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NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT

The Mysteries of Udolpho

RICHARD S. ALBRIGHT

Suppose that I am going to recite a psalm that I know. Before I begin, my faculty of expectation is engaged by the whole of it. But once I have begun, as much of the psalm as I have removed from the province of expectations and relegated to the past now engages my memory, and the scope of the action which I am performing is divided between the two faculties of memory and expectation, the one looking back to the part which I have already recited, the other looking forward to the part which I have still to recite. But my faculty of attention is present all the while, and through it passes what was the future in the process of becoming the past.

(Augustine, *Confessions* 278; bk. 11, sec. 28)



In the decade of revolution that was the 1790s, Ann Radcliffe became a publishing phenomenon, emerging from anonymity to become one of the most successful novelists of her time. Although Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* is widely regarded as having begun the Gothic genre in 1764, it was Radcliffe who really seemed to codify many of the characteristics that define the Gothic, and the term "Radcliffean Gothic" is almost a tautology.¹ Four of the five romances Radcliffe published between 1789 and 1797 feature exotic settings in the historical past, from the feudal Scotland of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* to the seventeenth-century France of *The Romance of the Forest*. (*The Italian* is the lone exception, set in Italy between 1742 and 1758). Yet her most famous novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, is most thoroughly imbued with discourses on temporality, four aspects of which I will address in this essay: the novel's explicit references to time, for example, its past setting, or con-

versely its noticeable *absence* of definitive temporal markers such as seasonal descriptors; the castle as a trope of time; the role of repetition as a temporal motif; and the protagonist's prolonged suspension between memory and expectation in an extended present. I will argue that the novel's embedded discourses on temporality were a response to the unprecedented forces that were reshaping the concept of time in England, and that the novel's construction of an alternative temporality contributed to the novel's popular reception. In response to the gathering perception of a present growing increasingly detached from the past, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* offered an imaginatively compensatory version of this new temporal reality. I want to suggest that Radcliffe's novel served as an antidote to revolutionary fears and also to the whole idea of progress and its temporally dissociative effects, these antidotal properties contributing to its success during this decade.

1. REFERENCES TO TIME

In a nod to Cartesian specificity, *Udolpho* is nominally set in 1584, 210 years prior to its publication, but, as is common in Gothic fiction, the use of the past is more atmospheric than historical.² Despite the reference to the year, which occurs twice in the novel—including its opening sentence—we cannot really locate the novel in a particular era, and Radcliffe ignores references to particular historical events of the period. In fact, the discourses contained in the novel involve, not late sixteenth-century, but late eighteenth-century issues, such as sublimity, sensibility and taste, and the characters drink coffee (94) and use dinner forks (97) nearly a century before either practice was introduced to western Europe (Castle, notes 681). Radcliffe has established a discursive tension in the temporal realm, a state of dissonance between the supposed specificity and the vague historicity of her setting.

Robert Miles argues that Radcliffe sets the novel in a period that Miles calls “the Gothic cusp,” a “moment of passage from a feudal to a modern world,” so that she can dramatize the tensions between the two periods and their respective world-views (*The Great Enchantress* 175, 87–88, 144–45). Seen in this context, the apparent conflict between Radcliffe's choice of temporal settings with a particular purpose in mind (Miles's argument) and her disregard for historical accuracy, exemplifies discursively the very tension that her settings explore, the conflict between the feudal and the modern. This is just one of a whole network of dialectical relationships that *Udolpho* imaginatively resolves, dialectics of sense and sensibility, reality and fantasy, move-

ment and stasis, difference and repetition, past and present, memory and expectation. Synthesizing these dialectics is the work of Radcliffe's narrative, and as we shall see, Augustine's recitation of the psalm becomes the figure for this great synthetic project. Augustine's example is particularly applicable to my analysis of *Udolpho* because the psalm's recitation emphasizes that the resolution of apparent paradoxes (in Augustine's case, that between time and eternity) takes place in the mind, is bound up with issues of temporality, and is accomplished narratively. Augustine's recitation is a narrating instance that is in turn described through an act of narration. This act fashions coherence by uniting past, present and future, memory and expectation, in an extended present. It is just such a model that *Udolpho* employs to accomplish its own peculiar coherence by its synthesis of temporalities.

The conflict between feudal and modern that Miles addresses was a particularly late eighteenth-century concern, especially in the decade of the French Revolution, which played such a prominent role in disrupting history. Such a disruption prompted Burke to write his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, which invokes the British national past and emphasizes, in contrast to France, its lineal relationship to the present, from the "hereditary succession" of the crown (24) to the "sure principle of transmission" of government, property and life itself (38). Radcliffe's temporal setting accomplishes a connection to the past in a more complicated way. The past invoked by *Udolpho* is reminiscent of M. M. Bakhtin's epic past in several ways. First, it is set in "the national heroic past . . . a world of 'beginnings' and 'peak times' in the national history, a world of fathers and founders of families, a world of 'firsts' and 'bests'" (Bakhtin 13). This national heroic past is a "Gothic" past, because, in the eighteenth century, "Gothic," as applied to literature, art, and architecture, becomes an especially desirable attribute. With specific application to Britain, what had been regarded as wild and barbaric begins to be valued. Describing this shift in cultural attitudes, David Punter states that "the fruits of primitivism and barbarism possessed a fire, a vigour, a sense of grandeur which was sorely needed in English culture . . . and . . . the way to breathe life into the culture was by re-establishing relations with this forgotten, 'Gothic' past" (6). And yet, in Bakhtin's schema, the epic past is sealed off from the present: "The epic world is constructed in the zone of an absolutely distanced image, beyond the sphere of possible contact with the developing, incomplete and therefore re-thinking and re-evaluating present" (17). We can see this absolute distance in the way that there is no apparent line of descent from Emily St. Aubert to Ann Radcliffe's present. The St. Auberts are a

mythic family rather than a real one, yet Bakhtin notes that the authorial perspective of the epic is that of “the reverent point of view of a descendent” (13). The St. Auberts become ancestors of us all. If not their literal descendants, we are at least their spiritual and moral offspring through a Burkean kind of national descent. (Of course, the St. Auberts are not British, but neither does such a detail prevent the British appropriation of the Goths as paragons of Britishness). Bakhtin’s construction of the epic past as simultaneously “walled off absolutely from all subsequent times” (15), and as an age of heroes from whom “we” nevertheless descend, embodies exactly the kind of discursive tension between past and present that we have been considering. It is 1584 and it is not, because the characters drink coffee and talk about sensibility and taste. In the postmodern era, we perceive such details as anachronistic because we think of different periods of the past as separate and distinct objects. But Radcliffe was invoking a past in which time was imagined as being continuous rather than dissociated into discrete segments, a fitting antidote to the “dissociation of sensibility” that characterized the late eighteenth century (Miles, *The Great Enchantress* 38).

This representation of time as continuous and unsegmented may explain the novel’s nearly total absence of references to days of the week, months, or seasons, and helps to reinforce the dreamlike quality of the novel.³ *Udolpho* constantly works to frustrate the linearity of time. Its time is more akin to the “miraculous” time of the chivalric romance, exhibiting “a *subjective playing with time*, an emotional and lyrical stretching and compressing of it” (Bakhtin 155, emphasis original). Near the end of the novel, after Emily’s return to France, she reflects upon having been “tossed upon the stormy sea of misfortune for the last year,” so clearly the novel’s events are meant to comprise approximately a year. However, there is no way for the reader to determine this in the absence of any specific durational cues, and what seasonal references there are suggest that more than a year has passed. (At the time of her reflection, we’ve seen two summers, and this must be the second autumn). The lack of precise dateability, which we associate with public, or calendar, time, signals that *Udolpho*’s time is not what Paul Ricoeur terms “the time of the world.” We use the calendar to bridge the human and astronomical universes, “mak[ing] historical time conceivable and manipulable” (Ricoeur 3: 182), but *Udolpho*’s rhythms are not those of the heavenly bodies, whose movements order the passage of time (as Aristotle noted when he observed that, while time is not motion, time is still a *measure* of motion and cannot exist without it [*Physics* 105; 219a, 109; 221b]). Nor can we say that the novel’s

rhythms are those of Emily's various travels, because, as we shall see, the descriptions of those excursions resemble each other so much that they seem more like a single journey, endlessly repeated.

It is easy to see why the novel has so often been read as a story of an inner journey—or perhaps not a journey at all, for “journey” implies “progress” and whether any occurs in *Udolpho* is debatable—but read at least as a narrative of inner space. D. L. Macdonald states that “since Emily learns nothing she does not already know from her experiences, there is no reason for them not to repeat themselves over and over Since nothing is happening in the novel, there is no reason for it ever to stop” (199). Certainly, the situation at the end of the novel is remarkably similar to the one at the beginning, suggesting that nothing really did happen. Ian P. Watt's discussion of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* is just as applicable to *Udolpho*'s often dreamy quality: “In dreams, time is intensely real in the sense that we are immersed in a series of scenes which follow each other with hallucinatory vividness: it is very much a question of now, and now, and now” (164). Thus, the events in *Udolpho* seem vivid enough, but they cannot be situated according to an external, or public, time scale. As a result, they are perceived as being without beginning or end, and therefore seem random and chaotic. This is a manifestation in the temporal dimension of what Linda Bayer-Berenbaum, in her discussion of the Gothic fascination with ruins, calls a desire “for the random, the wild, and the unbounded” (29).

2. THE CASTLE

The fascination with ruins fuses the desires for randomness in both the spatial and the temporal realms because ruins are physical examples of time's passage, breaking down organized forms into more disordered ones, time acting on space. The castle itself constitutes a second key element of temporality in *Udolpho*. The castle becomes what Bakhtin terms a *chronotope*, “literally ‘time space,’ . . . the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spacial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.” In the chronotope, Bakhtin goes on to say, “[t]ime, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history” (84). We can almost see time taking on flesh in the figure of the castle. The castle has received a great deal of attention by modern critics as a representation of the body or as an oppressive, enclosing, patriarchal space and yet relatively little attention has been paid to it as a trope of

time.⁴ Such feminist and psychoanalytic readings are oriented spatially rather than temporally, and while illuminating, they obscure the fact that Radcliffe's contemporaries would have seen the crumbling old castle primarily as a figure of antiquity and sublimity. They would have seen it in temporal, as well as spatial, terms. Archibald Alison's 1790 *Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste* notes that "The Gothic castle is still more sublime than all [other forms of architecture], because, besides the desolation of time, it seems also to have withstood the assaults of war" (Castle, notes 686). The castle is the material and therefore spatial inscription of time. Ian P. Watt discusses the late eighteenth century's fascination with the tension between past and present, as evidenced in its preoccupation with ruins in art, architecture, and landscape, and observes that "in the Gothic novel, the castle becomes connected with the family because it is essentially the material survivor of a powerful lineage, a symbol of the continuing life of its founder" (163). Watt thus associates the figure of the castle with generational succession. Generational succession is one means of reconciling the aporias—the inarticulable contradictions—of time by providing a connection between historical time and the time of one's own experience, a way we can travel back along the path of our ancestors' memories (Ricoeur 3: 114).⁵

Bakhtin's description of the castle seems to invoke Edmund Burke in its representation of the transfer of power and property rights in an unbroken line:

The castle is the place where the lords of the feudal era lived (and consequently also the place of historical figures of the past); the traces of centuries and generations are arranged in it in visible form as various parts of its architecture, in furnishings, weapons, the ancestral portrait gallery, the family archives and in the particular human relationships involving dynastic primacy and the transfer of hereditary rights. (246)

The "material survivors," in Watt's terminology, the castles in Gothic novels, are always in terrible states of disrepair, crumbling on the outside, dusty, rotting, and damp on the inside, bearing, in other words, all the scars of their survival. Most Gothic castles have a neglected wing or two, and even responsible homeowners miss some details: The Count De Villefort does a fine job of restoring the Chateau-le-Blanc to its former glory, but manages to overlook the north apartments, shut up for twenty years (546), while less capable castle owners, such as Montoni, effect only those repairs needed to withstand a siege. And even a heroine with the most refined sensibilities hardly hesitates a

moment before sleeping in a bed whose appearance must be extremely doubtful.⁶ A reader with twenty-first-century sensibilities thinks about hygiene, but our century is more focused on the body, and psychoanalytic and feminist Gothic readings tend to refract such concerns. To an eighteenth-century reader, however, these crumbling old castles and their dusty apartments do not encode discourses on hygiene, but on temporality and sublimity.

This eighteenth-century sensibility is vividly demonstrated by a famous passage in the novel. Shortly after Emily apprehends the castle of Udolpho for the first time, Radcliffe's narrator's description contains numerous references to both the sublimity of the castle's appearance and its antiquity. It is described as "vast, ancient and dreary"; its crumbling aspect, beheld (naturally) in the fading light of the dying day, seems to invoke the past, as well as the disorder caused by entropy. Emily perceives "two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them" (227). In Radcliffe's description, the very plant life is a metaphor for antiquity, since it is taking root among the stones, the natural world battling the artificial, working, slowly but inexorably, to undo human accomplishments, much as Percy Shelley would later represent nature's erosion of human works in "Ozymandias." The human life that is associated with the castle is also old: As Emily "gazed with awe upon the scene . . . an ancient servant of the castle appeared." Even opening the door is a process characterized as a slow transformation, akin to the grass' slow progress over the stone. The bolts of the door must be withdrawn, the "huge folds of the portal" must be "force[d] back," the "carriage wheels roll[] heavily under the portcullis" (227).⁷

These prolonged descriptions of representations of the past require time to narrate and time to read, further slowing the pace of the narrative, and therefore bringing the reader's temporal experience closer to Emily's, as was the case with the landscape descriptions. Gérard Genette observes that

written narrative exists in space as space, and the time needed for "consuming" it is the time needed for *crossing* or *traversing* it, like a road or a field. The narrative text, like any other text, has no other temporality than what it borrows, metonymically, from its own reading. (34, emphasis original)

Our time to "cross" this ponderous narrative passage corresponds to Emily's temporal experience of the carriage crossing under the portcullis, juxtaposing our temporal reality with hers.

3. REPETITION

This description of the castle also illustrates a frequent pattern in the novel, whereby the narrator makes a point of explicitly juxtaposing past and present. The characters do this as well, especially in the way they invest the castle with the spiritual presence of departed inhabitants. After hearing the story of the Marchioness de Villeroi from Dorothée, the housekeeper of the Chateau-le-Blanc, Emily “felt a thrilling curiosity to see the chamber, in which the Marchioness had died, and which Dorothée had said remained, with the bed and furniture, just as when the corpse was removed for interment” (529). Emily’s “thrilling curiosity” is to behold this chamber, frozen in a moment of time twenty years past. It is undoubtedly the prospect of an uncanny experience that produces the thrill, and the fact that the subsequent entry is clandestine adds to this quality.⁸ The two women steal into the neglected north apartments without the knowledge of the Count de Villefort, so as not to “displease” him. As the two explore the chambers, the narrative incessantly refers to the rooms having been left exactly as they were twenty years before. Dorothée observes that “the last time I passed through this door—I followed my poor lady’s corpse!”, noting that “all the time between then and now seems as nothing,” (531–32). The past becomes a *doppelgänger* that haunts the present, from which the uncanniness of this episode derives (Freud, “The Uncanny” 387–89). The past is so vividly imposed on the present that the dead seem to come to life again. Emily, approaching the bed, observes “the high canopied tester of dark green damask, with the curtains descending to the floor in the fashion of a tent, half drawn, and remaining apparently, as they had been left twenty years before.” At least for the excitable Dorothée, the illusion is so effective that the housekeeper almost convinces herself that her former mistress is still present: “Holy Virgin! Methinks I see my lady stretched upon that pall—as when I last saw her!” (532–33). Both frightened and fascinated, she then makes the apparition real, by having Emily stand beside the Marchioness’s portrait, so that she can “exclaim[] again at the resemblance” (533). And, when Emily looks at the Marchioness’s clothing, “scattered upon the chairs, as if they had just been thrown off,” the very disorder, a tableau of frozen haste, joins the scene to Emily’s own time. But the tableau cannot be left alone. The past must be reanimated again in the present, as Dorothée does when Emily picks up a black veil, “dropping to pieces with age”:

“Ah!” said Dorothée, observing the veil, “my lady’s hand laid it there; it has never been moved since!”

Emily, shuddering, immediately laid it down again. “I well remember seeing her take it off,” continued Dorothée . . .

Dorothée wept again, and then, taking up the veil, threw it suddenly over Emily, who shuddered to find it wrapped round her, descending to her feet, and, as she endeavoured to throw it off, Dorothée intreated that she would keep it on for one moment. “I thought,” added she, “how like you would look to my dear mistress in that veil;—and may your life, ma’amselle, be a happier one than hers!” (533–34)

Dorothée tries to prolong the moment beyond Emily’s desire, and the resemblance is indeed uncanny—so much so that Emily will later drive Agnes/Laurentini to distraction: “It is her very self! Oh! There is all that fascination in her look, which proved my destruction!” (644).⁹ Not only Emily, but “every object” in the room—an open prayer book, a crucifix—“seemed to speak of the Marchioness.” Emily picks up the Marchioness’s lute and “passe[s] her fingers over the chords” (534). Although Radcliffe permits the lady’s lute to have gone out of tune in the intervening twenty years, the strings still “utter[] a deep and full sound” (534). We associate an untuned instrument with dissonance and discord, but Radcliffe’s language qualifies that. The dissonance is not emphasized, but rather the depth and fullness of the sound, and the “well-known tones” of the lute trigger a fond memory in Dorothée of the last time she heard her mistress play it, a song that, although mournful, is characterized as “sweet,” as she sang “a vesper hymn, so soft and so solemn.” The lute becomes a lyrical voice, and its dissonance is productive, a musical figure for the discursive tension that we see so often in the novel. Its discordance is strangely concordant, a paradox to which we shall return later.

In the scene in the Marchioness’s chamber, there is a multiplying of temporalities at work, much as Wordsworth will contemplate the landscape near Tintern Abbey in 1798 and see his second visit as both a repetition of the one five years earlier (“The picture of the mind revives again” [line 62]), and a realization that the second visit is not exactly the same (“I cannot paint/ What then I was” [76–77]).¹⁰ Ricoeur’s analysis of Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* notes that:

The cardinal function of the concept of repetition is to reestablish the balance that the idea of a handed-down heritage tipped to the side of having-been, to recover the primacy of anticipatory resoluteness at the very heart of what is abolished, over and done with, what is no longer. Repetition thus opens potentialities that went unnoticed, were aborted, or were repressed in the past. It opens up the past again in the direction of coming-

towards. By sealing the tie between handing-down and resoluteness, the concept of repetition succeeds at once in preserving the primacy of the future and in making the shift toward having-been. (3: 76)

In other words, the apparent closure of the past is reopened and infused with new potential. Repetition is a unifying act involving all the temporal dimensions because “repetition is the name given to the process by which . . . the anticipation of the future, the recovery of fallenness, and the moment of vision (*augenblicklich*) in tune with ‘its time’ reconstitute their unity” (Ricoeur 3: 76). On the banks of the Wye, Wordsworth experiences a doubled awareness—how he feels *now*, and (in memory) how he felt *then*, a process Ricoeur terms “[t]he double intentionality of recollection.” In Ricoeur’s system, “expectation [is introduced] into memory itself, as the future of what is remembered,” and “retroactively . . . color[s] the reproduction of the memory” (3: 36–37).¹¹

This is exactly the kind of doubled awareness that Gilles Deleuze had in mind when he said, “the active synthesis of memory may be regarded as the principle of representation under this double aspect: reproduction of the former present *and* reflection of the present present” (81), a kind of dialogue between past and present in which the temporalities interpenetrate each other. Details such as the scene in the Marchioness’s chamber are part of *Udolpho*’s preoccupation with repetition and difference. The novel abounds with repetitions, or almost-repetitions, of characters and events. Terry Castle observes that “characters in *Udolpho* mirror or blur into one another.” Both the friar who comforts Emily after her father’s death and the Count de Villefort remind her of St. Aubert; Du Pont is taken for Valancourt; Emily even sees herself reflected in Valancourt (Castle, “Spectralization” 238–39). Miles (*Gothic Writing* 76) refers to these dualities as antitheses of each other (Emily and Laurentini, St. Aubert and Montoni, and even, in an apparent reference to Valancourt’s gaming, the two Valancourts [“the same . . . not the same,” as Valancourt himself cries, 513]). These character doublings correspond in the temporal dimension to repetitions of narrated events. There are four excursions over the mountains in carriages: the Pyrenees with Emily’s father; the Alps and later Apennines, with Montoni; and the Pyrenees again with the Count De Villefort. There are two shootings of Valancourt, two attempts to kidnap Emily, and two trips to the castle (along with corresponding departures). All of these repeated incidents “mirror or blur into one another,” just as the characters do. We perceive them as both similar—as repetitions—and as different. The tension between similarity and difference is sufficient to produce the uncanny effect, to render the incidents doppelgängers.

The narrative does not always impose such repetitions upon the characters; sometimes they desire and actively seek the repetition. Despite an open invitation to stay at the Chateau-le-Blanc, Emily wants to go to the nearby convent so she can “sigh, *once more*, over her father’s grave” (492, emphasis added). Perhaps most peculiar of all is Valancourt’s behavior after Emily’s departure, behavior that to our modern sensibilities seems obsessive and even somewhat perverse. Castle describes the novel’s fascination with investing objects with the spirits of those who are absent (either dead, or just separated in space). Theresa, the old servant of Emily’s father, informs her that, after Emily had left La Vallée, Valancourt would wander through the rooms of Emily’s house, particularly in the south parlor that had been hers, looking at her pictures, playing her lute, and reading the books she’d read (but, as Theresa pointed out, not really reading, just holding them and talking to himself about Emily [593–94]). We might call this behavior evidence of a fetish (in her brief mention of the incident, Castle refers to Valancourt’s behavior as “obsessive” [“Spectralization” 234–35]), yet the very placement of this description in the novel clearly undermines such an interpretation. Rather than suggesting the need for a restraining order, Valancourt’s behavior is related in the context of his rehabilitation, and used to emphasize his constancy and sensibility, although Theresa does briefly worry that Valancourt is “out of his reckoning” (594). While Valancourt laments the loss of Emily at this point and has no hope for a future with her, these fantasies of her presence as he handles objects associated with her seem to console him. He still talks to her as if she were present, and in a way she is. “A scar is the sign not of a past wound but of ‘the present fact of having been wounded,’” Deleuze observes, and goes on to state that “the contemplation of the wound . . . contracts all the instants which separate us from it into a living present” (77). Further, the description of this behavior is what Genette would categorize as “iterative” or repetitive (i.e., “he *would* go . . .”). In other words, it is “narrating one time, what happened *n* times” (Genette 116). For Valancourt, wandering through her rooms and talking to Emily represent a poignant realization of the present, a totalization of his memories and hopes in an extended present that embraces all the temporal axes, just as Heidegger characterizes repetition as unifying the *ecstasies* of time (“the phenomena of future, having been, and present” [Heidegger, *Being and Time* 300–03; §65; and Ricoeur 3: 76]). Valancourt’s strange behavior contracts time into an ecstatic unity that resonates in the musical spectrum of the novel. It suggests Augustine’s experience in reciting a psalm he has memorized. He is “engaged by the whole of it” even as the act of recitation

causes parts of the psalm to pass from expectation into memory. In the grasping of the whole of it, there is a kind of unity of past, present and future that Heidegger terms *ecstatic* (Augustine 278; bk. 11, sec. 28). This grasping of the whole provides coherence, so the repetition motif becomes productive. According to Ricoeur, “Heideggerian repetition . . . holds together, in the most improbable manner, mortal time, public time, and world time.” It provides one type of resolution to the aporia that is represented by “the oscillations of an existence torn between the sense of its mortality and the silent presence of the immensity of time enveloping all things” (Ricoeur 3: 141, 140).

4. MEMORY AND EXPECTATION

Heidegger’s ecstatic unity is akin to sublimity in the temporal realm. Edmund Burke identified terror as an important source of the sublime in his *Philosophical Enquiry* (101–02, 108), and *Udolpho* makes many explicit references to the sublimity of terror. Radcliffe herself, in her 1826 essay, “On the Supernatural in Poetry,” drew a distinction between Terror and Horror, noting in fact that the former “expands the soul and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life”—just what the sublime does—while the latter “contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them” (149). I want to argue that there is a temporal component to this distinction that is consistent with Radcliffe’s assertion that terror expands while horror contracts. For example, having just entered the castle of Udolpho for the first time, and still very much under its spell, Emily experiences a curiously dilated sense of time as Montoni paces thoughtfully in front of Emily and her aunt, awaiting the return of the servant, who is bringing wood to light a fire. All seems suspended: “From the contemplation of this scene, Emily’s mind proceeded to the apprehension of what she might suffer in it, till the remembrance of Valancourt, far, far distant! came to her heart and softened it into sorrow” (229).

In a single sentence, Emily, immersed in the present gloom of the ancient castle, moves, first to anticipation of what she might suffer, then to a recollection of Valancourt, distant in both space and time. The castle’s brooding presence haunts not just its ancient past, but looms over her future, as well. Her awareness in this passage is not confined to a point-like now (or even to a succession of nows, which Heidegger characterizes as the “vulgar understanding” of time [302]), nor does she experience time as fleeting. Emily’s temporal awareness is more akin to the *distentio animi* (“extension of the mind” [Augustine 274; bk. 11, sec. 26]) of Augustine’s three-fold present:

[I]t is abundantly clear that neither the future nor the past exist, and therefore it is not strictly correct to say that there are three times, past, present, and future. It might be correct to say that there are three times, a present of past things, a present of present things, and a present of future things. Some such different times do exist in the mind, but nowhere else that I can see. The present of past things is the memory; the present of present things is direct perception; and present of future things is expectation. (269; bk. 11, sec. 20)¹²

Contrast this “extension of the mind” to one of the truly singular moments of horror in the novel, at the point when Emily obtains her first, brief, glimpse of what lies beneath the veil in the picture gallery. Emily falls senseless to the floor:

When she recovered her recollection, the remembrance of what she had seen had nearly deprived her of it a second time. She had scarcely strength to remove from the room, and regain her own; and, when arrived there, wanted courage to remain alone. Horror occupied her mind, and *excluded, for a time, all sense of past, and dread of future misfortune* (249, emphasis added).

Clearly horror “contracts” Emily’s temporal faculties, obliterating memory and expectation alike, stripping the present moment of its richness and freezing her in a narrow now.

But this passage is an exception. For the most part, the novel is filled with examples of the Augustinian three-fold present: During one of the many occasions in which Emily hears distant music, she recognizes one of the songs her father had sung to her as a child, and this invokes, first, memories of her childhood in her native country, then memories of having heard it (sung by someone else—actually Du Pont, although she does not know that at this point) in her father’s fishing house, and then a complicated dilation of the present to include the future and memories of multiple pasts:

Assisted, perhaps, by the mystery, *which had then accompanied this strain*, it had made *so deep an impression on her memory* that she had never since entirely forgotten it; and the manner in which it was now sung convinced her, however unaccountable the circumstance appeared, that this *was the same voice she had then heard*. Surprise soon yielded to other emotions; *a thought darted, like lightning, upon her mind, which discovered a train of hopes, that revived all her spirits*. Yet these hopes were so new, so unexpected, so astonishing, that she did not dare to trust, though she could not resolve to discourage them. She sat down by the casement, breathless, and

overcome with *alternate emotions of hope and fear*; then rose again, leaned from the window, that she might catch a nearer sound, listened, now doubting and then believing, softly exclaimed the name of Valancourt, and then sunk again into the chair. Yes, it was *possible, that Valancourt was near her*, and *she recollected circumstances*, which induced her to believe it was his voice she had just heard. She remembered he had more than once said that the fishing house, *where she had formerly listened to this voice and air*, and where she had seen pencilled sonnets, addressed to herself, had been his favorite haunt, *before he had been made known to her*; there, too, she had herself unexpectedly met him. (386–87, emphasis added).

She remembers the sound of this voice, back to an earlier time in her father's fishing house, before she knew Valancourt, to the implied time when she first knew him. There are many other instances of this multiplied present. As Montoni's men conduct Emily back into the castle after a brief sojourn outside its walls, the sight of the familiar gate fills her with terror: "The little remains of her fortitude now gave way to the united force of remembered and anticipated horrors, for the melancholy fate of Madame Montoni appeared to foretell her own" (427). Earlier, in a more sublimely tranquil moment, Emily gazes at the stars: "They brought a retrospect of all the strange and mournful events, which had occurred since she lived in peace with her parents . . . She wept to think of what her parents would have suffered, could they have foreseen the events of her future life" (329).

As Reinhart Koselleck has noted in his discussion of the latter half of the eighteenth century, "experience is present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered. . . . expectation also takes place in the today: it is the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet, to the nonexperienced, to that which is to be revealed" (272). Although Emily's awareness, to cite Ian P. Watt again, is "very much a question of now, and now, and now" (164), it is the kind of present that Paul Ricoeur, in his discussion of Augustine's analysis of time, calls a "thick" present (containing both protention, or future intention, and retention), not a point-like now (3: 133). Time "thickens, takes on flesh," Bakhtin told us, using the same metaphor. In contrast to the memory and anticipation that saturate Emily's awareness during most of the novel, her long-anticipated future seems "a dreary blank" when she feels she has lost Valancourt, who in Emily's mind is always connected to the future. "Valancourt seemed to be annihilated, and her soul sickened at the blank, that remained" (581). Without the richness of the three-fold present, her existence seems thin and meaningless, because the experience of the

three-fold present may partake of some of the sublimity of God's experience in eternity, which, Augustine tells us, is of an eternal present, without past or future, and thus infinitely "thick":

It is in eternity, which is supreme over time because it is a never-ending present, that you are at once before all past time and after all future time. For what is now the future, once it comes, will become the past, whereas *you are unchanging, your years can never fail*. . . . Your years are completely present to you all at once, because they are at a permanent standstill Your today is eternity. (263; bk. 11, sec. 13, emphasis original)

Even though we mortals are "in time," *Udolpho's* frequent passages about sublimity suggest an association with "the Great Author" during these sublime moments. "Blanche's thoughts arose involuntarily to the Great Author of the sublime objects she contemplated" (475). Ascending the Alps, Emily "seemed to have arisen into another world, and to have left every trifling thought, every trifling sentiment, in that below." The world of trifling thoughts and trifling sentiments she leaves behind is the world of time, and "grandeur and sublimity now dilated her mind" (163).

Even in her less sublime moments, throughout *Udolpho*, and not just in the one-third of the novel that she spends imprisoned in the castle, Emily is constantly suspended between memory and expectation. Emily's contemplation of the past makes it seem to live in the present. One way this phenomenon is represented is through the novel's investiture of objects and places with the spirits of the departed, as explored by Castle in her essay "The Spectralization of the Other in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*." Despite Castle's analysis of the implications of the dissolution of the barrier between life and death, it seems to me that there is a temporal component to this motif in the novel as well, because the dead who are ever-present are not just dead but are associated with her past, yet that association occurs in the present. ("They're here!") Emily is surrounded and enclosed by these spirits, but this is a happy, soothing, thickening kind of enclosure, not the material enclosure often described by critics of the Gothic, who see the castle only as an oppressive space. The womb is a better analogy here, because the womb is about both space and time. It is productive; it ripens the foetus which "takes on flesh," just as time does for Bakhtin.

As Emily is suspended temporally in her extended present, so too is the reader subjected to the same temporal suspension by the narrative, a strategy that Radcliffe employs to a greater extent in this novel than in her other Gothic romances. Descriptive passages, interspersed poems, repetitions, and post-

ponements all work to delay forward progress. For example, consider the private staircase in Emily's bedroom in the castle (which Annette refers to as the "double chamber," yet another *doppelgänger* [234]). On at least six occasions spanning more than 180 pages, Emily fears, recalls, or proposes to explore this staircase. Sometimes her intentions to explore it are foiled because the door is locked (272); on two occasions, it is unlocked and, fearing someone will enter her room, she tries to secure the doorway by blocking it with furniture (320, 438). Another example of this motif of repeated postponements is Dorothée's narration of the mysterious fate of the Marchioness, also delayed a number of times: at first she is too overcome with emotion to begin (492); later, she starts telling the story but is interrupted by the horn for dinner (498–99); on two different occasions, despite the build-up of suspense about this story, Emily herself is distracted by her circumstances and *forgets* her appointments with Dorothée (504, 518). The housekeeper finally begins the story, only to be briefly interrupted by "music of uncommon sweetness" (523) before she is able to resume. The story having been finally told, Emily wants to see the Marchioness's picture to examine the strange resemblance to herself, but this has to be postponed because "[t]he night was too far advanced" (529).

Ludovico, while spending a night in the chamber of the Marchioness in order to dispel the servants' fears of ghosts, disappears from the chamber, his fate unknown for some fifty-five pages before he reappears in the hideout of the banditti. But the explanation of this mystery is deferred for another fifteen pages and several interruptions. Thus our anticipation continues to build as these mysteries overlap. These overlapping mysteries—some of which (such as the secret hidden in the papers of Emily's father, Laurentini's story, and the murdered figure behind the veil) are not resolved until the final pages of the novel—leave the reader poised between the memory of their previous apparitions and the expectations about what they might signify. We also find ourselves suspended, along with Emily, in Todorov's fantastic, that realm that lies between the uncanny and the marvelous. Todorov uses the language of "hesitation" to characterize the duration of our experience of the fantastic: "The fantastic . . . lasts only as long as a certain hesitation: a hesitation common to reader and character, who must decide whether or not what they perceive derives from 'reality' as it exists in the common opinion" (41).¹³ We think of hesitation as occupying only a moment, but moments are richly and thickly prolonged in *Udolpho*. The novel's readers remain suspended in the momentary realm between the uncanny and the marvelous as mysteries remain unresolved. The hesitations, in a curious way, "propel" the narrative, but not

linearly. They instead make suspensions productive. Scott Mackenzie has characterized as “innovative” Radcliffe’s strategy of

synchroniz[ing] her plotted lacunae, sometimes literal gaps in writing, sometimes figural gaps in knowledge, with the overall structure of the narrative and the self-realization of its heroine. Mysterious tunes, words, and figures, gaps in a manuscript, mistaken resemblances and so on, have equivalent spaces in the novel, spaces that will be filled in later, with direct consequences for its heroine, Emily St. Aubert. (416)

These “lacunae,” as Mackenzie puts it, “should not be understood as spaces that are simply empty. They are spaces which signify doubly, and more than doubly” (416).

5. DISCORDANT CONCORDANCE: TOWARD A NEW TEMPORALITY

In addition to being suspended between memory and expectation, Emily is also suspended generationally. She is at once the focus of the novel, and the focus of generations, all of which converge on her, as her multiple inheritances attest. At the end of the novel, she not only marries Valancourt, but she inherits property from her father, St. Aubert; from her aunt, Madame Montoni; and a third of the personal property of Sister Agnes, (who is really Laurentini and who had helped to murder her other aunt, the Marchioness). The text even implies that Emily inherits Udolpho itself from Laurentini. The castle was Laurentini’s, because Montoni was to inherit it if Signora Laurentini died unmarried; at this point in the novel, both are dead. Such a conclusion would probably not be supported by careful scrutiny, but the text is decidedly ambiguous. Note the key paragraph:

The legacy, which had been bequeathed to Emily by Signora Laurentini, she begged Valancourt would allow her to resign to Mons. Bonnac; and Valancourt, when she made the request, felt all the value of the compliment it conveyed. The castle of Udolpho, *also*, descended to the wife of Mons. Bonnac, who was the nearest surviving relation of the house of that name . . . (672, emphasis added)

Does the *also* in this passage connect the things that the Bonnacs inherit, or the things that Emily resigns to them? The text can be read either way. A similar ambiguity surrounds the flying of the banners of the Villeroi line, “which had long slept in dust” (671), and which are now apparently rehabilitated: It is

unclear whether they fly in honor of Emily or Blanche, since both are married on the same day, and both are related to that family, Blanche as the daughter of Villeroi's cousin (de Villefort) who inherited the title, and Emily as the niece of the Marchioness. (We had previously been told that St. Aubert himself was buried, at his own request, "near the ancient tomb of the Villerois." In fact, he "had pointed out the exact spot" most specifically [87]). It is a double wedding, and a wedding of doubles, as Emily and Blanche are almost the same person, which the text's ambiguities about the inheritance affirm. At least figuratively, Emily may represent the successor to the Villeroi line. But even while all of these generational lines from the past converge on, and tend toward a linear, Burkean resolution—"working after the pattern of nature, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives" (Burke, *Reflections* 38)—in Emily, ultimate closure is frustrated. At the very moment that the novel seems to assert the coherence of genealogical succession, it complicates such a reading via the textual ambiguities of the legacy passage.

Udolpho's multivalence on the issue of inheritance constitutes yet another of the novel's many dialectics. Even more important, this generational convergence takes place in the extended present of the novel. Radcliffe gives us no scene of Emily as a mother, surrounded by her children. They and the future they represent are certainly implied, for we must assume that the generations will flow outward from Emily, presumably neat, untangled, Burkean lines now, but we do not see them, and children are never mentioned. As a result, this omission underscores the separation of Emily's Bakhtinian epic past, from which we are cut off even while we are simultaneously the descendants of its heroes. The narrative stops at this point, with Emily embodying the future like a reservoir of potential energy, but the emphasis is on the here and now, the rich, thick, extended, spectralized, present. The narrator intrudes here, asserting that innocence will triumph over misfortune, and hoping she has "beguiled the mourner of one hour of sorrow" (672). The reference to "one hour of sorrow" is of course rhetorical, as if to say, "if the reading of this four-decker, a work of many hours, could ameliorate even one hour of sorrow," but it occupies that slippery textual space in which a secondary implication also obtains—that the novel only takes an hour to traverse, because public time has no meaning here. And indeed, at the end of it, Emily seems to have come full circle, back to her point of origin. She has Valancourt, just as if the original wedding had taken place. *Udolpho* thus perfectly typifies the "adventure time" of Greek romance that Bakhtin describes:

The first meeting of hero and heroine and the sudden flareup of their passion for each other is the starting point for plot movement; the end point of plot movement is their successful union in marriage. All action in the novel unfolds between these two points. These points—the poles of plot movement—are themselves crucial events in the heroes' lives; in and of themselves they have a biographical significance. But it is not around these that the novel is structured; rather, it is around that which lies (that which takes place) *between* them. But *in essence* nothing need lie between them It is as if absolutely nothing had happened between these two moments, as if the marriage had been consummated on the day after their meeting. (89, emphasis original)

All that apparent plot movement is only stasis, a kind of Aristotelian paradox of movement and non-movement. As MacDonald stated, “nothing is happening in the novel.” The Villeroi banners, flying again, seem to return us to the time of Dorothée’s youth, or at least they superimpose that time on Emily’s present; with Dorothée, we, too, can almost see the Marchioness again. As Valancourt said of himself, Emily is both “the same . . . [and] not the same” (513). All the genealogical discontinuities *seem* to have been set aright. It is true that people have died since the beginning of the novel, but their being dead does not mean that they’re gone—to the contrary, as Castle points out: “Absence is preferable to presence. (An absent loved one, after all, can be present in the mind. One is not distracted by his actual presence)” (“Spectralization” 249). They’re never *as* present as when they’re dead, for then they surround us, but do not get in the way, so this spectralized present is even better than the original.

I have said earlier that the novel lacks any real *progress*. Progress is associated with movement and transition, a way of thinking that sees the present as dividing past from future—a rupture (Koselleck 257). And coincident with the development of the notion of progress is a desire for the past, perhaps for the fantasy of wholeness it seems to offer. David Punter notes that much of the fiction written during this decade of revolution “rejected direct engagement with the activities of contemporary life in favor of geographically and historically remote actions and settings” (61), and it is certainly tempting to consider *Udolpho* as a response to the French Revolution, for its publication in May of 1794 indicates that it must have been written during the worst period of the Terror (59). But even considering Radcliffe’s Dissenting Unitarian background, so illuminatingly explored by Rictor Norton’s recent biography, it is impossible to say for certain how Radcliffe personally responded to develop-

ments across the Channel, since the only extant journals are travel writing, beginning with journeys taken *after* the publication of the novel and excerpted in Thomas Noon Talfourd's memoir.¹⁴ Thus, we cannot be sure if the novel's past setting (like the settings of most of her other romances) stems from a nostalgic desire to reach back to a time before the chaotic events in France that so unsettled Edmund Burke, and, in fact, much of the country. We just do not know anything about Radcliffe's private thoughts. Norton, however, has documented the extraordinary *response* of the public to Radcliffe's romances, particularly to *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. These responses ranged from tremendous popular and critical success—as evidenced by the number of reprintings, the unprecedented amounts she received for the sale of copyrights to her last two novels (£500 for *Udolpho* and £800 for *The Italian* [Norton 94–95]), and the fact that “many of her contemporaries joined in one breath the names of Shakespeare, Milton, Ariosto, Radcliffe” (Norton 8)—to the extreme: Some millennialists regarded Radcliffe's Gothic novels as communications from God (Norton 90–91). But all testify to the novel's resonance with the public. And while we have said that Miles has described the temporal setting of many of Radcliffe's novels as being on “the Gothic cusp,” looking backward to the feudal and forward to the modern era, *Udolpho* alone must have been written during the time that I will call the “cusp” of the French Revolution, at virtually the sunset moment when British public opinion toward the revolution began to change. (*The Romance of the Forest* was published in 1791, and *Udolpho* in May of 1794). Miles considers the year 1792 to be pivotal in this regard, noting that, at the time Burke's *Reflections* was published in 1790, it reflected a minority view, the tide of public opinion having been largely in favor of the revolution until the massacres of 1792–93, but

[b]y 1794 the reaction against French Revolutionary atrocities had reached a fever pitch. The hopeful mood of 1791 had turned very sour indeed. Habeas corpus was suspended; in 1794 the radical intellectuals John Thelwall and Horne Tooke (plus sundry others) were tried for high treason. (*Great Enchantress* 58–62)

Like Emily, the public in England must have been filled with alternating hopes and fears as events across the Channel unfolded.¹⁵

The Mysteries of Udolpho's construction of an alternative temporal experience functioned as an antidote to a decade of revolutionary fears, providing an imaginative resolution to growing cultural anxieties. And even though

many of the familiar trappings of Radcliffe's romances were both imitated and parodied to such an extent that both she and her imitators soon became passé, in a curious way her novels, particularly *Udolpho*, "came to symbolize remembered youth . . . a prelapsarian world of lost happiness" (Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho* 102–05). While we cannot say with certainty that Radcliffe set her novels in the past from motives of nostalgia, many readers regarded them nostalgically, fondly remembering the experience of reading them. This personal, "prelapsarian world," as we have seen, is a peculiarly timeless one. Entering it by way of *Udolpho*, even re-entering that world, becoming lost in its postponements and repetitions, its picturesque ruins and sublime sunsets, poised, at least for awhile, in a present rich with vivid memories and alternating hopes and fears, is akin to communing again with the spirits of the departed. It allows readers to connect themselves to a time before the dissociation of sensibility, before the rupture of the present, before the notion of progress, when time seemed whole again. The temporality created in *Udolpho* is mythic and non-linear, not arbitrarily marked out into discrete segments, but whole, unbroken, un-dissociated, where time flows in circles of repetition, where the dead live again and surround the living, who not only commune with their spectralized presences but also *become* them, taking their forms, allowing them to exist simultaneously in multiple temporalities. The idealized past is thus heroically and epically national, as well as lyrically personal. The novel's use of these epic and lyric forms invokes the attributes of their temporalities, admitting access to a past made present, richly, thickly present, through the act of reading. "The narrative work is an invitation to see our praxis as it is ordered by this or that plot articulated in our literature" (1: 83), as Ricoeur reminds us. In the case of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the peculiar temporal attributes of that imagined world inform and penetrate the reader's own reality, especially given the novel's characteristic blurring of boundaries between the real and fictional worlds. Our own world's temporality is transformed. *Udolpho*'s aporias are hesitations, a hesitation from the world of the French Revolution into Todorov's fantastic, into a world with "no advancing historical movement," where time "moves rather in narrow circles," where time "is without event, and therefore almost seems to stand still" (Bakhtin 247–48).

There is considerable evidence that many readers of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* did return to the world of the novel, sometimes repeatedly. These repeat readers, among whom are Henry Crabbe Robinson, William Hazlitt, and Charles Bucke, obviously derived a satisfaction that could not have stemmed

from a desire for suspense in the conventional sense of not knowing the solution to the mystery (Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho* 107).¹⁶ Ricoeur suggests an explanation for this phenomenon that takes into account the novel's association with an idealized national past and also invokes the theme of repetition:

As soon as a story is well known—and this is the case for most traditional or popular narratives, as well as for those national chronicles reporting the founding events of a given community—to follow the story is not so much to enclose its surprises or discoveries within our recognition of the meaning attached to the story, as to apprehend the episodes which are themselves well known as leading to this end. A new quality of time emerges from this understanding.

. . . the repetition of a story, governed as a whole by its way of ending, constitutes an alternative to the representation of time as flowing from the past toward the future, following the well-known metaphor of “the arrow of time.” It is as though recollection inverted the so-called “natural” order of time. In reading the ending in the beginning and the beginning in the ending, we also learn to read time itself backwards, as the recapitulation of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequences.

In short, the act of narrating, reflected in the act of following a story, makes productive the paradoxes that disquieted Augustine to the point of reducing him to silence. (1: 67–68)

Ricoeur's analysis supports my belief that *Udolpho's* refraction of desire for the past is more complicated than simple nostalgia for a simpler time. The temporality that the novel evokes is also more complicated than our circular figure suggests, for “circular” implies a degree of order and regularity that is not really present, and time only *almost* seems to stand still. All is not restored *exactly* as it was (“the same . . . not the same” again). We must return again to the strings of the Marchioness's lute: “They were out of tune, but uttered a deep and full sound,” a sound that evokes a powerful memory for Dorothee. Ricoeur's reading of Aristotle's *Poetics* states that “Aristotle discerns in the poetic act par excellence—the composing of the tragic poem—the triumph of concordance over discordance” (1: 31), that is, imposing a sense of order on the chaotic nature of the world, including time (“the narrative consonance imposed on temporal dissonance”). But Ricoeur goes on to say that “so long as we place the consonance on the side of the narrative and the dissonance on the side of temporality in a unilateral fashion, . . . we miss the properly dialectical character of their relationship.” For example, Greek tragedy emphasizes

the role of plot reversals (*peripeteia*), that complicate the straightforward resolution of the narrative problem. Ricoeur further argues that Augustine's three-fold present by means of an extension of the mind, his solution to the paradox of time and eternity, represents a "plea for a radically unformed temporal experience." Ricoeur calls this plea "the product of a fascination for the unformed that is one of the features of modernity" (1: 72), and as we have seen, Miles maintains that Radcliffe has set *Udolpho* on the cusp of modernity. It seems no coincidence, then, that this "fascination for the unformed" is strikingly akin to Bayer-Berenbaum's claim that the eighteenth-century fascination with ruins represents a desire "for the random, the wild, and the unbounded" (11). *Udolpho*—the novel as well as the castle—is a ruin, bearing all the signs of the work of time, a scar that is evidence not of a past wound, but of "the present fact of having been wounded" (Deleuze 77). The strings of the Marchioness's lute give unmuted testimony to this phenomenon. They are not in tune, in the sense of being organized according to predefined pitches, as we would mark out the days and months using a calendar, but their sound possesses a wildness and randomness that are not the chaos of noise, but the work of time, uncannily superimposing the Marchioness's past upon the novel's present. A "new quality of time" has indeed emerged. Augustine's solution to his contemplation of the paradox of time and eternity was his synthesis of past, present, and future into an extended, three-fold present. The "faculty of attention" that illuminates Augustine's recitation of the psalm transforms the present into "the actualization of the future of what is remembered" (Ricoeur 3: 36), and unites all the temporal axes through his narrative act. From the level of narrative to the lowest textual level, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* creates its own peculiar temporality, a "radically unformed temporal experience" in which movement and non-movement, concord and discord, the same and not the same, the feudal past and modern present, can co-exist coherently.

NOTES

1. I am aware of, and agree with, James Watt's contention (1–3) that the Gothic genre as we know it is "a relatively modern construct" and that, notwithstanding Walpole's subtitle added to the second edition of *Otranto*—"a Gothic story"—and Clara Reeve's emulation of this convention in *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (1778), the novels that we today regard as constituting the Gothic genre considered themselves "romances." Still, whatever the label, and whatever the literary moment in which it was first applied, Radcliffe's romances were widely recognized as foremost among a class of fictions that we now regard as a genre. We see evidence of this in Coleridge's letter to

Wordsworth in October 1810, when he notes: “I amused myself a day or two ago on reading a romance in Mrs. Radcliff’s [sic] style with making out a scheme, which was to serve for all romances a priori—only varying the proportions.” (Deborah D. Rogers 99). And Sir Walter Scott is one of a number of critics who referred to Radcliffe’s “imitators” (E. J. Clery 108–09).

2. See, for example, George Lukács, who notes that “in the most famous ‘historical novel’ of the eighteenth century, Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, history is . . . treated as mere costumery” (19); David Punter, who observes of *The Castle of Otranto*, that “Walpole is quite unconcerned with the details of life in the Middle Ages; what he is concerned with is conjuring a general sense of ‘past-ness’” (52); and Terry Castle, notes, 686.

3. Among the most provocative treatments of the novel’s dreamlike affect is Terry Castle’s “The Spectralization of the Other in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*,” 232, 239. Ian P. Watt’s “Time and Family in the Gothic Novel: *The Castle of Otranto*” also refers to dreams in a temporal context (164). Both articles will be discussed below.

4. For discussions of the castle as a representation of the body, see Clare Kahane’s essay, “The Gothic Mirror,” in which Kahane cites some earlier critics, including Norman Holland and Leona Sherman; for discussions of oppressive, enclosing spaces, see Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* and Eugenia C. DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic*. There have been a few notable exceptions to my claim that little attention has been paid to the castle as a trope of time: one of these is Bayer-Berenbaum, who observes, “When the walls that outlast generations crumble, the powers of time appear even more awesome. In the face of decaying material, we sense the eternal forces of destruction, and the eternity of time is contrasted by the temporality of matter” (27). DeLamotte also mentions the fact that Gothic buildings are associated with the historic past (15). Ian P. Watt’s “Time and the Family in the Gothic Novel” is also an exception that will be discussed momentarily. And James Watt observes that “[t]hrough the Gothic castle has provided a powerful metaphor for psychoanalytic literary criticism in recent decades, it is important to recognize the more literal role which the castle played in the political discourse and in the fiction of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (64).

5. An *aporia* is a rhetorical figure marking hesitation. The word *aporia* literally means “without passage” in the Greek, where it was used most famously by Aristotle in the *Physics*, in his discussion (particularly germane to our purposes) of the being and non-being of time. Derrida discusses the term as follows:

The word “aporia” appears in person in Aristotle’s famous text, *Physics IV* (217b), which reconstitutes the aporia of time *dia ton exoterikon logon* . . . (*Diaporeo* is Aristotle’s term here; it means “I’m stuck . . . I cannot get out, I’m helpless.”) Therefore, for example—and it is more than just one example among others—it is impossible to determine time both as entity and as nonentity. (Derrida 13)

I use the term in both its connotations—that of hesitation or “stuckness,” as well as a paradox or contradiction that resists articulation.

6. There do seem to be limits to this apparent tolerance, however. In *The Italian*, Ellena is forced to sleep in a “miserable mattress, over which hung the tattered curtains of what had once been a canopy” (Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* 211).

7. Eugenia C. DeLamotte notes that lingering on the threshold, accompanied by terror, is a standard Gothic motif (16, 19).

8. See Todorov 41–42, for a discussion of Radcliffe’s novels as examples of the uncanny; as well as Castle, “Spectralization” 251 (and, in fact, much of her essay).

9. The same passage is quoted by Castle, “Spectralization” 239. No one seems to have mentioned the odd syntax of Laurentini’s exclamation. Whose is the fascination? Presumably Laurentini’s fascination with the Marchioness, but the construction opens this up to question.

10. For Radcliffe’s influence on Wordsworth and the Romantic poets, see Norton 250–53.

11. Wordsworth does go on to imagine the future, at least Dorothy’s future, in which she is remembering being with him in that time and place.

12. This project was well under way when I read Gregory Sean O’Dea’s dissertation, *The Temporal Sublime: Time and History in the British Gothic Novel*. While O’Dea cites the same excerpt from Augustine’s *Confessions*, his analysis of Augustine’s meditation as applied to Ann Radcliffe’s novels is more concerned with time as a psychological construct in a fleeting present than as an extension of the mind (94–99).

13. Macdonald argues that “[t]he *fantastic*, in Todorov’s sense, is strictly excluded from Radcliffe,” because the supernatural is always “undercut” by Emily’s descriptions of her superstitions (198). While I do not necessarily disagree with this assessment, in the strict Todorovian sense, there is nevertheless for the reader *some* kind of hesitation that occurs, *some* element of suspense that falls between memory and expectation.

14. Rictor Norton concludes that “the only manuscript in Ann Radcliffe’s own handwriting to have escaped oblivion” is a commonplace book recording the progress of her health (and her final illness) from May through November 1822, ending a few months before her death (238). The Talfourd memoir takes up the first 132 pages of volume one of the four-volume *Posthumous Works*. Approximately seventy-four of the 132 pages of Talfourd’s memoir is taken up by travel journals, covering ten tours throughout England.

15. During this revolutionary decade, Radcliffe’s own romances, especially *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, are on the cusp of change and can be read both radically and conservatively in the domestic as well as the political spheres. For example, the novel ends with a marriage, but consistently asserts the property rights of women. Despotic figures such as Montoni and forced marriages, or the threat of them, can represent the excesses of foreign tyranny, but they could just as easily encode a critique of aristocratic privilege and patriarchal power in England. Similarly, the feudal past is multivalent in England at this time. On the one hand, it can be associated with the excesses that brought on the French Revolution in the first place, giving St. Aubert’s warning that “all excess is vicious” as “deep and full [a] sound” as the strings of the Marchioness’s lute. On the other hand, it is an idealized time “uncursed with the modern ‘dissociation of sensibility’” (Miles, *Great Enchantress* 38). The word *sensibility* is itself an excellent example of shifting attitudes during the 1790s. Despite its universality of appeal in

the second half of the eighteenth century, by 1800 *sensibility* had become almost as universally tainted (along with associationism) by perceived associations with Enlightenment rationalism and the French Revolution (Miles, *Great Enchantress* 49–50). This shift in attitude is mirrored by the response to Radcliffe's novels, wildly popular for awhile, and then falling almost as quickly out of fashion due to a glut of mass-produced imitations and perhaps a whiff of Jacobinism. (The wave of imitations was remarked upon by Scott [*Quarterly Review* 344], and by a famous letter to a 1798 journal ["Terrorist Novel Writing," quoted in Clery and Miles, 183–84], among others. The Radcliffe imitators and associations with Jacobinism are discussed by both Norton [156–59] and Clery [134–45]).

16. Norton notes that Sir Walter Scott was an exception, Scott having commented that he could not imagine undertaking a second reading of the novel (107).

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