so considerable a measure, constituted, according to picturesque theory, by our openness or porosity to one common world. What, then, given a common world, distinguishes one character from another? Picturesque aesthetics dictates that the defining criterion may be the distinctive frame that a person imposes on a scene. David Punter has recently suggested that the essence of the picturesque is "a negotiation of the bounding line between self and other."¹¹ Radcliffe makes her reader perceive exactly how this ne-

¹¹ See David Punter, "The Picturesque and the Sublime: Two Worldscapes," in *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics Since 1770*, ed. Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).

gotiation proceeds: individual and social identity is triangulated through a third apex—nature. The empathy of a comradely on-looker, suitably educated in the works of Rousseau and of picturesque artists such as Claude Le Lorrain, can compensate fairly well for the discrepancies wrought by the inevitable variation, the parallax effect, that estranges one's own from another's perspective. Thus M. St. Aubert may grieve his spouse, and Emily her mother, through contemplation of nature: "he suddenly became silent, thoughtful, and tears often swelled his eyes, which Emily observed, and the sympathy of her own heart told her the cause. The scene before them bore some resemblance, though it was on a much grander scale, to a favourite one of the late Madame St. Aubert, within view of the fishing-house. They both observed this, and thought how delighted she would have been with the present landscape" (29).

As for William Wordsworth in "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," picturesque attention here promises not the ineffability, but rather the nearness of another's inwardness. This guarantee even holds true in the recreation of the sensibilities of the dead (Mme St. Aubert), or of those who have otherwise changed from what they once were (Wordsworth's speaker). Places personify people; people personify places. This chiasmic interchange endorses an assumption that the sexes are alike. The speaker of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," for example, addresses a "Sister" in the faith that what he has felt in the past on the banks of the Wye can actually share identity with the present experiences of his companion:

For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform

The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men ...
 Shall e'er prevail against us. (114–35)¹²

Wordsworth concludes his poem with a claim that, in Radcliffean (or at least picturesque) fashion, assimilates love of a particular place and love of a particular human being who has stood witness to that same beauty: "these steep woods and lofty cliffs, / And this green pastoral landscape, were to me / More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake" (158–60). Emancipating his "Sister" in imagination, as though she were another Emily St. Aubert, Wordsworth's speaker wishes for her a Rousseau-like "solitary walk" beneath the moon (134–35).

In fact, the relationship between Emily St. Aubert and Valancourt is close in tenor to siblinghood—a trope, perhaps, for parity, the way "brotherhood" functioned in the slogan of the Revolutionary French. Wordsworth prescribed a solitary walk beneath the moon for the "Sister" of his poem; it is in the course of a nocturnal excursion that Emily St. Aubert becomes reconciled, at the end of *Udolpho*, to her love, Valancourt: "One evening, having wandered with her lute to this her favourite spot, she entered the ruined tower.... The sun was now setting on that tract of the Pyrenées, which divides Languedoc from Rousillon.... Though the sun had now sunk behind the mountains, and even his reflected light was fading from their highest points, Emily did not leave the watch-tower, but continued to indulge her melancholy reverie, till a footstep, at a little distance, startled her" (665–67). A "solitary walker" here experiences, in the midst of reverie, a long-delayed reunion—a sociable and sexual event occurring in a cosmic frame

¹² I do not mean here to assert direct influence by Radcliffe on Wordsworth. The text of Wordsworth here is that appearing in Jerome J. McGann, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993) 178–81. Note Wordsworth's echo of Psalm 25 ("For thou art with me"). The love of sister and brother in the presence of nature acts redemptively; the Wye Valley appears to be anything but the valley of the shadow of death. Or, to phrase it more accurately, the Wye is a valley simultaneously of death and rebirth. Like Radcliffe, Wordsworth draws on combined resonances originating in Rousseau and the discourse of the picturesque to argue for the mutual perspicuousness of individual sensibilities in the experience of nature.

commensurate with its significance, full of images of mountainous and nocturnal division, the division of province from province, of day from night.¹⁵ In the manner of Rousseau's reveries, these natural divisions emblemize Emily's state of mind, as she comes into her father's estate full of expectation yet reluctant from filial grief. The greatest concentration of references to Rousseau occurs here at the end, and also at the beginning, of *Udolpho*—as early as the naming of central characters and places.

For example, Radcliffe's penchant for interpenetration between locale and persona is already implicit in the name "Valancourt": it chimes with that of Emily's patrimony, the estate La Vallée, "The Valley"—even as "Montoni" associates, philologically as well as residentially, with sublimity's peaks. "Emily" is triumphantly the female form of Émile, titular hero of Rousseau's 1762 novel. Radcliffe imagines a woman who overcomes the defects of Rousseau's Sophia, appropriating instead the traits of Rousseau's protagonist, and all without forfeiting traditional feminine appeal. Fulfilling the promise of Emily's name, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* seems to start by drawing intensely on Rousseau: he arguably provides the *régime de vivre*, the setting and the architectural blueprint for the estate of La Vallée.

Radcliffe sets her story in a charmingly anachronistic sixteenth century: a fine landscape may be said to anticipate, rather than to recall, Salvator Rosa (30); yet the avocations of the St. Aubert family conform in many particulars to the prescriptions of Rousseau in parts of his *Confessions* and *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*. The predicament of M. St. Aubert, like the very layout of the St. Aubert residence, echoes the situation of Rousseau in his last phase, the phase of botany and reverie.

Rousseau starts *Les Rêveries* with a statement of utter isolation:

Look at me—alone on earth, with no brother, neighbour, friend, nor any company but my own. The most sociable and loving of men has been proscribed by unanimous agreement. They have sought out in the ingenuity of their hate the cruel-

¹⁵ Hagstrum calls Rousseau's novel *Émile* an exercise in "the psychology of postponed sexuality" (*Sex and Sensibility* 221). Despite its revision of Rousseau, Radcliffe's story also conforms to this description.

est torment for my sensitive soul, and have violently broken all the threads that attached me to them.... But me—detached as I am from these people and from the whole world—who am I? This must now be the object of my inquiry. (35)

Emily's disillusioned and philosophical father fits Rousseau's profile in limited but significant respects: "He had known life in other forms than those of pastoral simplicity, having mingled in the gay and in the busy scenes of the world; but the flattering portrait of mankind, which his heart had delineated in early youth, his experience had too sorrowfully corrected" (1). Even on the first page of her book, Radcliffe summons picturesque vocabulary: "scenes," a "flattering portrait," and the heart as a sort of conjecturing artist whose work experience must amend.

Nevertheless, contrasts with Rousseau immediately strike the reader. Although disenchanting, M. St. Aubert has brought his whole family with him into humanist retirement: "M. St. Aubert loved to wander, with his wife and daughter, on the margin of the Garonne, and to listen to the music that floated on its waves" (1). The Rousseau of *Les Rêveries* has companions as well as persecutors; but, in his exilic circumstances, none qualifies as a dependent, and indeed he arguably fills that category himself in his relation to other people. By contrast, M. St. Aubert counts as the most dedicated of fathers. Nonetheless, by the judicious use of an adjective, Radcliffe may relate M. St. Aubert etymologically to Rousseau, who lived for a time on the *Île de Saint-Pierre*. St. Aubert, walking under his cherished chestnut tree, "now felt himself to be almost an insulated being, with nobody but his Emily for his heart to turn to" (24). "Insulated" derives from the Latin *insula*, or island; perhaps the name "St. Aubert" reproduces the accents of "Saint-Pierre."

The lonely philosopher-botanist Rousseau subdivides his *Rêveries* into wayward chapters called "Promenades." Following Rousseau's program, St. Aubert likewise loves to "wander"—yet never solitarily. Rousseau insists on his own singularity; it was, he argues, confirmed by the disapproval of society, by its great conspiracy against him. In the warm circle of the St. Aubert family, however, human love must compromise such singularity. But Emily's task in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* nevertheless remains in part the posing of Rousseau's lonely question: *Mais moi ... que suis-je moi-même?*; "But me ... who am I, after all" (35). Emily's unusually

liberal education helps equip her for the satisfaction of her curiosity in this regard. What further enables her inquiry is the Gothic terror and inconvenience of Montoni's eruption into her life. Rousseau himself had a sufficiency of Gothic apprehensions, in his vision of a comprehensive plot against him; historically, few women have felt themselves so centrally important, even in imagination, as to motivate a conspiracy of such magnitude.

A novelist in the 1790s inventing a woman driven to know herself after the pattern of Rousseau cannot easily make her character the object of a far-reaching plot. Because a woman's agency has close limits, she cannot, perhaps, believably qualify as the victim of universal attack. Instead (according to Radcliffe in this novel) such a woman—namely, Emily—must lose her kindly father, and fall under the influence of a menacing patriarch, a Gothic man, a Montoni. This man should try to marry her off against her will—traditional coercion to which female characters find themselves subject in eighteenth-century novels, from *Pamela* onward. Persecution of women tends to have a sexual rather than political basis, or rather the sexual inflects any political excuse. Only after travails during which Emily never ceases to exercise a mind strengthened by picturesque mores can she reconvene with her destined fraternal spouse, Valancourt, and take up, with ingenious freedom, her father's legacy—his customs, his home, his garden, his books.

Plausibly demonstrating the depth of her immersion in Rousseau, Radcliffe attributes to M. St. Aubert on the first page of *Udolpho* three habits of which the philosopher would have approved (at least in the abstract): St. Aubert loves the "scenes of simple nature," the "pure delights of literature" and "the exercise of domestic virtues." His ancestral estate itself proves the strength of such passions. The house in which the St. Aubert family dwells is one to which the father has felt attachment since boyhood: like the chestnut tree rooted nearby, it represents organic continuity. The architectural history of the building mirrors M. St. Aubert's life—a transition from youth (the structure was originally a cottage) to paterfamilias (renovations have elaborated on, not destroyed, the core of the building). The Horatian virtue of "neat simplicity" (*simplex munditiis*) characterizes all decorations.¹⁴

¹⁴ Horace furnishes a number of tropes conformable to Rousseau, such as rural retirement.

Subtly Radcliffe assimilates the contents of the St. Aubert library with their setting. This library frames a picturesque prospect: the "room opened upon a grove, which stood on the brow of a gentle declivity, that fell towards the river, and the tall trees gave it a melancholy and pleasing shade; while from the windows the eye caught, beneath the spreading branches, the gay and luxuriant landscape stretching to the west" (2). An old name for an anthology of writings (used by Ben Jonson, for example, when he compiled a collection of his poems) is *sylvia*, or "forest". With this etymologizing suggestion, the St. Aubert library almost elides the burden of its shelves into the boughs of the adjacent timber. Rousseau plays with similar, though more ambivalent, collocations of the botanical and the literary. In the fifth promenade of *Les Rêveries*, for example, he chooses to replace his own library with plants, suggesting thus obliquely the interchangeability of literature and flora: "Instead of all these gloomy scribblings and heaps of reading material, I filled my room with flowers and grasses" (96). Elsewhere Rousseau puns on the leaf of paper and the vegetable leaf.¹⁵

By pressing specimens into Linnaean field guides to preserve them, Rousseau binds nature to culture, and vice-versa. The St. Aubert estate La Vallée functions on a similar principle. Rousseau calls his herbarium "a diary of my expeditions, which makes me set out again with fresh delight, or ... an optical device that places them once again before my eyes" (136). The book of nature is an old idea; Linnaeus made it portable. Picturesque doctrine analogously educates the eye so that it may extract a maximum of pleasure from any terrain, creating an archive and taxonomy of "scenes" mentally framed, mentally painted, comparable to a herbarium or a field-guide. The St. Aubert library window readies its residents for framing of picturesque judgements by itself already featuring the "side-screens" (in this case, embowering branches) favoured by theorists of pictorial composition.¹⁶ To consummate the holism of La Vallée's cultural resources, Radcliffe adds that the library col-

¹⁵ For some analysis of the rhetorical use to which Rousseau puts herbarium and reverie, see Eric Miller, "Taxonomy and Confession in Christopher Smart and Jean-Jacques Rousseau," in *Christopher Smart and the Enlightenment*, ed. Clement Hawes (New York: St. Martin's, 1999) 99–118.

¹⁶ For a discussion of picturesque "side-screens," see Punter, "The Picturesque and the Sublime" 196.

lection has "the best books in the ancient and modern languages" (2). This ideal habitation reconciles not only nature and art, but also the warring parties on whose conflict Jonathan Swift reported in "The Battle of the Books." Rousseau famously extolled the "ancient" Plutarch, and his own "modern" contributions to literature influenced writers of all persuasions in the 1790s. That something like Radcliffe's imaginary library really existed may be proven by the report of Mrs. Lybbe Powys, visiting Middleton Park, Oxfordshire, in 1778. She noted a room "seventy feet long," containing "a good collection of books ... and a few good pictures. As her ladyship is, according to the fashion, a botanist, she has a pretty flower garden going out of the library."¹⁷ Culture and horticulture lie fashionably adjacent.

Radcliffe provides another detail, characteristically like and unlike Rousseau: "Adjoining the library was a green-house, stored with scarce and beautiful plants" (3). In his *Rêveries*, Rousseau extols the virtue of his *hortus siccus*, his herbarium, a collection of dried specimens. The St. Aubert family has instead at their disposal two varieties of still-living plants—the tough indigenous ones outside their library window, and the more exotic kinds that thrive in an artificial environment. Radcliffe emphasizes the flourishing plant rather than the pressed one. As in the case of the heritage chestnut tree, this preference for growth over mere preservation, for active guardianship over simple curatorship, suits Radcliffe's narrative of dynastic transfers. Emily must take off where her father stopped; presumably, she and Valancourt will in time produce an heir—the novel argues that this heir need not necessarily be male. Rousseau's *Rêveries* by contrast conclude with a wistful regression to his first lover, the motherly Mme de Warens: erotic nostalgia, reaching so far back, implies and awaits no lineage. Rousseau claims that it is from Mme de Warens that he received his true and final "form"; Valancourt, correlatively but more actively, learns to assume a worthy configuration by studying his beloved Emily.

On the Île de Saint-Pierre, Rousseau had private quarters. Anticipating Virginia Woolf's prescription, Emily possesses (according to Radcliffe's floor plan) a room of her own—right from the start of *Udolpho*. This room stands on the far side of the greenhouse, fur-

¹⁷ Quoted in Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980) 234.

nished with "her books, her drawings, her musical instruments, with some favourite birds and plants" (3). The room functions at once as studio and zoo. This chamber, predictably enough, offers Emily her own picturesque frame: "The windows of this room were particularly pleasant; they descended to the floor, and, opening upon the little lawn that surrounded the house, the eye was led between groves of almond, palm-trees, flowering-ash, and myrtle, to the distant landscape, where the Garonne wandered" (3). The taxonomic accuracy of this passage's catalogue of trees is pure Rousseau; moreover, eye and river wander together, in a happy fusion or confusion characteristic of the philosopher's reveries. But Emily must move from the subordinate security of her childhood room, to take over the entire estate of La Vallée.

Once Emily escapes Montoni and makes her way back to La Vallée, aided by the transitional figure Du Pont, she has proven the efficacy of Rousseau and picturesque discipline as guides to life. She has not just survived her ordeals, but matured in the course of them. Returning to the paternal estate, she feels real grief. But Radcliffe's narrator also attributes another, and surprising, emotion to Emily: "a tender and indescribable pleasure" (591). Under the suasion of this feeling, she enters the home of her childhood: "One of the first apartments she visited, was that, which had been her father's library, and here she seated herself in his arm-chair, and, while she contemplated, with tempered resignation, the picture of past times, which her memory gave, the tears that she shed could scarcely be called those of grief" (591). This passage resorts once again to the lexicon of the picturesque; "past times" recur as a "picture." Emily takes her father's seat. The chair is surely a synecdoche for the whole estate, the rural seat; and, because it is specifically a writer's chair, it may stand for Radcliffe's novel, for the "Great Enchantress" at work. Yet to read this occupation of the chair and the library as a triumph over M. St. Aubert would be wrong. It is in the Gothic figure of Montoni that a prohibitive masculinity, a "usurped authority," has been defeated, and through this ordeal Emily can complete her *Trauerarbeit*, her work of mourning, for the decent (though haunted) M. St. Aubert. To win to the end of her grief is to inaugurate her own productivity.

Meanwhile, as Emily learns from Theresa, a faithful retainer, Valancourt has profoundly mourned his own beloved, supposing Emily dead. Erroneous grief has schooled him intensively in the

picturesque study of her character, enabled by contemplation of Emily's dearest belongings: "He would go into every room in the lower part of the house.... He used to be very fond of the south parlour, because I told him it used to be yours; and there he would stay, looking at the pictures, which I said you drew, and playing upon your lute, that hung up in the window, and reading in your books" (593-94). Thus devotedly does Valancourt engross into himself Emily's intimate possessions. The room is her own: accordingly, its objects embody her. Through the depth of Valancourt's scrutiny (a voyeurism largely wholesome), the same objects come, in fact, to constitute him, to reconfigure the chambers of his inwardness. Especially by examining the pictures that Emily once drew, Valancourt interiorizes her: he enters her frame. He thus acts in accord with the hybrid of Rousseau and picturesque theory elaborated by Radcliffe in the course of her novel. What you see, what you draw, what you hear, what you read: these create you, whether you happen to be a woman or a man. Each person frames a world; the good man or the good woman may step lovingly into another's characteristic frame. Radcliffe's exemplary man, Valancourt, has learned this truth. On the last page of the novel, the erotic body and nature once more embrace: Emily and Valancourt "were, at length, restored to each other—to the landscapes of their beloved country" (672). To hug a lover is to hold the incarnation in human form of that lover's characteristic landscape.

The Mysteries of Udolpho concludes with a passage of direct address: "If the weak hand that has recorded this tale, has, by its scenes, beguiled the mourner of one hour of sorrow, or, by its moral, taught him to sustain it—the effort, however humble, has not been vain" (672). Here Radcliffe pairs mourning and morality, with an obligatory last reference to the aesthetics of "scenes." In the course of her wanderings, Emily St. Aubert has found a way to assuage Wollstonecraft's grief over Rousseau's libertine flaws. Meanwhile, Valancourt and the reader, exposed to Rousseau, picturesque doctrine and the Gothic mode, have learned a true object lesson—or, more accurately, a lesson in proper object relations.