

Ann Radcliffe’s Life Described as “Helpless Maiden” and the “(Un)Conventional Woman” in the Mysteries of Udolpho

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Abstract

Ann Radcliffe, an important pioneer of the Gothic genre, is a representative of her culture in terms of revealing the features of the male-dominant 18th century world as acceptable to her audience in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Dealing covertly with the validity of the established values of the patriarchal society, she hardly suggests alternative norms and behaviour types to women. Therefore, if analysed from the biographical and psychological perspectives, Radcliffe can be said to have constructed Emily, the major female character in *Udolpho*, like herself: Emily is committed to masculine ideas (and ideals), and is submissive to patriarchal authority. By constructing such a character, Radcliffe, in fact, gives hints about her own life which we know little about. The parallelisms between the lives and viewpoints of Radcliffe and her heroine indeed unveil the author’s inner world and her wish fulfilment over the major character. Happy with the masculine civilization, her heroine, like herself, remains anodyne and unengaging.

Key words

Ann Radcliffe, *Mysteries of Udolpho*, patriarchy, aristocracy, bourgeoisie, helpless maiden, wish fulfilment

I. Introduction:

After Horace Walpole’s introduction of the genre with *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) in which he suggests a passive and helpless female character (Isabella) who is susceptible to masculine villainy, Ann Radcliffe is the first female author to further develop Walpole’s prototypical female character in her *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) that has come to be labelled as the “helpless maiden” of Gothic fiction. Radcliffe’s “helpless” character is Emily. Despite the secondary role Walpole’s Isabella plays in *Otranto*, Radcliffe makes her passive Emily the major character in *Udolpho*, for most of the time we see the world from her eyes, and for the moral superiority she demonstrates when compared to the other, male characters, especially. As Emily’s point of view and her moral stance gain priority, her moral judgement comes victorious at the end. In fact, the construction of this stereotypical character, who is devoted to convention, is a type of wish fulfilment for the author. If we analyse the world Emily represents, we can then better understand Radcliffe’s mysterious life and her aims. Since Radcliffe constructs Emily as a product of her wish fulfilment, she reveals by this way her hidden and suppressed identity. Emily, who assumes the archetypal role of the female figure of the 18th century, can therefore be considered the persona of the author, giving information about Radcliffe’s life, her psychology, and the position of women in Radcliffe’s age.

In this article, we will analyse the contribution of Ann Radcliffe to the creation of the helpless female figure in the gothic genre by studying the author’s life and her psychology through *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. We will try to find out the role of the civilised and the uncivilised forces in the life of the author, who expressed her dilemma between the two worlds by making her character (Emily) enjoy and detest

the two settings in the novel. On purpose Radcliffe creates two different worlds for her heroine: civilised and sentimental Apollonian¹ values are arrayed against the wild and uncivilised Dionysian² ones. As Koç argues, “[t]here is too much to admire in both, but Radcliffe is too much a product of her milieu to appreciate the Dionysian for its own sake . . . It is, however, Emily on whose shoulders Radcliffe puts the responsibility of amalgamating the two different modes of existence” (2005: 101). The heroine’s journey from the Apollonian world to the Dionysian one comes to an end when she shifts, at the end, to the Apollonian world again. And what the author labels as “civilised” turns out to be an extension, or a hybrid form, of the uncivilised paradigm, for the major character, though safe from the masculine threats at the end, shows no trace of personality development.

II. Ann Radcliffe’s life and the learned helplessness of women in the 18th century

Ann Radcliffe is known only by her works, and through the few letters written by her or written to her. As Rictor Norton states “If the known facts of the life can be shown to have parallels in the novels, then it is reasonable to assume that often-repeated features of the novels may illuminate the author’s otherwise unknown inner life” (1999: 137). The “unknown inner life” of the author may be analysed through the study of her six works which appeared between 1789 and 1797. Yet, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, being less sophisticated and less artistic than *The Italian*, and more successful in its sincere tone than the rest, is the novel through which the life and psychology of the author, and by extension, the position of the women in the 18th century will be analysed. In fact, “*The Mysteries of Udolpho* is entirely a work of imagination and the suspense world it creates from sources not only literary, but also psychological, that this novel must stand or fall as a successful work of literature” (McDermott, 1989: 91). Besides, the novel has attracted more praise and attention than her other works, satisfying the expectations of the 18th century audience, especially the women who identified themselves with the heroine of the novel. Hence, among the six novels of Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is the most revealing work concerning Radcliffe’s mysterious life, and by extension, the position of women, and women’s interaction with the emerging capitalist, masculine paradigm.

If Emily is the representative figure of the 18th century woman, and if Radcliffe is what this woman stands for, then it will not be a far-fetched idea to claim that Radcliffe, by introducing such a character, reveals her female identity in her work. The author and the heroine she constructs exhibit some similarities in their respective *weltanschauung*, which is to be considered closely in order to understand Radcliffe’s age in which women were subject to the arbitrariness of male authority. Dissatisfied with this oppression, Radcliffe depicts in her work a heroine outwardly in search of her identity. Emily’s viewpoints and personality traits, in fact, disclose Radcliffe’s vision of her own cultural paradigm. The heroine she constructed is

¹ Apollonian: A term used, along with Dionysian, by Frederich Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* to designate contrasting elements in Greek tragedy. Apollo, the god of youth and light, stood for reason, culture, and moral rectitude (Harmon, H. And Holman G. Hugh, 1996, *A Handbook to Literature*, 7th Ed., New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1996: 35).

² Dionysian: A term used by Frederich Nietzsche for the spirit of Greek tragedy associated with Dionysus, the god of wine. It refers to states of the ecstatic, orgiastic, or irrational. (*ibid.*: 156).

powerless and helpless, and has to endure the hardships of the male oppressors. Standing as a symbol of male-domination, Emily, like other women, belongs to home and marriage. Radcliffe believes that it is not possible for the majority of women to detach themselves from this society. Besides, Radcliffe lets her heroine gain “moral superiority” over her oppressors. Therefore, she puts her emphasis on the “moral” superiority and “intellectual” development of women, the qualities that will make the females more respected in their families and social milieu.

The first parallelism between the author and her character is that, as conservative female figures, both Ann Radcliffe and Emily St. Aubert have had eventless and sheltered lives. Born in London in 1794, Ann was the only child of William and Ann Oates Ward. As a shy and retiring member of a well-off middle class society, she led an uneventful and shielded life, and lived with her parents in the peaceful environment of Bath¹. She was on good terms with her parents, particularly with her mother, who was very much concerned about her daughter’s moral and duties.

A letter from her mother dated 15 August 1776, written when Ann was visiting the Stamfords at Derby indicates that Ann’s mother regarded her only child, whom she addresses as ‘Nancy,’ with affection. Maintaining a didactic tone, she wishes her daughter ‘health and every enjoyment that may contribute to the improvement of mind or person so as to make you amiable or useful in life. God bless you my Dear child.’ (Rodgers, 1994: 3)

The letter shows how much her mother was attached to Ann. Knowing how fragile Ann was, she wished to guard her against the dangers of the outside world. Moreover, for her mother, Ann was a beauty to be protected attentively against all hazards. According to the description of Thomas Talfourd, another biographer of the author, “Radcliffe was, in her youth, exquisitely proportioned, though she resembled her father ... Her complexion was beautiful, as she was her whole countenance, especially her eyes, eyebrows, and mouth” (as cited in Rodgers, 1994: 4).

As an imaginative young girl, “Ann’s life seems always to have been spent in two worlds - the imaginary world of beauty and terror that she later represented in her novels and the everyday, actual world, in which she lived so conventionally” (Grant, 1951: 35). William Ward, her father and the owner of a haberdasher’s shop, was mostly busy with his work; therefore, it was her mother who was taking care of her in general. Her mother’s excessive attachment and controlling over her made Ann a reserved young girl. Her father was close to Ann’s celebrated uncle, the intellectual William Cheselden, a surgeon to King George II, who contributed much to Ann’s education. She had chances to meet current celebrities in art, literature, and science. Hence, Ann was raised in a literate and cultural society, where she could also maintain her Christian values, and remained faithful to the church, all of which helped develop her future career as a writer.

Emily St. Aubert, the young heroine of the novel who is exposed to the fears of her own imagination in the work, is depicted as a member of the aristocracy, maintaining the values and attitudes of this class. Like Ann, Emily is a beautiful girl. She “resembled her mother; having the same elegant symmetry of form, the same delicacy of features, and the same blue eyes, full of tender sweetness” (Radcliffe, 5).

¹ Bath is located in the ceremonial country of Somerset in South West England. It takes its name from the Roman Baths. It is famous for its impressive architecture, historical sights and magnificent panoramic views. Among the other well-known Bathonian writers are Jane Austen, William Beckford, Charles Dickens and Mary Shelley.

She is the only child of her family living an eventless and secluded life in harmony with her parents. The chateau of La Vallée, led by her wise and benevolent father St. Aubert, is a shelter for Emily for it represents her sentimental and isolated world.¹

La Vallée is depicted as a nonviolent and shielded place, essentially, a world of innocence. “To the south, the view was bounded by the majestic Pyrenées, whose summits, veiled in clouds, or exhibiting awful forms, seen, and lost again . . . These tremendous precipices were contrasted by the soft green of the pastures and woods that hung upon their skirts” (Radcliffe, 1). As a melancholic young girl living in this isolated world, Emily has intensive sensibility. She is fond of book, poetry, music and nature. If the author’s tastes are taken into consideration (Radcliffe’s interest in books, music, and poetry), she is no different from Radcliffe, and from the refined women of upper classes. Since Emily’s mother died when she was a little girl, she is affectionately committed to her father. “Repeated cautions are delivered by the ailing St. Aubert, who fears his daughter Emily will succumb to melancholy memories yet, he, too, is overcome by reflection.” (Schillace: 2009, 273) Her dying father is, in fact, the absent father in Ann’s life. Although her father was affectionate towards Ann, he hardly had the time to spend with his daughter. Hence, the affectionate, yet absent father figure in Ann’s life is embodied through the character St. Aubert.

The second parallelism is that both Ann and Emily are shy and isolated female figures. Ann Ward was a person hosting the common needs and characteristics of the 18th century. Her marriage with William Radcliffe, the editor of a newspaper, in 1787, did not change her timid personality. Her isolation from society continued during her marriage. The couple enjoyed loneliness and desolation. Having devoted herself to her husband, Ann Radcliffe was skilled in housework. Talfourd describes Radcliffe as “so domestic that she was ‘minutely attentive to her household affairs,’ (as cited in Rodgers: 4) keeping exact records of every disbursement until shortly before her death. Her leisure hours were spent reading, singing, and attending operas, oratorios, and plays. At the theater, the Radcliffes would sit in the pit, partly to avoid attracting attention” (Rodgers, 1994: 4). She was apparently formal and reserved. She “did not simply remain aloof from fame and ambition; she disliked public notice to the point of eccentricity” (Norton, 1999: 203).

Her authorship and her private life were somewhat similar. She was shy not only as a person, but also as a writer. Due to the conventional restrictions of the 18th century, she remained reserved and felt uncomfortable about her literary life. Leading a secluded life, she avoided putting her literary identity forward for she did not want to assert herself as a writer. *The Edinburg Review* of May, 1823 comments on Radcliffe indicating that “[t]he fair authoress kept herself almost as much incognito as the Author of Waverley; nothing was known of her, but her name on the title page. She never appeared in public, nor mingled in private society, but kept herself apart, like the sweet bird that sings its solitary notes, shrouded and unseen” (as cited in Rodgers, 1994: xxv). *The Literary Gazette* of June 3, 1826 explains the ladylike attitude of the author stating that “[s]he was ashamed of her own talents; and was ready to sink in the earth at the bare suspicion of any one taking for her an author; her chief ambition being to be thought a lady! (as cited in Miles, 1995: 21). Therefore, as

¹ At the beginning of the novel, Emily’s happy urban life is depicted with the poem by Thomson to suggest peace and tranquillity of Emily’s sheltered and eventless life: “Home is the resort of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where, supporting and supported, polish’d friends and dear relations mingle into bliss” (Thomson in Radcliffe, 1).

a reticent author, she published her earlier novels anonymously to shun public attention. Concerning her conservative values, David Durant, another biographer of Radcliffe, claims that

Ann Radcliffe's place among gothic novelists has been consistently misunderstood because she was a conservative writer in what is now considered a revolutionary movement... Every step of her heroine's progress is defined in terms of her evolving relationships with a series of explicitly labelled parental figures ... Its circular shape suggests that the only solution to the problems of adult existence lies in returning to traditional, conservative rules. (1982: 519-520)

Her novels begin in a civilised, safe and isolated family life; continue with the shift to an uncivilised and hierarchical world where the real parents are substituted with step parents who turn out to be villains torturing the heroine; and finally end back in the asylum of returning to conservative and traditional values. Defamiliarizing the familiar figures in the progression of the novel, keeping the heroine both in touch and away from villainy and turning back to normality at the end, Radcliffe's style, like her personality, is coy and reticent.

The third similarity between Ann and Emily is their preference for a "love marriage." Emily, who, upon her father's death subsequently becomes the ward of Madame Cheron, a selfish and wealthy widow living in her estate in Toulouse, is a coy figure living a sheltered life in La Vallée. Addicted to sentimentality on account of her shyness and lack of life experience, Emily dreams of marrying her romantic lover, Valancourt, with whom she thinks of living a secluded life in the peaceful environment of La Vallée. "... to the beloved landscapes of their native country, . . . and to the exercise of the benevolence, which had always animated their hearts; while bowers of La Vallée became, once more, the retreat of goodness, wisdom and domestic blessedness!" (Radcliffe, 672). However, Montoni, the villain who shortly marries her aunt, and pretends to be an Italian nobleman to gain control over his wife's wealth and estates, commands Emily to marry Count Morano, whom she refuses. Because marriage to the Count would almost certainly kill Emily physically and somatically, escaping from him is likened to avoiding a death-sentence. . . (Wennerstrom: 2014, 198) Montoni's wife dies after a short while. "After his wife's death, Montoni's temptation of Emily takes a new form, as he wishes her to resign to him the land she has inherited from her aunt" (Graham: 2014, 98). At the end, Emily manages to marry Valancourt, and the concept of love marriage comes victorious. "O! how joyful it is to tell of happiness, such as that of Valancourt and Emily; to relate, that, after suffering under the oppression of the vicious and the disdain of the weak, they were, at length, restored to each other . . ." (Radcliffe, 672). Thus, Emily rejoins her lover, Valancourt, and prefers "love marriage".

Ann's marriage was also a "love marriage". Despite the common idea of disapproval of such marriages in the 18th century, Ann and her husband, the harmonious couple, belonged to the exceptional group. "In her *Preface to A Journey made in the Summer of 1794 through Holland and the Western Frontiers of Germany (1795)*, Radcliffe touchingly referred to her husband as her 'nearest relative and friend'" (as cited in Facer, 2012: 1). Though childless, they had a happy marriage with common tastes and hobbies. They both enjoyed and shared the each other's intellectual interests, loved travelling together, and spent the money Ann earned from the publication of her works to finance their trips.

Love marriages were not celebrated in the 18th century because marriages were, most of the time, considered as financial arrangements to exchange property among families. Radcliffe makes this subject the central theme of *Udolpho*: When Emily is taken to the Udolpho castle, a gothic form of La Vallée, by her aunt and

Montoni, she leaves her simple and isolated life. Instead, she is taken to a place where power politics for the usurpation of property, aggression, and cruelty are the axioms of life. As soon as she arrives at the Udolpho castle, Montoni forces her to sign the papers to possess her estates saying, “. . . I will be trifled with no longer: let the collection of your aunt’s sufferings, in consequence of her folly and obstinacy, teach you a lesson. - Sign the papers” (Radcliffe, 394). There, the distinctions between the two different worlds become more apparent for her. Emily is forced to take a step to the cruel, hypocritical and uncivilised world, and she tries to protect herself from villainy. Even though she cannot learn to do it fully, she shows patience against the arbitrariness of male power, and her patience is eventually rewarded: “O! useful may it be to have shown that, though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction upon the good, their power is transient and their punishment certain; and that innocence, though oppressed by injustice; shall supported by patience, finally triumph over misfortune!” (Radcliffe, 672). She chooses to live in the Apollonian world with her lover, Valancourt.

The fourth parallelism between Radcliffe and Emily is that both Ann and Emily remain unchanged, yielding to the rules and restrictions of their times. While trying to find their identities, they cannot complete their proper maturation: they remain as polarized beings attached to masculine ideology. In fact, suppressing her identity, Ann, like Emily, could not live the life she wanted to due to the rules and restrictions of the 18th century in which she was brought up. Mary Poovey says that Mrs. Radcliffe discloses “the root cause of the late 18th century ideological turmoil, the economic aggressiveness currently victimizing defenceless women of sensibility. . . [She] does not suggest an alternative to paternalistic society but rather retreats into idealization” (1979: 311). Therefore, Radcliffe, as the author, fails to improve her female heroine throughout the novel. “Through Emily’s obsessive association of all women’s stories with her own life, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* seems to focus on a total identification of all its female characters, as if, in Radcliffe’s world of stereotypical characters, there is only one female type” (Kilgour, 1995: 126). Since the author rejects to accept the attraction of the uncivilised world, she does not allow her heroine to appreciate it, either. Yet, she makes the heroine experience and enjoy the other dimension in a quite surreptitious way.

III. Emily and Radcliffe’s secret love for Montoni, the father figure

Radcliffe deals with the psychological hang-ups of Emily, and she describes her imprisonment in the novel to suggest her own psychological imprisonment in her own life. Emily wishes to feel free; however, she finds herself literally and emotionally imprisoned by Montoni in the Udolpho castle. For Emily, however, freedom means the safety of the civilised world. Therefore, when she gets imprisoned, this triggers her fears about the uncivilised dimension. Yet, taking delight from the existence of such a dimension, Emily’s fears can be explained as the consequence of her suppressed instincts. Moreover, in search of her social *and* sexual identity as a female, Emily’s fears stand for a very special and romantic relationship, a type of “wish fulfilment,” in fact, to compensate the spiritual and sexual lacunae in her life. There is, however, a dramatic irony surrounding both the author and the character: they are not aware of the fact that they both hate and love the villain, Montoni.

Centuries after the publication of *Udolpho*, Sigmund Freud defined this phenomenon in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. He argues in his work that “[a] dream is the wish fulfilment of a wish” (1990: 121). He also adds that “[w]e understand that what is wish fulfilment for the suppressed wish is for us, who are on the side of the dream-censor, only a painful sensation and a cause for antagonism. The anxiety which occurs in dreams is, if you wish, anxiety because of the strength of these otherwise

suppressed wishes” (2012: 181). Radcliffe’s wish fulfilment is a secret one, as she was a conservative person. Her husband, as a journalist, worked long hours, leaving his wife home alone. Hence, she began writing fiction to keep herself “occupied” at the age of twenty-three. Grant writes that

[w]hile waiting for William’s return in these long evening hours, with all -her household duties done and complete freedom from interruption assured, Ann began . . . putting down on paper some of the romantic scenes on which her imagination loved to dwell, and she peopled them with heroes, heroines, villains, and trusty servants taking part in a series of breath-taking misadventures and escapes.” (1952: 46)

Unable to express her own character in her own life, Radcliffe constructs Emily as a product of her wish fulfilment. Radcliffe, who lived an uneventful life, and experienced a “happy” and “romantic” marriage with her husband, wrote such an eventful Gothic novel, and created a character like Montoni, the embodiment of all the eerie desires both the author (Radcliffe) and the character (Emily) denied.

Radcliffe’s Emily, who lives in the shelter of her family house, marries Valancourt, a romantic figure, at the end. Yet, she admires Montoni. The reason for Emily’s words and feelings about Montoni can be explained with the Electra Complex, and through the Neo-Freudian psychology, the term was first proposed by Carl Jung in 1913, who asserts in *The Theory of Psychoanalysis: The Oedipus Complex* that *[a] daughter develops a specific liking for the father, with a correspondingly jealous attitude toward the mother. We could call this the Electra complex . . . The unconscious presence of numerous fantasies which have their roots in the infantile past . . . which in men may be designated as the Oedipus complex, in women as the Electra complex.* (1961: 154)

When Emily first meets Montoni, she is highly impressed by his physical appearance. She compares his masculinity to the other characters:

Among the visitors assembled at dinner were two Italian gentlemen, of whom one was named Montoni, a distant relation of Madame Quesnel, a man about forty, of an uncommonly handsome person, with features manly and expressive, but whose countenance exhibited, upon the whole, more of the haughtiness of command, and the quickness of discernment, than of any other character. (Radcliffe, 23)

Emily is impressed not only by his handsomeness and masculinity, but also by his air of superiority and, in other words, sublimity. She gives further details about Montoni saying, “This Signor Montoni had an air of conscious superiority, animated by spirit, and strengthened by talents, to which every person seemed involuntarily to yield” (Radcliffe, 122). When Morano offers her to leave Udolpho castle with him, she refuses to join him, and chooses to stay under Montoni’s imprisonment which she calls “protection”. The dialogue between Count Morano and Emily shows her admiration for Montoni for she cannot leave him:

‘Let us go, then,’ said Morano, eagerly kissing her hand, and rising, ‘my carriage waits, below the castle walls.’ ‘You mistake me, sir,’ said Emily. ‘Allow me to thank you for the interest you express in my welfare, and to decide by my own choice. I shall remain under the protection of Signor Montoni’ . . . ‘Emily,’ said the Count, ‘why will you reduce me to adopt this conduct? . . . I will not leave you to be sold by Montoni’. . . ‘Yet you tremble-you grow pale! It is! It is so;-you-you-love Montoni!’ cried Morano . . . ‘If you have indeed believed so,’ said she, ‘believe so still.’ ‘That look, those words confirm it,’ exclaimed Morano, furiously. (Radcliffe, 263, 265)

Astonished by her response, Count Morano tries to convince her to leave the castle with him. However, their conversation leads Count Morano to think that she loves Montoni even though she is exposed to his brutal behaviours. Emily does not deny what Morano says about Montoni. No matter how frightening and sublime Montoni appears to be, Emily prefers to stay under his protection in the Udolpho castle because she is emotionally attached to him.

In fact, "In the case of a Gothic novel, the sublime becomes a benevolent *paternal* force for the heroine in the absence of a 'good' father figure" (Bondhus, 2010: 17). Since Emily loses her father at an early age, she replaces her parent with Montoni, an endeavour to complete her psychosexual development. Therefore, she unconsciously develops a deep affection and a sexual desire towards her new father figure. The reason for Radcliffe's tendency to make Emily admire Montoni can be related to the lack of a father figure in her own childhood. Brought up by her mother, Radcliffe could not develop a father-daughter bond with her own father for he was usually occupied with his work. Her mother could not fulfil this role in her life. With regard to her husband, although she had a "happy" and "romantic" relationship with William, he could not replace the absent father figure, either. This is because he was always busy with his work, and she felt the absence of the male figure who frequently reminded his rough, unrefined (and sometimes sexual) existence, yet providing protection for her. Hence, Radcliffe constructed a fictitious character, Montoni, to satisfy her desire for the existence of such a figure in her life. In Emily's case, the absence of her father figure has led her to substitute Montoni as her father. Even though Montoni has evil features, he also has the characteristics she adores. He is extremely handsome and cool, yet torturing and unscrupulous, the qualities which make him attractive to a girl who has had a very little experience of life. While Emily tries to fight against Montoni, she chooses to stay under his protection in the castle for she needs love, cruelty, and male hegemony. All these are misleadingly shown by Radcliffe to be the "natural" needs of the women in patriarchal societies. Unable to see the passivized state of women in her age, and the queer sort of wish fulfilment of both herself and her character, but aware of the incongruity of the situation about Emily, she makes her character marry Valancourt, a "civilised" insipid figure, at the end.

IV. Ann Radcliffe and Emily St. Aubert as conformist women of the patriarchal society

Both the author and the main character are female figures living in a patriarchal society. In fact, "*The Mysteries of Udolpho* is the most female-centered of Radcliffe's novels" (Ellis, 1993: 123). This is because "Radcliffe invested herself too much in her women characters and needed a male-centered novel to explore the fully dark side of the unconsciousness" (Rodgers, 1994: xli). Her focus is on the heroine rather than the villain. Yet, she is not away from being a revolutionary author, nor is she a feminist author though raised as an educated and intellectual woman. As a member of the male dominated society, she experienced the restrictions of the masculine world. Due to the fact that Ann Ward was governed by powerful men in her life (her father, her uncle, and her husband), in a patriarchal society, she experienced the negative effects of the societal demands, and the suppression of women. However, while questioning the ethical rules of that era, she never digresses from the conventional restrictions of her age. Turning a deaf ear to the female demands in her age, she was in favour of conservatism, supporting the *status quo*. Hence, Radcliffe is the "female" author of the 18th century male-dominated world,

impregnated by the dominant ideology in her age, and supporting the same ideology in her *Udolpho*. As Russ claims,

[t]he result is that these very familiar plots simply will not work. This is because culture is patriarchal, that is from the point of view of men, and so literature naturally has developed in such a way that is reflective of patriarchy. Now writers, as I have said, do not make up their stories out of whole cloth; they are pretty much restricted to the attitudes, the beliefs, the expectations, and above all, the plots that are in the air. They are dramatic embodiments of what a culture believes to be true—or what it would like to be true—or what it is mortally afraid may be true." (1995: 80-81)

Radcliffe seems to believe that women's subordination arises mostly from the socio-economic conditions in the 18th century which provided women few opportunities to reverse their uneven social status. The social system mainly supports men. "The narrative implies that women are protected by a society willing to shame men who abuse women. Removed from the protection of that society within the impenetrable *Udolpho*, Emily and Madame Montoni become subject to the will of the individual patriarch" (Ledoux: 2011, 336). Hence, terrible things happen to Radcliffean heroines who, as a result, tend to create supernatural events. In fact, all the uncanny events are visible only to women in her works as they are the fragile and sterile beings in the rough and dirty masculine world. This style of the author demonstrates her viewpoint that women are susceptible to making up, and to believing in such bizarre and uncanny phenomena. As an author praising covertly or overtly the dominant masculine ideology, she has the mistrust in women's ability to reason.

Emily seems to yield to the social restrictions of the society, and is committed to sentimentalist ideas and expectations, as well. She takes a step towards the cruel and uncivilised world by leaving her sheltered and civilised life. These two different worlds collide in her life. While encountering persecution and unpleasant events in the uncivilised world, she does not cooperate with the other female characters. She keeps her distance with them, and exhibits a reticent personality in her relationships. Besides, she is so reserved that she does not even strive to learn from them to improve herself, and thus, her relations with the other female characters do not make Emily progress.

Radcliffe believes that "virtuous sensibility" is the source of power for women, and this will shape their fate. She also believes that women should somehow gain some rationality to question their own status in society and in the social institutions. Such views of Radcliffe can be seen in St. Aubert's words giving advice to Emily:

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

In fact, the author tries to do this in her own life to some extent. "Soon after her marriage, the powers of Mrs. Radcliffe's mind began to develop themselves in the production of a series of romances, of which it is not too much to say that they rank with the best that have appeared in the English language" (as cited in Rodgers, 1994: 111). She was an intellectual woman. Hence, she lets her heroine improve intellectually, but she puts the emphasis on the development of her character's virtuous sensibility. As for Radcliffe, 18th century women should belong to home and

marriage to ensure happiness in their lives. By doing so, women may turn into respected individuals in their families.

Therefore, the heroine devotes herself to home and marriage at the end, but with an awareness of the mundane world. Rejecting the profit-oriented marriage, Emily marries the one she seems to be in love with, Valancourt. Now a semi-romantic, semi-rational figure, she does not elaborate on Valancourt's absence and the mistakes he committed during his absence. Hence, Emily, the anodyne and unengaging heroine, comes victorious at the end, if this can be called "victory" at all.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, Ann (Ward) Radcliffe led an eventless life as both an unmarried young girl and as a married woman under male protection, which formed her character as an introverted and mysterious female figure, and which also imposed on her the patriarchal ideology she reveals in her Gothic works. Away from public attention, and having absorbed the role she has to play as a "respectable" woman in her "respectable" Apollonian society, her departure to the Dionysian world in her works, especially in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, is but a thrilling experience for her which she enjoys over the personae she creates in the form of "helpless maiden," providing, for herself, a "wish fulfilment" in Freudian terms. Unfortunately, however, Radcliffe did not contribute much to the betterment of the conditions of women in her age: She ignored many of the problems of women, especially the problems of individuality and independence. Having lived in accordance with the societal demands and the rules of the 18th century, in her works she just *acclaims* both the good (Apollonian) and the bad (Dionysian) attitudes of her age towards women. From Radcliffe's viewpoint, though St. Aubert, Valancourt, and Emily are the characters to be respected, there is still much to admire in the "evil" characters of the Udolpho castle, especially in Montoni, the central virile character. The two polarities, in fact, form the masculine world of the 18th century, and Radcliffe never thinks of demolishing one polarity for the sake of the other: They will survive, but her female character, meanwhile, will have acquired back her property, restored back to the Apollonian order after enjoying the Dionysian, and married the "good" male figure who just appears at the beginning and is absent till the end of the novel. Emily, the anodyne character in *Udolpho* whose fancy occupies the bulk of the story, has the simple role of arousing suspense in the audience. Yet, the rational explanations for the strange happenings at the end reduce her further to the position of a timorous woman, whom Radcliffe sees as the typical woman of her age. Finally, there comes Ann Radcliffe's message: the triumph of female "virtue" over male "villainy", a respectable solace for the author and her patriarchal culture.

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