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From the Female Gothic to a Feminist Theory of History: Ann Radcliffe and the Scottish Enlightenment

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After the phrase “female gothic” entered feminist consciousness thirty years ago with the publication of Ellen Moer’s *Literary Women*, readings of Ann Radcliffe’s fiction began to focus almost exclusively on the absent mothers, overbearing fathers, and suffering daughters who compose the dysfunctional families of her novels.¹ Although these early readings productively interpreted gothic doppelgangers, repetitions, and lacunae as symptoms of psychological trauma, they have been roundly criticized in recent years for producing universalizing, reductive, and ahistorical portraits of women’s experience.² Like these earlier feminist readings of the female gothic, this essay also examines the uneven and repetitious qualities of Radcliffe’s novels; instead of seeing these characteristics as disruptions in psychological development, however, I see them as attempts to theorize gaps in eighteenth-century narratives of historical progress. One antidote to the universalizing and ahistorical tendencies of the female gothic can be found in the fragments of Scots poetry reproduced in the epigraphs of many of Radcliffe’s novels. For example, the poetic interludes in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) create a temporal disruption or unevenness that invites readers to leave the main narrative and enter a distant Scottish past recreated in the 1740s, 1750s, and 1760s by Scots poets such as James Thomson, James Macpherson, and James Beattie. These poets resurrected Highland bards in an effort to process the 1707 Act of Union, the failed Scottish Rebellion of 1745, and the disappearing culture of the Highlands. Macpherson and Beattie were also active participants in the Scottish Enlightenment, and their poems engage with Scottish stadial history, which was the first theory of history to link what Karl Marx would later call a society’s mode of production to the development of social attitudes and behaviors. These early materialist histories created new connections between economic development, imperial expansion, and the status of women in particular societies and in different geographical locations. Far from generating a singular or universal account of women’s experience, this essay

finds an uneven and non-linear feminist historiography sensitive to depicting different relationships between women's experience and British imperial and commercial growth in the tension between *The Mysteries of Udolpho's* representations of female sensibility and its Celtic paratext—what Gerard Genette calls a “boundary,” “border,” or “threshold.”³

Although there is no way to know if the biographically elusive Radcliffe ever read much conjectural history or Scottish Enlightenment philosophy, her novels betray a pressing awareness of the way in which Scottish historiographers used women's social status to gauge historical progress and the health of economic and imperial development.⁴ One of the best examples of Radcliffe's interest in Scotland is her first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), which depicts a clan battle in the Highlands of medieval Scotland. The conflict within the novel revolves around two men: Malcolm of Dunbayne, a clan chief who “suffers” his lands to “lie uncultivated” and finds himself “torn by conflicting passions” he cannot control, and the more refined and civilized Earl of Athlin, a peer of Scotland who possesses a heart that “glowed with all the warmth of benevolence.”⁵ The different manners of Malcolm and the Earl of Athlin exemplify the two poles of the Scottish Enlightenment's stadial theory of history, which posits the existence of four stages of social and economic development, ranging from the rude manners of hunting and gathering societies to the refined and polished sentiments of more commercial cultures. Progress was measured in Scottish historiography by women's influence, which was minimal in the brute world of hunters and gatherers, but a significant civilizing force in the world of commerce. Malcolm personifies the first of four stages in which men battle the elements and each other for survival and are ruled by “uncultivated” passions; the Earl of Athlin, connected to a larger social and economic network, has time to tame his passions and refine his feelings, qualities that mark the later stages of human development. The hot-blooded warlord, Malcolm, and the cultivated peer, the Earl of Athlin, battle over the Earl's sister, Mary, who represents the best of humankind, having a “heart which vibrated in unison with the sweetest feeling of humanity; a mind, quick in perceiving the nicest lines of moral rectitude, and strenuous in endeavouring to act up to its perceptions.”⁶ Like Radcliffe's later heroines, Mary finds herself caught between not just men but also rival historical forces, competing temporalities that coexist and offer women alternative futures, some of which exist outside a purely Whiggish history that aligns women's progress with commercial expansion. Radcliffe's first novel suggests that the origins of her gothic fiction are entangled with the Scottish origins of stadial history and the theories of uneven development first articulated by Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, John Millar, and Lord Kames, as well as the poets Macpherson and Beattie.

Radcliffe's debt to the Scottish Enlightenment in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* appears in her citation of poems such as Beattie's *The Minstrel*, a Scottish progress poem published in 1771, the same year as Millar's important *Origin of the Dis-*

tion or Ranks. Borrowing from conjectural history, Beattie's poem traces the growth of society from a "rude" Scottish-inspired landscape to the more refined world of the contemporary British Empire. Stadial history traced this same journey and, in doing so, attempted to reconcile the economically backward Highlands with the commercial centers of Britain. Their universal four-stage theory of human history aligned manners with economic development, creating the "savage" Highlands as an earlier stage of history and suggesting that different stages of history could exist at a single time. Literature, particularly poems like Macpherson's Ossian series that many Scots literati understood as a record of ancient manners, factored largely in these new historical maps, as Colin Kidd has argued.⁷ Yet the refined sentiments of the Ossianic heroes and heroines recovered by Macpherson question the outcome of this universal history, which celebrated eighteenth-century Britain as the highest stage of economic and social development. Macpherson offered a counter narrative, found also in Beattie's poetry, that located in economically backward societies the elevated sentiments and the free commerce between the sexes that generated refined feeling. This Celtic counter narrative unsettled the connection between women's progress and the rise of commerce and suggested that manners and sentiment could develop without the expansion of trade and the growth of empire. Beattie's poem not only borrows from this historiographical model but also interrogates its impact on women through both the dedication of the poem to the Bluestocking Elizabeth Montagu and his main character Edwin's defense of and affection for the "ancient dame" who educated him.⁸

By excerpting Beattie's *Minstrel* as a signpost for Emily St. Aubert's journey, Radcliffe grafts Emily's "progress" onto eighteenth-century debates about history, the relationship between manners and economic structures, as well as the place of women in history. In fact, Radcliffe's fiction supplements the recent work of feminist historians such as Jane Rendall, Silvia Sebastiani, and Mary Catherine Moran, who have examined the feminist potential of Scotland's stadal histories and argue that the Ossian poems and its derivatives served as vehicles for "the ambiguity of the Scottish historians with respect to a modernity, dominated by commodity and by appearances."⁹ Recovering Radcliffe's debt to the Scottish Enlightenment not only links her gothic fiction to theories of uneven development and non-synchronous time, but also sheds new light on the relationship between feminism and imperial critique. This approach highlights the importance of Radcliffe as not just a gothic novelist but also a feminist theorist who struggles with women's relationships to the increasingly complex models of historiography and economic development that women still find themselves subject to today. The first part of this essay situates Emily, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*'s heroine, in the context of the Scottish Enlightenment's histories of manners and feeling. The second part turns to the Scots poetry found on the borders of Radcliffe's novels and examines the impact of the Scottish Enlightenment's treatment of time on the new feminist historiography she creates.

THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT OF RADCLIFFE'S FEMINIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

When set in a historical context, Radcliffe's novels are read as reflections on the Revolutionary and Jacobin 1790s, yet the literary and historical backdrop provided by Radcliffe's epigraphs also place her gothic novels within earlier eighteenth-century debates over how to interpret Great Britain's past, particularly its variously termed "barbarian," Gothic, or Celtic past.¹⁰ Placing Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* in the context of these earlier debates provides an alternative to Claudia Johnson's important reading of the novel as a response to Edmund Burke's defense of Marie Antoinette and his attempts in *Reflections on Revolution in France* (1790) to revive a chivalric past populated by feeling men who would weep over the Revolutionaries' attacks on the Queen.¹¹ In this reading, the excessive sentiment of Emily's betrothed, Valancourt, and her father, St. Aubert, link them to Burke's romantic and chivalric British ideal. When placed in the context of Scottish Enlightenment historiography, these same feeling men appear as overindulgent moderns with dangerously refined emotions. Refined and excessive sentiments were potential byproducts of the increased influence of women on contemporary civil society. As Millar writes in his *Origins of the Distinction of Ranks*, "the advancement of people in manufactures and commerce has a natural tendency to remove those circumstances which prevented the free intercourse of the sexes and contributed to heighten and inflame the passions."¹² Once the "free intercourse of the sexes" commences in society, two potential outcomes emerge: the society in question could progress into a state of gender equality inspired by the beauty and grace of the female sex, or it could descend into a state of overindulgence and luxury marked by effeminate men and overindulgent women.

Lord Kames explores the first possibility in his *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774), and Ferguson explores the second in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767).¹³ Kames equates economic progress with the elevation of the female sex, celebrating the greater equality women enjoy in commercial society and critiquing their degraded status in "savage" societies:

Conversation is their talent, and a display of delicate sentiments: the gentleness of their manners, and winning behaviors, captivate every sensible heart. Of such refinements savages have little conception: but when the more delicate senses are unfolded, the peculiar beauties of the female sex, internal as well as external, are brought into full light; and women, formerly considered as objects of animal love merely, are now valued as faithful friends and agreeable companions.¹⁴

Women's public display of "delicate sentiments" results in a blossoming of feeling that defines civilization, separating modern man from "savages [who] have little conception" of social graces and the "peculiar beauties of the female sex."

Ferguson, a member of the famous Highland Black Watch Regiment and a great admirer of Spartan society, was, of all the Scottish literati, the most hesitant to sanction this gender revolution. He saw the greater equality between the sexes spawned by commercial society as confusing gender roles and read this confusion as a sign of decay:

The increasing regard in which men appear, in the progress of commercial arts, to study their profit, or the delicacy with which they refine on their pleasure, even industry itself, or the habit of application to a tedious employment, in which no honours are won, may, perhaps, be considered as indications of a growing attention to interest, or of effeminacy, contracted in the enjoyment of ease and conveniency.¹⁵

In Ferguson, the leisure time and busy work created by commercial and imperial expansion mark not just the feminization of society but a loss of national consciousness, a descent into self-serving pursuits. Ferguson links a revival of national character to the reinstatement of boundaries between the sexes and the exertion of new limits on imperial expansion. Imperial expansion brings with it an “enjoyment of ease and conveniency” that he sees as dangerous because it renders “the individual of less consequence to the public”—a public that is so expansive that it can no longer take into account the opinions and actions of all its citizens.¹⁶ Kames and Ferguson remind us that commercial growth and refined manners, depending on your vantage, could mark either a historical advancement or regression, both of which were measured by the “progress” of women.

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily appears to be caught between these warring historical forces, the militant pre-modern warriors celebrated by Ferguson and the feeling men of Kames’s modern commercial society. She does not belong to the savage world of Montoni, the villain of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. His high passions run without restraint, unregulated by the women surrounding him. He regards women as inferior—property to be abandoned in drafty turrets. At one point, he condemns the modern rule of women, calling his friend and Emily’s admirer, Count Morano, “the slave of a petty tyrant” when he pleads for Emily’s comfort.¹⁷ Yet, far from epitomizing a modern and feminized civil society, Emily seems equally distant from the world of refined feeling embodied by her father, St. Aubert, and her lover, Valancourt, whose emotions lack the measured restraint exhibited by the less demonstrative and more stoic Emily.

Although St. Aubert educates Emily to suppress her emotions and maintain “fortitude” in the face of disaster, he appears unable to control his own feelings. During Emily’s first test, the death of her mother, she “felt the importance of the lessons, which had taught her to restrain her sensibility . . . never had she practiced them with a triumph so complete.”¹⁸ Emily’s victory over grief stands in stark contrast to the reaction of St. Aubert, who frequently has to leave his wife’s bedside to “indulge his tears.”¹⁹ Emily’s restraint and ability to con-

trol her emotions also serve to emphasize Valancourt's overindulgence. When Emily tells Valancourt she must leave him for Italy, ending their engagement, he finds himself unable to control his passions. The novel describes him as emotionally imbalanced: "Valancourt, between these emotions of love and pity, lost the power, and almost the wish, of repressing his agitation; and, in the intervals of convulsive sobs, he, at one moment, kissed away her tears, then told her cruelly, that possibly she might never again weep for him."²⁰ Valancourt's extreme grief culminates in misplaced accusations. Unmoved by Emily's efforts to restrain her grief, he says, "Emily! . . . this, this moment is the bitterest that is yet come to me. You do not—cannot love me!—It would be impossible for you to reason thus coolly, thus deliberately, if you did."²¹ Throughout the novel, Valancourt over-emotes, and his reactions are without fail disproportionate to the occasion. After being reunited with Emily and hearing about her harrowing imprisonment at the hands of Montoni, Valancourt, "no longer master of his emotions," elevates his period of suffering—the time he spent gambling in Parisian salons—above Emily's ordeal.²² Instead of greeting Emily with apologies and sympathy, he accuses her of being too frigid: "is it thus you meet him, whom once you meant to honour with your hand—thus you meet him, who has loved you—suffered for you?"²³ Valancourt overvalues his experience in the casinos of Paris and undervalues Emily's time away from him, during which she suffered under the constant threat of rape, the death of her closest living relative, and a near shipwreck. Here, Valancourt's behavior realizes Ferguson's greatest fears: he forgoes the honors he might have won on the battlefield after enlisting in the French army for "tedious employment" and dissipation. Valancourt's decided preference for wandering aimlessly through the scenic Alps or gambling in Paris, instead of serving Emily or his country, emerges as a symptom of social decay.

Valancourt's overindulgence contrasts sharply with Montoni's excessive restraint. Montoni's self-discipline at times resembles the stoicism Smith attributes to and admires in those he designates "savages" in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). In his discussion of custom and fashion, Smith compares the open and transparent emotions of civilized men like Valancourt with those of men who belong to an earlier age. He writes, "the passions of a savage . . . though they never express themselves by any outward emotion, but lie concealed in the breast of the sufferer, are, notwithstanding, all mounted to the highest pitch of fury."²⁴ Although Montoni is often described as a barely contained volcano, Emily observes and reluctantly admires his talent for disguising his true emotions, beginning with his feigned attraction to her aunt, Madam Cheron, and extending to his fearless battles to defend Udolpho from neighboring warlords:

She could scarcely have imagined, that passions so fierce and so various, as those which Montoni exhibited, could have been concentrated in one individual; yet

what more surprised her, was that, on great occasions, he could bend these passions, wild as they were, to the cause of interest, and generally could disguise in his countenance their operation in his mind; but she had seen him too often, when he had thought it unnecessary to conceal his nature, to be deceived on such occasions.²⁵

Montoni's ability to "disguise" his passions coexists with the "sort of animal ferocity" and determination he exhibits as the captain of the condottieri.²⁶ As a "stranger to pity and fear," Montoni is not a social being and, unlike Valancourt and St. Aubert, finds no value in the polish and refinement women introduce into society.²⁷ As Smith writes in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, "the weakness of love, which is so much indulged in ages of humanity and politeness, is regarded among savages as the most unpardonable effeminacy."²⁸ To Emily, Montoni's "savage" features make him appear like a relic from a previous age. In fact, when exploring the ancient chambers of Udolpho with her maid Annette, Emily comes across a picture of "a soldier on horseback in a field of battle . . . darting his spear upon a man, who lay under the feet of the horse, and who held up one hand in a supplicating attitude."²⁹ The look of vengeance in the spear-wielding soldier's eye "struck Emily as resembling Montoni."³⁰ Despite Montoni's barbarism, Emily finds herself admiring him: "Emily felt admiration, but not the admiration that leads to esteem; for it was mixed with a degree of fear she knew not exactly wherefore."³¹ Part of Emily's admiration for Montoni stems from their shared stoicism, their ability to restrain emotion under extreme circumstances.³² The unnamed "fear" that accompanies her admiration for Montoni may register a suspicion that they are more alike than it at first seems. Like Montoni, Emily might be a holdover from an earlier age or an uncharted island on developing maps of historical progress.

Emily, like her predecessor Mary of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, appears caught between these poles of human development represented by Montoni and Valancourt—between times, as well as between men. She both feels deeply like Valancourt but exercises a restraint and stoicism associated with Montoni's more "savage" disposition. Emily's "self-command" combined with her ability to feel appropriately for her fellow humans sets her apart from the other characters in the novel. She fails to perform the "excessive refinement" of the Venetian women she encounters.³³ Likewise, the modern and cosmopolitan Countess de Villeroi's habits seem light years away from Emily's simple and native charms. The Countess does not find any pleasure in the French countryside and designates her husband's paternal domains an uninhabitable "barbarous spot";³⁴ instead of (like Emily) playing the native songs of Gascony or enjoying the simple pleasures of nature, she reads "sentimental novel[s] on some fashionable system of philosophy."³⁵ In opposition to Valancourt, who suffers so demonstrably, "hers was a silent anguish, weeping, yet enduring; not the wild energy of passion, inflaming imagination, bearing down the barriers

of reason and living in a world of its own."³⁶ Unlike Valancourt and Montoni, Emily also remains mindful of her place in the world and her connection to other people: "The sufferings of others, whoever they might be, called forth her ready compassion, which dissipated at once every obscuring cloud of goodness, that passion or prejudice might have raised in her mind."³⁷ Her manners do not correspond neatly to one of the four stages of economic development. She troubles the possibility of universal history, a certain map of progress, by belonging to neither commercial society nor the savage world. Like the Celtic bards found on the peripheries of Radcliffe's novel, Emily survives her parents and two infant brothers and becomes an anomaly, the last of her race.

References in the novel's diegesis to Ossian and Ossianic derivatives further align Emily and her plight with Macpherson's counter narrative of human development, suggesting that social and economic development may be independent of each other and that the productive influence of women and feeling may exist without the corruption and excessive self-interest bred by commercial and imperial expansion. In fact, the Ossian poems stand in for Emily's native music, which continually wafts through the novel from distant and unnamed sources. After Emily refuses to sign over her estates to Montoni, she finds herself contemplating the various means by which he might choose to punish her. The only comforts she receives are the "notes of distant music" that float into her chamber from a mysterious source:

Its sweet and peculiar tones she thought she had somewhere heard before; yet, if this was not fancy, it was, at most, a very faint recollection. It stole over her mind, amidst the anguish of her present suffering like a celestial strain, soothing, and re-assuring her;—"Pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter's ear, when he awakens from dreams of joy, and has heard the music of the spirits of the hill."³⁸

Although Radcliffe identifies these lines in a footnote as a piece of Ossian's most famous epic *Fingal*, Emily renames this Scottish lay as "one of the popular airs of her native province, to which she had so often listened with delight, when a child, and which she had so often heard her father repeat! To this well-known song, never, till now, heard but in her native country, her heart melted, while the memory of past times returned."³⁹ In this moment, Emily displaces this Ossianic lament from the Scottish Highlands to the medieval French countryside, from a Scottish warrior culture to her father's provincial retreat, his escape from a corrupt and overly refined modern world.

At first, Emily believes Valancourt to be the source of this song. She imagines her beloved Valancourt imprisoned in Montoni's dungeon as a soldier of the French army, instead of (as he is in reality) enjoying a life of dissipation, gambling in Parisian salons, and falling under the sway of sophisticated *salonnières*. Eventually, the source of the music reveals itself not as Valancourt,

but the Chevalier Dupont, another young Frenchman who lives near Emily's birthplace, La Vallée, and admires her from afar. Bound by her promises to Valancourt, Emily finds herself unable to accept the attentions of Dupont, but she does agree to escape with him from Udolpho to France. Dupont, unlike Valancourt, emerges as a suitable companion for Emily. Instead of lamenting volubly and frequently after Emily rejects him, he enjoys a "deep, but silent melancholy."⁴⁰ The Count De Villeroi, Emily's surrogate father, calls Dupont "a sensible and amiable man."⁴¹ Finally, when Dupont discovers through a mutual friend that Valancourt's Parisian debauches were not scandalous enough to bar him from accepting Emily's hand, he acts in a disinterested fashion. He tells the Count and Emily of the mistake, restoring his rival's good character and gracefully leaves the novel and Emily without any of Valancourt's hysterics. Readers cannot help but imagine the more peaceful life Emily might have led with the more restrained, selfless, and like-minded Dupont. He remains an Ossianic future-history unfulfilled. Like the Celtic epigraphs outside the narrative frame, Dupont points to an Ossianic alternative outside the existing text, which concludes with Emily's marriage to the suspect Valancourt, and suggests that an alternative temporality or history exists on the periphery of Radcliffe's narrative. This feminist historiography, which questions the overdetermined link between economic development and the progress of women, emerges with even more clarity in the interpretive space between the epigraphs and Radcliffe's diegesis.

CELTIC PARATEXTS

The first time through *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, a desire to find out what lies beneath the shrouded painting that so frightens Emily near the beginning of the novel might lead one to skip over the epigraphs with which Radcliffe prefaces each chapter. Yet the Celtic poets who figure so largely in the paratext of Radcliffe's fiction invite new questions about her interest in Celtic literature and speculation about the potential connections between her fiction and the work of Oliver Goldsmith, William Collins, Thomas Gray, James Thomson, and Frank Sayers, as well as Beattie and Macpherson. For the purposes of this article, I will limit myself to a select few of her citations of Beattie's *Minstrel*, which appears several times in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, as well as *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Italian*, and engages directly with the questions raised by Scottish Enlightenment historiography. Although best known as a critic of Humean skepticism, Beattie was educated in Aberdeen (like Macpherson) and later was appointed as a professor of moral philosophy at Marischal College. The intellectual milieu in which Beattie worked shapes the travels of Edwin, his minstrel. As Beattie writes, *The Minstrel* follows "the progress of a Poetical Genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a MINSTREL."⁴² Like many

of his Scottish counterparts, Beattie equates the development of the individual from birth to old age with the progress of the nation from “rude” hunting and gathering societies to a later period, in this case the Age of Minstrels—a courtly and romantic stopping point preceding the contemporary age of commerce. In his history of civil society, Ferguson uses a similar analogy: “If, in advanced years, we would form a just notion of our progress from the cradle, we must have recourse to the nursery, and from the example of those who are still in the period of life we mean to describe, take our representation of past manners, that cannot, in any other way, be recalled.”⁴³ By adopting this philosophical model in his poem, Beattie, like Radcliffe, interrogates the relationship between individual experience and larger narratives of social and national advancement.

Like many of his fellow Scots, Beattie expresses discomfort with the idea that distance from a “rude” age necessarily signals national progress. In two recent articles, Maureen McLane suggests that the figure of the minstrel allows Beattie to interrogate the very notion of progress. She attributes the popularity of eighteenth-century minstrels, including Beattie’s Edwin, to the minstrel’s temporal position between “prehistoric” bards and “modern ballad mongers,” and reads Beattie’s Edwin as a “liminal” figure who complicates existing historical maps.⁴⁴ Like Emily, who interacts with both the “savage” Montoni and the effeminate and overly refined Valancourt and St. Aubert, Edwin moves between stages of human development. Yet his trajectory, according to McLane, begins in a feminine and “rude age” in which he is nurtured by an “ancient dame” who uses “riddle’s quaint device . . . [to cheer] the shepherds round their social hearth” and extends the masculine “threshold of Enlightenment announced by a severe hermit” who introduces Edwin to the “path of Science.”⁴⁵ By labeling the early stages of history feminine and the later masculine, McLane deftly identifies one gendered trajectory of progress but others operate within the poem.⁴⁶ Although, as McLane argues, Edwin does progress from his birthplace and the nurturing influence of the village’s “beldam” to the “cultivated spot” of the hermit, Beattie dedicates his final revision of the poem in 1784 to his patron, greatest defender, and most critical reader Montagu.⁴⁷ At the end of the first canto, he associates the Bluestocking salonnière Montagu with the best of modernity:

But on this verse if MONTAGUE should smile,
 New strains ere long shall animate thy frame.
 And her applause to me is more than fame;
 For still with truth accords her taste refined.
 At lucre or renown let others aim,
 I only wish to please the gentle mind
 Whom Nature’s charms inspire, and love of human kind.⁴⁸

Instead of the vulgar trappings of “lucre” and “fame,” Beattie aims to reach the “refined” tastes of Montagu, his model reader, who possesses the polished man-

ners necessary to appreciate good poetry. Montagu's appearance introduces the possibility that the poem also traces a journey to a refined and feminine modernity as well as a passage into a masculine Enlightenment. The competing figures of the hermit, Montagu, and the "ancient dame" remind readers of the multiple eighteenth-century historical models that traced the competing and gendered histories of reason and feeling. Edwin's struggle with these different historical registers gestures towards the difficulty Emily has in projecting herself into any of the competing temporalities she encounters.

Uncomfortable with the luxurious trappings of a feminine and refined modernity, in possession of stoic tendencies yet critical of savage passions, Radcliffe's Emily complicates linear history and the gendered categories imposed on changing human and economic relationships. From references to *The Minstrel* and Edwin, who as McLane argues troubles the notion of historical "periodization," Radcliffe's feminist theory of history emerges.⁴⁹ Radcliffe begins several of her chapters with epigraphs from *The Minstrel* and frames Emily's journey from rural France into her Italian prison, Udolpho, with Edwin's journey to adulthood. The excerpts from *The Minstrel* indicate that Emily moves not just into adulthood but also between stages of historical development. When Emily's aunt, Madame Cheron, arrives to take Emily from her bucolic home, the chapter epigraph drawn from *The Minstrel* describes how the poet's perspective shifts once Edwin reaches adulthood. No longer will the mature poet dwell on the childhood haunts Edwin rambled through in Book I:

I leave that flowery path for aye
Of childhood, where I sported many a day,
Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
Where every face was innocent and gay,
Each vale romantic, tuneful every tongue,
Sweet, wild, and artless all.⁵⁰

After this stanza, Edwin moves into the more complex and rugged landscape of *The Minstrel's* Book II, found beyond a "lonely eminence" where as a young adult Edwin meets the enlightened hermit. Radcliffe selects this stanza to signal the journey into adulthood Emily is about to undertake from the pastoral La Vallée (her father's modest estate) into the refined and modern world of Madame Cheron's Tholouse, the luxurious world of Venice, and finally into the savage landscape of Udolpho. In another instance, Radcliffe prefaces a chapter about Emily's journey into the Pyrenees, culminating with the death of her beloved father, with a description of Edwin's perceptions and appreciation of the landscape of his home, the rural "north cuntry" or "Scotia":

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene.

.....
 Even sad vicissitude amus'd his soul;
 And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
 And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
 A sigh, a tear so sweet he wish'd not to control.⁵¹

Moving between historical periods, Emily and Edwin are both "wayward wight[s]," on a historical precipice, unable to find a foothold. Edwin's departure from his native village is, in part, prompted by his distaste for the occupations of his companions:

His heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed
 To work the woe of any living thing,
 By trap or net; by arrow or by sling;
 These he detested; those he scorn'd to wield.⁵²

Edwin finds himself unable to practice the "cruel sport" demanded by the rude age of hunters and shepherds into which he was born. He also finds himself unable to embrace wholly the modern principles described by the hermit. Although he adopts the hermit's philosophical and scientific principles, he cannot abandon the fancy and poetry of his earlier life: "But she, who set on fire his infant heart, / And all his dreams, and all his wanderings shared. . . . Still claim th' enthusiast's fond and first regard."⁵³ Edwin's "wayward" qualities make him an unlikely hero for a poem that was supposed to end with Edwin leading his people against an invading army and may, in part, account for its status as an unfinished fragment.⁵⁴ Even the formal repetitions and repeated returns required by the Spenserian stanza Beattie employs in *The Minstrel* serve to undercut the notion of progress. In his preface to the poem, Beattie recognizes the mixed messages offered by "so difficult of measure." He describes the Spenserian stanzas as admitting "both simplicity and magnificence . . . the sententiousness of the couplet, as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse."⁵⁵ Both simple and awe-inspiring, a vehicle for basic emotion and complex ideas, the Spenserian stanza is capable of registering formally the poet's own ambivalence about progress and development.

Also critical of the gendered relationships built into eighteenth-century understandings of progress, Radcliffe shuttles Emily between purportedly simple and more complex stages of human development. Emily experiences the unevenness of time, beginning in the pastoral French countryside, traveling through excessively polite and cosmopolitan cities in France and Italy, and stopping periodically at the brutal fortress of Udolpho. At the end of the novel, when she inherits the domains of her father, Madame Cheron, and Montoni, she finds herself with a share of all these stages of development or competing temporalities. Yet, with the exception of her pastoral retreat, she remains com-

fortable nowhere. Emily belongs to neither a modern feminine world that links luxury, refinement, and commercial expansion to the progress of women, nor a hyper-masculine “savage” world of barely disguised passion and brutal feeling. She insists on enjoying the simple pleasures of rural life at La Vallée, a pastoral space separate from the cosmopolitan centers of commerce and equally distant from the barbarism of Udolpho. Through Emily, Radcliffe fashions a feminist historiography that both refuses a universal or linear narrative of progress and denies the dependence of developed sentiments on economics. In fact, Radcliffe’s feminist theory of history may have shaped the gothic novel, a genre of doppelgangers, split selves, and unexpected repetitions—psychic disruptions that mirror on the individual level the uneven narrative of history, the refusal of linear and universal maps of human experience, that she found in her Scottish sources.

Exploring Radcliffe’s debt to the Scottish periphery of the British Empire, as well as attending to the overlooked borders of her novels, decenters traditional feminist readings of the female gothic and generates new potential questions about the relationship between feminist, Marxist, and postcolonial treatments of history and temporality. Critics have read Radcliffe’s novels as marking historical shifts in psychology, economics, and politics: for example, the creation of the internally riven modern self in Terry Castle’s famous reading and the development of commercial society in E. J. Clery’s analysis.⁵⁶ These readings seem an inevitable result of the temporal confusion that characterizes Radcliffe’s fiction, from the imposition of descriptions of Salvator Rosa’s and Claude Lorrain’s landscapes onto the sixteenth century to the location of eighteenth-century sentiments and manners in a medieval past. Although Radcliffe’s novels undeniably comment on the shifts these critics describe, Radcliffe’s gothic acts not just as a marker of historical shifts, but as a meta-commentary on the problems involved in producing history, measuring change, and mapping progress. Radcliffe critiques the gendered gauges used to manufacture history and, in doing so, interrogates the relationship between a society’s mode of production and the progress of women. Her fiction refuses universalizing and reductive claims about women’s progress and poses an alternative to the rhetoric of imperial expansion, which insinuates that the British Empire will not only transform territories economically but also free women from the savage bonds of oppression. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* suggests that the progress of feelings and economies are separate concerns and that uneven economic relationships do not indicate uneven moral developments.

NOTES

1. Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (Garden City, 1976).

2. In the introduction to a special issue of *Women’s Writing* dedicated to the female gothic, Robert Miles argues that the “universality” of psychoanalytical readings of the female gothic “threatened to undermine the very benefits such psychoanalytically guided

readings promised as it contradicted the promise that the Gothic could say anything particular about women's experience—an experience otherwise effaced by the cultural record" ("Female Gothic Writing," special issue *Women's Writing* 1, no. 2 [1994]: 131–40, 132).

3. Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge, 1997), 1.

4. Richard Norton's biography suggests that Ann Radcliffe may have read Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* and James Beattie's *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (*Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe* [New York, 1999], 77, 80).

5. Ann Radcliffe, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (New York, 1995), 7, 39, 4.

6. Radcliffe, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, 44.

7. Colin Kidd reads James Macpherson as a major contributor to Whig historiography (*Subverting Scotland's Past* [New York, 1993]). He argues that the Ossian poems successfully located democratic values in an ancient Scotland that was also pre-Christian. Although Kidd provides an important corrective to those who see Macpherson and the Ossian poems as part of a purely Jacobite phenomena, he overlooks the separation of feeling from commerce that occurs in the poems. This separation challenges the idea of a universal four-stage theory of history as well as the ideological justification for British imperial expansion.

8. The first canto of Beattie's *Minstrel* was published anonymously in 1771. Dr. Gregory, a friend of both Beattie and Elizabeth Montagu, introduced the two to each other soon after its publication, and Montagu worked tirelessly as Beattie's patron to get him a royal pension and encourage him to write and publish the second canto. In his final revision of *The Minstrel* he added a dedication to Montagu in the final stanza of the first canto, and dedicated the entire volume, which included eight other short poems to her, writing "To Mrs. Montagu, these little poems, now revised and corrected for the last time, are, with every sentiment of esteem and gratitude, most respectfully inscribed by the author" (*The Minstrel in Two Books with Some Other Poems* [London, 1784]).

9. Silvia Sebastiani, "Race, Women, Progress in the Scottish Enlightenment," *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (New York, 2005): 75–96, 90. See also Mary Catherine Moran, "The Commerce of the Sexes," *Paradoxes of Civil Society*, ed. Frank Trentmann (New York, 2000), 61–84; and Jane Rendall, "Tacitus Engendered: Gothic Feminism and British Histories, c. 1750–1800," *Imagined Nations*, ed. Geoffrey Cubitt (New York, 1998), 57–74.

10. For more on the reading of Radcliffe's novels as reflections on the Revolutionary and Jacobin 1790s, see Ronald Paulson, *Representations of Revolution, 1789–1820* (New Haven, 1983).

11. Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s* (Chicago, 1995).

12. John Millar, *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771; repr., Edinburgh, 1806), 88.

13. Although Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* examines the relationship between economic developments, such as the division of labor and private property and what John Brewer calls "social change," Ferguson's argument does not rely as heavily on the influence of changing "modes of production" as do the arguments of Millar, Adam Smith, and Kames. Unlike other stadial theorists, Ferguson was also more reticent about linking economic complexity to social progress. See Brewer, "Conjectural History, Sociology and Social Change in Eighteenth-Century Scotland: Adam Ferguson," *The Making of Scotland*, ed. David McCrone, Stephen Kendrick, and Pat Straw (Edinburgh, 1989), 13–30.

14. Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Sketches of the History of Man*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1774), I:190.

15. Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger (1767; repr., Cambridge, 1995), 241–42.

16. Ferguson, 257.

17. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794; repr., New York, 1998), 200.

18. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 19.
19. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 19.
20. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 154.
21. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 158.
22. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 625.
23. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 625.
24. Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759; repr., Amherst, N.Y., 2000), 302.
25. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 296.
26. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 358.
27. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 358.
28. Smith, 298.
29. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 232.
30. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 233.
31. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 122.
32. On the relationship between "savage" stoicism and Smith's impartial spectator, see Maureen Harkin, "Adam Smith's Missing History: Primitives, Progress, and Problems of Genre," *ELH* 72, no. 2 (2005): 429–51.
33. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 188.
34. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 469.
35. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 476.
36. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 329.
37. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 279.
38. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 386.
39. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 386.
40. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 493.
41. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 565.
42. Beattie, xi.
43. Ferguson, 80.
44. Maureen McLane, "The Figure Minstrelsy Makes: Poetry and Historicity," *Critical Inquiry* 29, no. 3 (2003): 429–52, 434.
45. McLane, "The Figure Minstrelsy Makes," 435. See Beattie, Book I Stanza 52, and Book II Stanza 56.
46. See also McLane, "Dating, Orality, Thinking Balladry: Of Milkmaids and Minstrels in 1771" in "Ballads and Songs in the Eighteenth Century," ed. Ruth Perry, special issue, *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 47, no. 2–3 (2006): 131–49. In this essay, McLane reads the "ancient dame" of *The Minstrel's* Book I as a figure for a feminine and oral tradition historicized by antiquarians and ballad collectors. McLane's article describes written history's attempt to relegate a feminine oral culture to a distant past.
47. Beattie, I.43 and II.9.
48. Beattie, I.60.
49. McLane, "The Figure Minstrelsy Makes," 434.
50. Beattie, II.3.
51. Beattie, I.22.
52. Beattie, I.18.
53. Beattie, II.58.
54. See Roger Robinson, "The Origins and Composition of James Beattie's *Minstrel*," *Romanticism: The Journal of Romantic Culture and Criticism* 4, no. 2 (1998): 224–40.
55. Beattie, xii.
56. Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York, 1995); E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800* (New York, 1995).