

**From Libraries to Landscapes: Ann Radcliffe and the Cultural Location of Gothic Fiction: 1705-1795**

**By:**

Mark Bennett

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

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*For Lynn Bennett and David McLeish*

*Thank you for the stories*

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**Abstract**

This thesis examines the developing relationship between Gothic fiction and travel writing during the eighteenth century, focusing particularly on the work of Ann Radcliffe. As a popular parallel genre, travel writing played an important role in locating the Gothic imagination within contemporary print culture and the imaginative geographies it maintained. However, as analysis of influential travel writers such as Joseph Addison and William Gilpin reveals, the place of Gothic materials and the range of responses to them within popular forms of Grand and Picturesque tourism and travel writing was carefully deferred and delimited. This is reflected in the framing of earlier Gothic fictions by Horace Walpole and Charlotte Smith. Radcliffe’s works intervene in and revise this scenario. Her use of travel is a more considered and innovative process than has hitherto been acknowledged, working to develop a significant and robust presence for the Gothic imagination within contemporary eighteenth-century print culture.

Analysis of Radcliffe’s early works *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* and *A Sicilian Romance* and the travelogues that inform them reveals the significance of their well-chosen Scottish and Sicilian settings as apposite locations for an engagement with the Gothic at the peripheries of domestic and continental tourism. Examination of *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* then identifies the way these works locate the Gothic within the heartlands of continental Grand Tourism and approach it through the experiences of travelling heroines informed by the revisionary work of female travel writers. Finally, Radcliffe’s own travelogue, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* is read in continuity with her fiction as a response to the transformative impact of revolutionary turbulence and the questions it poses for the worldview constructed within eighteenth-century travel writing. The study concludes by relating its findings to Radcliffe’s last published novel, *The Italian:*  a text in which the significance of travel has already been identified by existing scholarship, but which now stands as the final statement of Radcliffe’s achievement in relocating the Gothic.

**Acknowledgements**

This thesis represents the end of a lengthy journey with many travelling companions. To list all of them individually would not be possible here, but I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge some people in particular. All PhD students owe a debt of gratitude to their supervisors, but Professors Andy Smith and Angela Wright have provided me with guidance, inspiration and encouragement for longer than they perhaps anticipated; I cannot thank them enough for their patience and their support. I am also grateful to Martin Willis for his input at an earlier stage of this research. I am fortunate to have specialised in a field that benefits from an exceptionally collegiate and supportive academic community. My thanks to all those I have discussed ideas (and more) with at conferences, particularly those of the IGA. Thanks too to my fellow students at Sheffield Gothic, past and present. The challenges involved in a part-time PhD were mine to accept, but they’ve often been shared by those around me (who have generally had less say in the matter). My parents, Dennis and Sharon Bennett and my in-laws, Mike and Jan Summerlin, all helped to make it possible for me to begin a PhD. The understanding and support of my employers, Andy Pritchard and Andy Holliday, allowed me to eventually get it finished. My closest travelling companion throughout has been my wife, Nai. I would not have made it to this point without her and could not imagine doing so with anyone else. Finally, I would like to thank my son, Torren, who joined this journey towards the end. My frequent weekend disappearances have apparently inspired him to begin his own PhD and complete it in an afternoon – the final bit of inspiration I needed, perhaps.

Limited versions of some of the material in this thesis have been published during this project. An earlier form of the material on Joseph Addison, Hester Piozzi and Ann Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* from Chapters One, Three and Four appeared as ‘Still to be Seen: Relocating the Gothic in the Fiction of Ann Radcliffe and the Travel Writing of Hester Piozzi’ in *Women and the Gothic,* ed. Maria Purves (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp. 11-23. A brief survey of the thesis topic also appeared as ‘Gothic Travels’ in *Romanticism and the Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Angela Wright and Dale Townshend (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 224-246.

**List of Abbreviations**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Anon | *A Journey to the Highlands of Scotland. With Occasional Remarks on Doctor Johnson’s Tour: by A Lady* | *Journey to the Highlands* |
| Joseph Addison | *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy in the Years 1701, 1702, 1703* | *Remarks* |
| Patrick Brydone | *A Tour Through Sicily and Malta* | *Sicily and Malta* |
| William Gilpin | *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; Made in the Summer of the Year 1770* | *River Wye* |
|  | *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on Several Parts of England, Particularly the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* | *Mountains and Lakes* |
|  | *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776, On Several Parts of Great Britain; Particularly the High-Lands of Scotland* | *High-Lands of Scotland* |
| Samuel Johnson | *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* | *Western Isles* |
| Hester Piozzi | *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy and Germany* | *Observations and Reflections* |
| Thomas Pennant | *A Tour in Scotland 1769* | *Tour in Scotland* |
| Charlotte Smith | *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* | *Emmeline* |
|  | *Ethelinde, or The Recluse of the Lake* | *Ethelinde* |
| Horace Walpole | *The Castle of Otranto* | *Otranto* |
| Ann Radcliffe | *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne: A Highland Story* | *Athlin and Dunbayne* |
|  | *A Sicilian Romance* | *Sicilian Romance* |
|  | *The Romance of the Forest* | *Forest* |
|  | *The Mysteries of Udolpho* | *Udolpho* |
|  | *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794, Through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a Return Down the Rhine: To Which are Added Observations During a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland* | *Journey* |
|  | *The Italian; or, The Confessional of the Black Penitents* | *The Italian* |
| *Henry Swinburne* | *Travels in the Two Sicilies* | *Two Sicilies* |

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Introduction

From Libraries to Landscapes

The gates of the castle she knew were locked, and guards placed in the court. [. . .] How avoid the pursuit [Manfred] would inevitably make throughout the castle! As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of Saint Nicholas. [Isabella] determined [. . .] to shut herself up for ever among the holy virgins, whose convent was contiguous to the cathedral.

(Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764)

I am going among scenery whence I intend to tip you the Damosel Radcliffe – I’ll cavern you, and grotto you, and waterfall you, and wood you, and solitude you.

(John Keats, ‘Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds’, 1818)

In the first chapter of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the heroine, Isabella, plans a somewhat remarkable escape. She will leave the eponymous castle by ‘a subterraneous passage’ leading to ‘the church of Saint Nicholas’ and then to a convent ‘contiguous’ with it (Walpole 1998: 27). In this way Isabella seemingly posits a journey across three sites that never really involves going outside. The oddity of this is easy to overlook because such travel is characteristic of Walpole’s novel, where, as Robert Miles has observed, movement typically ‘retreats ever deeper into the castle’s labyrinth’ (Miles 2002: 46). Though modern scholarship has often explored the inspiration for Walpole’s setting (see, for example Williams 2006; McEvoy 2016: 50-52), that setting itself is remarkable for its lack of an exterior landscape to explore.[[1]](#footnote-1) A similar property seems to characterise Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (1778), the self-acknowledged ‘literary offspring’ of Walpole’s story (Reeve 2003: 2). Here the action moves across a range of locations and even crosses national borders, yet the transit between them is never depicted in any detail. In fact, the device of the fragmentary manuscript that provides the “source” for Reeve’s tale is actively employed to elide travel. At one point the reader is told that a character produced an account detailing an extensive ‘journey to the West’ and ‘took down all the particulars in writing’ only for the narrative to break off and resume at his destination, following ‘an interval of four years’ (Reeve 2003: 19). These are novels that are variously concerned with history: the provenance of their manuscripts, the ancestral revelations presented in the stories they contain and the literary or political value of the “Gothic” age they claim to depict. Yet they are not, it seems, concerned with the Gothic’s ability to inhabit and interact with a recognisable geography.

This makes the breadth and detail of landscape description in Ann Radcliffe’s works all the more remarkable. And, indeed, it was that property that contemporary critics and readers – including Keats, above, – remarked. Reviewers praised her ability to ‘spread out vast, sombre and consistent pictures’ employing the ‘proper costume of nature [. . .] so that an air of reality pervades’ (qtd in Rogers 1994: 78; 105). For many ‘it was the painstakingly rendered natural landscapes of Radcliffe’s fiction that occasioned [. . .] her appreciation in terms better suited to fine art’ (Townshend and Wright 2014: 19). This relocation of the Gothic stands as one of Radcliffe’s most important innovations. For Walpole and Reeve, the Gothic inhabits the library, an interior space whose containment of the manuscript source is mirrored in the paratexts that caveat and curtail the significance of its contents. For Radcliffe, the Gothic appears within the landscape, approached across a believable exterior geography whose ‘reality’ and ‘consistent’ presentation means that its potential contiguity with that of the contemporary reader is always in play. The way in which Radcliffe effects this shift is bound up with what it achieves.

Radcliffe’s Gothic is always approached through travel. *Her* paratexts – as supplied for novels such as *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Italian* (1797) – are those of contemporary eighteenth-century travellers on versions of the continental Grand Tour. The other three novels published during her lifetime lack such prefaces but still begin with protagonists who are, or soon will, be explicitly or implicitly situated as travellers. Thus Osbert, the hero of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789)*,* ‘loved to wander over romantic scenes’ and is first encountered on ‘one of these rambles’ (Radcliffe 1995: 5) whilst La Motte, whose fugitive flight begins *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) too plans to style himself as a tourist, introducing himself to the first characters he meets as ‘a traveller’ (Radcliffe 1999: 4). The narrative of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), meanwhile, is set in motion by the convalescent tour undertaken by Emily St Aubert and her father in the first volume. Across these works – and including, of course, her *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* (1795) – the Gothic is encountered by travellers and in circumstances associated with familiar modes of travel. This is important for two, related, reasons. The first is that Radcliffe’s travelling frame-narrators and protagonists offer a point of identification for contemporary readers who could have and, in many cases would have, also approached such sites within continental tours or domestic Picturesque excursions. The second is that Radcliffe’s texts assert a relationship with travel writing: ‘another popular literary genre of her day’ (Townshend and Wright 2014: 10) and one that those readers would also be familiar with. For all its apparent historical distancing, Radcliffe’s Gothic is embedded within *contemporary* travel and travel writing. In leaving the library for the landscape it achieves a far more proximate and prominent location within eighteenth-century print culture.

This study is the first to explore that process in detail, mapping it across a range of Radcliffe’s works together with the travelogues that provide their intertexts. In doing so it makes a new contribution to the understanding of Radcliffe’s achievement and its significance in developing – and locating – the eighteenth-century Gothic imagination. In particular, this allows for the recognition of the way the Gothic developed in other genres, alongside and, sometimes, in advance of, the novels and romances that are most visible within modern scholarship. Eighteenth-century travellers and travel writers also encountered the materials that would provide a basis for the Gothic imagination, whether or not they recognised, indulged or even accepted them as such. Radcliffe’s innovation was to respond to these pre-existing encounters and to rework them within her texts in a way that recognised *and* revised the way the Gothic was being located within the contemporary topography – and imaginative geography – available to her readers.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Of course, this is not the first study to identify a relationship between Gothic and travel, or to do so in the works of Radcliffe specifically. At times this quality is sufficiently commonplace to be implicit, as when Robert Miles neatly describes Radcliffe as ‘galvanising Walpole’s moribund experiment, setting it stalking about the land’ so that travel defines her work both actually and metaphorically (Miles 1995: 2). Elsewhere it is aptly summarised by Ben Brabon’s broad acknowledgement of ‘the masterful accomplishments of Radcliffe’s representations of panoramic geographic spaces’ (Brabon 2014: 102). Unsurprisingly, critics have also drawn connections between Radcliffe’s work and the practice of travel and travel writing. Ellen Moers’s foundational study of *Literary Women* sees Radcliffe’s works as the model for what she calls ‘travelling heroinism’: an innovation through which the Gothic novel becomes ‘a device to send maidens on distant and exciting journeys’. This label has proven to be a somewhat less enduring definition of Radcliffe’s work than Moers’s association of her with the ‘Female Gothic’ (Moers 1978: 90-110).[[3]](#footnote-3) Yet her study nonetheless provides an early acknowledgement of the fact that travel and travelling are definitive of the Radcliffean Gothic. A problem with Moers’s account, however, is that the *relationship* with travel writing is mostly dismissed from it. For Moers, the idiosyncrasies and inaccuracies of Radcliffe’s depictions mean that her characters’ movements occur ‘independently of the laws of gravity, time, perspective and, certainly, of real travel’. This is apparently explained by the fact that for most of her career, Radcliffe had ‘never been out of England’ and thus her descriptions were drawn from ‘travel books’ by those (mostly men) who had (Moers 1978: 127-128). This paints Radcliffe’s travelling heroinism as a substitute for travel. Such a judgement is echoed by later critics such as Carol Margaret Davison, who draws upon Moers in seeing ‘the Female Gothic novelist’ (still typified by Radcliffe) as having ‘incorporated aspects of the travel narrative into the Gothic by sending her heroine travelling’ in order to overcome ‘the barriers to female travel at the time’ (Davison 2009: 93). Emma McEvoy similarly notes that ‘there is a good case for thinking of early literary Gothic’ which was ‘born in an age of tourism’ as being itself ‘a kind of vicarious tourism’ (McEvoy 2014: 479). This sense of the Gothic as a replacement for actual travel is also visible in scholarly work on travel writing. James Buzard, for example, includes ‘Gothic fiction’ in a survey of travel between the mid-seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, but restricts it to having ‘initially functioned to supply imaginary *substitutes* for travel’ (Buzard 2002: 44). The sense of the Gothic as providing a “route” to travel and travel experiences is important, particularly with reference to female writers and readers in the eighteenth century; this will be explored in Chapter Four. Yet seeing the Gothic as purely a vicarious substitute for travel obscures a more nuanced relationship between these two forms. Radcliffe’s works should not only be seen as *alternative* texts, bracketed off from “real” travelogues and real experiences. Instead, as this study will demonstrate, they should be understood as interventions in an adjacent genre they assert an intertextual relationship with.

To achieve this requires more attention to the specific texts and practices Radcliffe’s texts engage with. Again, existing scholarship has begun to explore this question, albeit not systematically. Moers herself notes that Hester Piozzi’s ‘unconventional, distinctly female travel book’, *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey Through France, Italy and Germany* (1789) was ‘most important’ to Radcliffe’s work, yet does not analyse this connection (Moers 1978: 128). Subsequent criticism has addressed this in more detail (see Bennett 2014; D’Ezio 2015) and the parallels between Piozzi’s work and *Udolpho* inform part of the argument in Chapter Four. Other critics have made more general observations about Radcliffe’s use of travel writing. For Robert Miles this is ‘the other fashionable genre Radcliffe draws upon’ (Miles 1995: 52) – a statement that briefly implies the equal importance of travel alongside earlier Gothic as an ingredient in Radcliffe’s formula. McEvoy also notes that ‘the touristic aspect of many Gothic novels’ is ‘particularly pronounced in novels such as Radcliffe’s’ so that ‘much of the description in Gothic texts overlaps with the language of travel writing’ (McEvoy 2016: 51). When it comes to the particular travelogues Radcliffe utilises and their relationships with the novels that draw upon them, the best analysis has often been found in biographical and editorial work. Rictor Norton employs a range of sources to provide an impressive summary of some of the texts that are likely to have influenced Radcliffe and whose elements can sometimes be found directly incorporated in her work (Norton 1999: 72-74). There has also been excellent textual scholarship involved in the preparation of critical editions of the novels, many of which carefully identify specific travelogues along with other important intertexts and sources for them (see, for example, Chard 1986; Milbank 1993; Milbank 1995; Clery 1998; Castle 1998). So far, however, there has been no study such as the present, which plots a broader relationship between Radcliffe’s works and the travel writing they so consistently interact with.

Such a study is valuable because it moves beyond an analysis of sources and the identification of specific details to consider why and how particular settings and texts are used. It also reveals the way these travelogues themselves engage and explore Gothic elements, rather than simply considering them as repositories of scenic descriptions to be interspersed *with* Gothic fiction, or a facile mechanism for endowing it with a suitably foreign and obscure setting. This means broadening a sense of what travel contributed to the Gothic in various senses. The role of travelogues as a source of exemplary aesthetic principles and set pieces, for example, is important and informs Miles’s consideration of ‘the aesthetic context’ for her work (Miles 1995: 53). Tellingly, Norton’s summary is also offered in a chapter on ‘the aesthetics of terror’ (Norton 1999: 66-81). As Miles notes, aesthetic discourses ‘were not without ideological meaning’ (Miles 1995: 53), yet a focus on the way such practices are incorporated *in* the Gothic can obscure the way in which they were applied *to* the Gothic, in travel, and the extent to which an author like Radcliffe is responding to that. The Picturesque, in particular, should be understood in part as offering a vocabulary for speaking about Gothic – or potentially Gothic – materials that develops in advance of the novels that draw on it; this is explored in more detail in Chapter One.

Consideration of a more nuanced engagement with the Gothic in travel can also add to an understanding of the way in which these texts inform the settings for novels such as Radcliffe’s. There is a tendency here to read travel writing as a shorthand for – or shortcut to – versions of otherness and alterity. Norton, for example, judges that ‘travel books, particularly descriptions of Italy, made an important contribution to Ann Radcliffe’s evocation of the exotic past’ (Norton 1999: 73). Other critics also identify travel as a means of distancing Gothic characteristics from the domestic, contemporary and familiar world of the reader (Schmitt 1994: 855; Mighall 1999: 18; Davison 2009: 93; Edwards 2014: 56; Watt 2014: 72-73). In such readings travel is a shorthand for chronological and geographical alterity (indeed, the two can be one and the same thing if the “other” is also historically benighted). These approaches are important, because they recognise the way travel and travel writing offer a means of encountering the Gothic and negotiating that encounter, but they miss part of its significance in locating that Gothic for the reader.[[4]](#footnote-4) Engagements with the Gothic in travel writing were also, by definition, contemporary engagements within an arena that travel writing itself worked to familiarise and make available within a contemporary print culture.[[5]](#footnote-5) Indeed, the travel writing Radcliffe draws upon contains its own methods for managing alterity that allow the foreign landscapes of the Grand Tour in particular to be understood in terms of the familiar, in a manner that potentially affirms the traveller’s education and privilege (Chard 1999: 40-83). Of course, the potential for alterity is part of the appeal of such “Gothic settings”, but this is precisely because this is an alterity the eighteenth-century reader can potentially engage with through travel writing and travel reading. It is therefore necessary to consider how such strategies were applied to the Gothic in travel writing and to ask how such processes are – or are not – echoed in the fiction that draws on these texts.

It is also important to recognise that the settings Radcliffe develops through travel are not entirely “exotic”. This is obviously – though not simplistically – true for the Scottish setting of her first novel, *Athlin and Dunbayne* (discussed in detail in Chapter Two).But it is also the case that, as critics such as Brabon have observed, fictionalisations of apparently ‘remote geographies’ could still refer back to Britain by tapping into political and social issues related to the transformation of the domestic landscape (Brabon 2014: 98-101). As such it is significant that even Radcliffe’s foreign settings employ the aesthetics of Picturesque description, which, as Chapter One will explore, was bound up with questions of the landscape’s ownership, management and history that could become freighted with a Gothic character, transmitted to fictional works through apparently innocuous scenic tours such as William Gilpin’s. Appreciating this more nuanced relationship with travel writing also means paying proper attention to paratexts such as Radcliffe’s prefaces. These may initially appear ‘perfunctory’ and ‘rapidly discarded’ (Watt 1999: 122) yet they serve an important function in framing the Gothic, through travel, as proximate and approachable rather than historical and unreachable. As such, they replay – and rework – contemporary encounters with the Gothic within travel. What is remarkable – though generally unremarked – about the preface to *A Sicilian Romance* is that it frames the foreign Sicilian Gothic through a domestic aesthetic discourse: that of the Picturesque ruin. As such, the Gothic is approached through a familiarising perspective, not an exoticising one. The significance of this is explored further in Chapter Three.

The existing critical emphasis on the association of the Gothic, through travel writing, with alterity, may be the product of a tendency to focus analysis upon *The Italian*, particularly the way Radcliffe’s final novel plays out a confrontation with the foreigner as an ‘exempla of otherness’ (Schmitt 1994: 855).[[6]](#footnote-6) This has brought forth important readings, but has tended to divert attention away from the use of travel in earlier novels, particularly *Athlin and Dunbayne* and *Sicilian Romance*. The present study makes a conscious effort to redress this by devoting a chapter to each of these novels and exploring the specific intertexts that inform the selection and use of their settings. In doing so, however, it draws on invaluable work by those scholars who *have* focussed on Radcliffe’s later work. Of particular importance is Diego Saglia’s ‘Looking at the Other: Cultural Difference and the Traveller’s Gaze in *The Italian*’, an essay that sought to restore the then ‘impoverished significance of place in Gothic writing’ (Saglia 1996: 12) – the success of which endeavour is visible in its influence upon later work (see Perkins 2006; Gephardt 2010).[[7]](#footnote-7) Saglia identifies *The Italian* as being embedded in travel: ‘the text decidedly plunges into the mysteries of present-day Italy and into the conventions of the Grand Tour with its peculiar modes of observation and evaluation’ (Saglia 1996: 13). He identifies the way in which the text’s preface sets up the way the Gothic – in the form of the assassin whose ambiguous history induces the narrative – is to be encountered as a challenge to this framework. It presents a kind of content the traveller, here a representative Grand Tourist, *cannot* make sense of as the *return* gaze of the assassin effects ‘a reversal of roles, the assassin's ability to unsettle the apparently settled picture of the English gentlemen [. . .] defies the construction of reality and the dominance of the foreign observer’ (Saglia 1996: 14). What is most significant about Saglia’s reading, for the present purpose, is that it identifies this process not as a typical feature of a Grand Tour encounter characterised by an innate exoticism, but as a surprising failure in the expected ability of the traveller to make sense of the Gothic. As such Saglia’s analysis reveals that the exploration of apparent Gothic alterity through travel can be highly nuanced, that this process can be informed by the strategies employed in travel writing and that the framing of Gothic *through* travel (in this case indicated and initiated by Radcliffe’s preface) can be especially significant. The present study explores these processes in more detail, particularly as they concern engagements with the Gothic within travel writings themselves.[[8]](#footnote-8) It also traces such engagements across Radcliffe’s earlier works. Saglia suggests that ‘the travel dimension and the ensuing outlook combine and dominate the narrative [of *The Italian*] as in no other of Radcliffe's romances with an Italian setting’ (Saglia 1996: 16): a statement that reveals his specific concern with Italy and the framework of Grand Tourism. The present study identifies a nuanced relationship with travel writing as a much broader characteristic of Radcliffe’s works, explaining how they come to re-locate the Gothic in such a way that it can be so thoroughly embedded within the Italy of contemporary Grand Tourism.

In identifying the role of travel writing in locating the Gothic, this research contributes to an ongoing re-evaluation of Radcliffe’s relationship with a broader print culture and literary marketplace in the late eighteenth century. Such work includes recent collections of new work on Radcliffe which have explicitly sought to ‘extend the appreciation of Radcliffe [. . .] beyond the narrow confines of the Gothic’ and to ‘relocate her work within a much broader literary, cultural and historical context’ that includes ‘other popular genres such as poetry and travel writing’ (Townshend and Wright 2014: xiv; Smith and Bennett 2015: 282). In particular, this study joins an effort to reassess the way Radcliffe herself asserts relationships with other forms of writing and the significance she thereby asserts for her Gothic. These include the innovative use of chapter epigraphs and inset poetry to canonise her texts (Jacobs 2014: 61) as well as other elements of a ‘highly successful assemblage of cultural references’ – including those drawn from travel literature – that Robert Miles has identified as integral to the ‘Radcliffean matrix’ (Miles 2009: 50-51). Crucial to this, as Jo Ellen Delucia has identified, is an understanding of the publication context for Radcliffe’s novels and the particular significance of her move from Thomas Hookham to George Robinson with *Udolpho*. Because Robinson was ‘best known for publishing not novels, but periodicals, translations and travel narratives’ this transition complicates Radcliffe’s position within eighteenth-century print culture’ and ‘invites readers to take seriously the foreign settings of her novels’. As such it also ‘begs more work on Radcliffe’s Gothic and these sister genres’ (Delucia 2015: 290-291, 295).[[9]](#footnote-9) The following chapters take up that invitation by considering the way Radcliffe uses travel across her career to locate the Gothic within a wider print culture.

This is the first extensive study of a specific relationship between Gothic and travel writing in the eighteenth-century and the first to explore Radcliffe’s role within it. It is nonetheless part of a broader reorientation in recent scholarship towards the significance of place and location in the Gothic and the intersections between fiction and other discourses or practices. One such study is George Dekker’s *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism*, which conceives of a particularly Romantic mode of tourism in the service of imaginative stimulus and the experience of ‘transport’. Dekker focusses primarily on fictionalisations of tourism in the work of a ‘subset’ of writers (including Radcliffe) who were both tourists and authors (Dekker 2004: 8-9). The present study has recourse to Dekker’s reading of *Forest* in particular, but considers Radcliffe in terms of earlier traditions of eighteenth-century travel writing and the relationship with the Gothic therein. As its title suggests, Emma McEvoy’s important study of *Gothic Tourism* is more specifically concerned with ‘the act of visiting, for the purposes of leisure, a location that is presented in terms of the Gothic’ but is similarly focussed on a later period, being primarily concerned with ‘some of the Gothic tourism in England today’ (McEvoy 2016: 3, 6).[[10]](#footnote-10) This pro-active and self-conscious search for Gothic experience differs markedly from the travel writing explored in the present study, but the following analysis nevertheless draws on McEvoy’s reading of earlier responses to particular sites. Ben Brabon’s work on ‘Gothic cartography’ (Brabon 2013) is more specifically concerned with the eighteenth century and the extent to which the foreign settings employed for Gothic novels served ‘as a means to explore social anxieties at home and abroad’ (Brabon 2014: 98). This study shares Brabon’s interest in the way the Gothic can inhabit a culturally proximate space, rather than being consigned to geographical and / or chronological alterity; it identifies the relationship with travel writing as an important and hitherto under-examined route through which it achieves this kind of (re)location (and the role of Radcliffe in effecting it). The status and significance of physical “Gothic” sites within the potentially travelled landscape is explored in important recent work by Dale Townshend, Michael Carter and Peter N. Linfield, focussing on responses to Gothic architecture, particularly the ruins that provided a focus for the Picturesque (see Townshend 2011; Carter, Lindfield and Townshend 2017). Townshend in particular has also identified the genesis of a nascent ‘Gothic tourism’ in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, occurring at those sites where a more conventional Picturesque tourism could not, or would not, function (Townshend 2014a). The present study takes account of Townshend’s work in assessing the Picturesque response to Gothic sites, but is most concerned with an earlier phase in which that response was (at least ostensibly) more dominant and more successful, prior to its uptake in fiction such as Radcliffe’s. Finally, a number of recent scholarly collections have begun to consider the role of place and regionality in Gothic fiction in more detail (see Yang and Healey 2016; Heholt and Hughes 2018). However, the majority of these essays focus on later periods and do not address travel writing specifically. This project contributes to these concerns with Gothic locations by tracing the important and hitherto overlooked extent to which travel writing helped to locate the Gothic for readers in the eighteenth-century.

In order to appreciate Radcliffe’s work as an innovation in the location of the Gothic through travel, it is necessary to examine the traditions of travel writing she had available to work with and consider the extent to which *previous* writers engaged with them. This makes it possible to see how the Gothic was geographically and culturally situated prior to Radcliffe’s intervention, along with the role of travel writing in this process. Chapter One therefore surveys two dominant modes of eighteenth-century travel and travel writing: those of the continental Grand Tour and the domestic Picturesque. It demonstrates that these traditions – overlapping in Radcliffe’s works as elsewhere – constructed and maintained an imaginative geography within which the presence and affective potential of Gothic materials might be recognised, but remained typically subordinated to the judgement of enlightened travellers equipped with appropriate perspectives and discourses. These are represented by the influential examples of Joseph Addison and William Gilpin, whose works provide model case studies for the treatment of the Gothic within Grand and Picturesque tourism. They also establish interesting paradigms for the location of the Gothic in earlier fictional works. The chapter therefore looks briefly at Walpole’s *Otranto* and considers the way in which, despite the text’s lack of any realised geography, the inaugural ‘Gothic Story’ nonetheless asserts a playfully deferred link to its author’s experiences of Grand Tourism. It then considers examples from the early work of Charlotte Smith, an often overlooked predecessor and contemporary of Radcliffe. Her *Emmeline* (1788) and *Ethelinde* (1789) locate elements of the Gothic within a strikingly contemporary and domestic setting, but do so precisely because they are able to draw on a discourse for responding to the Gothic, aesthetically and politically, within the tradition of Picturesque scenic tourism.

Chapter Two commences a process of looking at particular examples of Radcliffe’s fiction and considering the way in which specific travel contexts inform her choice of settings and her treatment of the Gothic within them. It begins by drawing on the argument in Chapter One to reassess the apparently uncharacteristic Scottish setting for *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, suggesting that an increasing interest in domestic travel, together with the intervening work of Smith, made Scotland a plausible choice for the location of a Gothic novel in 1789. The chapter goes on to demonstrate that this was also a typically *considered* choice on Radcliffe’s part. Scotland offered an apposite arena in which to rework the cultural location of the Gothic along with its geographical location and this would have been visible to Radcliffe through a nexus of travelogues produced during the previous decade. These texts respond to Scotland’s political union by attempting to make sense of its potential geographical and cultural continuity with England, employing discourses of enlightened scholarship and Picturesque appraisal to do so. Their frictions and partial failures therefore provide an important context for Radcliffe’s debut. A reading of *Athlin and Dunbayne* reveals the way the text problematises apparently simple questions of land ownership and historical progress. Because these questions are themselves bound up with the discourses of Picturesque scenic tourism *and* with the national “myth” of Gothic history Radcliffe adapts from her predecessors, they draw upon the significance of the text’s “domestic” setting and reveal the importance of travel writing as a context for this.

By devoting a full chapter to *Athlin and Dunbayne* this study acknowledges the importance of Radcliffe’s earliest works to the topic it addresses. Indeed, if anything, her first novels are of greater significance than those that follow and build on them. It is within these works, by definition, that Radcliffe’s use of travel is most innovative. This is particularly true for *A Sicilian Romance*, considered in detail in Chapter Three. Here, for the first time, Radcliffe explicitly and unequivocally situates the Gothic within the framework of contemporary travel. As its preface reveals, this text is concerned with encountering and engaging Gothic sites *and* their narratives during a version of the Grand Tour. Again, the specific setting for this encounter is appropriate and considered when understood within the context of the travelogues that inform it. The chapter reveals this by exploring the peculiar place of Sicily at the periphery of continental travel: a site to which the typical itinerary of the Grand Tour could occasionally be extended, but also something of a hinterland in which its perspectives and assumptions might not always function. Patrick Brydone’s *A Tour Through Sicily and Malta* (1773) and Henry Swinburne’s *Travels in the Two Sicilies* (1783-5) provide case studies for the way in which this less confident arena for Grand Tourism could also become one in which the Gothic was more apparent. A reading of the novel itself then reveals the extent to which it reflects this context; the prefatory encounter with the Gothic leads to the emergence of the narrative which overwrites the nascent travelogue and maintains its characteristic concern with the troubling visibility and agency of Gothic materials within the travelled landscape.

Chapters Two and Three reveal Radcliffe’s early use of settings at the peripheries of domestic and continental tourism as highly apposite arenas within which to explore a more robust re-situation of the Gothic. Chapter Four examines the next step in this process as *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* locate their narratives within the heartlands of continental travel. Here Radcliffe is more obviously concerned with questions that have been implicit, to varying degrees, in her earlier works: namely the extent to which “atypical” female travellers might have access to the discourses of travel and travel writing and the manner in which this shapes their experience of Gothic materials. The chapter looks in particular at the revisionary version of Grand Tourism presented in Hester Piozzi’s *Observations and Reflections* and its function as a model for Radcliffe. Readings of the novels then explore how they challenge the efficacy *and* question the objectives of dominant travel discourses, aprocess rendered visible through the perspectives of the novels’ heroines, whose own experiences of companionable journeying are frequently threatened or curtailed. In this way the chapter returns to the acknowledgement of the centrality of travel in Radcliffe that underpins Moers’s categories of travelling heroinism and Female Gothic. In doing so it provides a new understanding of these novels’ relationship *with* travel and their role in cementing the Gothic’s location within the imaginative geographies it constructs.

Chapter Five finally considers Radcliffe’s own travelogue, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*. It avoids reading this text, as some studies have done, as a point at which Radcliffe’s writing pivots away from her earlier works (see, for example, Macmillan 2000; Gephardt 2010). Instead the *Journey* is situated as part of the ongoing concern with the relationship between Gothic and travel revealed in the preceding chapters. In particular, it provides a means of assessing Radcliffe’s response to transformations in contemporary travel as the aftermath of the French Revolution turned continental tourism into an arena in which Gothic elements could become dominant, rather than subordinate. To provide context for this, the chapter considers how Revolutionary Gothic travel might be explored in fictional works, including Radcliffe’s own *Forest* and Smith’s *Desmond* (1792). These texts reveal a concern with the functionality of “exported” discourses such as the Picturesque in making sense of and / or retreating from revolutionary landscapes and their politics, a concern shared by the *Journey*. Through its innovative conjunction of continental and domestic tours, Radcliffe’s travelogue questions the ability to simply withdraw from the Gothic’s presence within the imaginative geography of contemporary travel: a presence her work plays a key role in revealing.

The unique and original case made throughout this study is that this relationship between the writing of Gothic fiction and travel is a key part of Radcliffe’s innovation in the development of the eighteenth-century Gothic *and* a key part of what that innovation achieves. Her work locates the Gothic within the arena of contemporary travel, within the imaginative geographies it constructed and the print culture in which they were made available to readers of both genres. Radcliffe, more than any other writer, is responsible for moving the Gothic out of the library and into the landscape.

Chapter One

Discoveries and Deferrals: Locating the Gothic in Eighteenth-Century Travel Writing

The eye is pleased with the tuftings of a tree: it is amused with pursuing the eddying stream; or it rests with delight on the shattered arches of a Gothic ruin.

(William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, 1782)

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle [. . .] the Gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object [. . .] it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign.

(Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794)

The settings of Ann Radcliffe’s novels are more innovative than they might appear to modern critics, who view them alongside the tradition of Gothic fiction that they helped to inspire and popularise during the 1790s and beyond. Following an initial foray into the Scottish Highlands, the other fictions that Radcliffe published in her lifetime range across France, Italy and neighbouring regions within continental Europe and the Mediterranean. Textual representations of these places would have been familiar to Radcliffe’s first readers, but this familiarity would not, for the most part, have been drawn from existing Gothic novels or romances. Radcliffe herself is the first writer after Walpole to set a Gothic fiction in Europe and to endow such settings with geographical detail. As Robert Miles observes, her work significantly expands Walpole’s formula to represent her characters’ journeying across the ‘picturesque and sublime scenery of southern Europe’ (Miles 2002: 46). In fact, it is travel and travel writing, rather than existing Gothic fiction, that would have provided contemporary readers with an initial frame of reference for the settings she employed and foregrounded in her titles as well as for the way she approached the Gothic within those settings.[[11]](#footnote-11)

This is gestured towards in the epigraphs above, which juxtapose Emily St Aubert’s famous arrival at the foreboding Castle Udolpho with one of the many less famous – and somewhat more congenial – views of Gothic ruin taken by William Gilpin, a contemporary travel writer with an equal interest in such sites. The obvious contrast between Gilpin and Radcliffe here is all the more striking because of what they share: an interest in the visual confrontation between the onlooking subject and the Gothic object within a version of the travelled landscape. In this way the contrast gestures towards a shared context for the encounter both writers present. This chapter begins to explore that context by examining the situation of the Gothic within the travel writing to which *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), along with Radcliffe’s other works, responds.

Radcliffe’s own familiarity with contemporary travel writing is well documented within her critical biography (see Norton 1999: 73-78). Accordingly, her novels chart individual and, indeed, collective trajectories that would have made sense to readers familiar with two predominant forms of travel writing: the literature of the continental Grand Tour, whose typical itinerary through France into Italy is traced by her major novels, and of the domestic Picturesque Tour that helped to popularise the Scottish setting for her first ‘Highland Story’ and whose aesthetics and politics are employed across her subsequent fictions. However, this part of Radcliffe’s creative process is more nuanced than is usually acknowledged. Travel offered more than a simple means of “marketing” fiction by interpolating scenic detail and signposting settings. During the eighteenth century, Gothic novels and travelogues co-existed within a wider print culture. Publishers of Gothic fiction were often also publishers of printed tours, while, by the same token, readers of Gothic fiction were frequently readers of travel narratives.[[12]](#footnote-12) By producing porous texts that incorporated and re-imagined material from contemporary travelogues, Radcliffe asserted the adjacency of her work within this marketplace; appealing to the ‘discriminating readers’ of a ‘high status’ genre (Watt 1999: 112-3), a ‘worthy labour’ towards ‘the gradual accumulation of knowledge’ (Miles 1995: 53) that was itself a ‘quintessential enlightenment production’ (Davison 2009: 93). Travel writing could locate the Gothic culturally, and not only geographically. Restoring Radcliffe’s novels to the company of the travelogues that informed them – and which they were read alongside – makes it possible to see this as a key feature of her work and of her innovation in developing the Gothic. To do this effectively it is necessary to understand the traditions of travel writing that Radcliffe’s novels adapt and to consider the pre-existing treatment of the Gothic within them.

**The imaginative geographies of eighteenth-century travel**

The two most recognisable modes of travel – and travel writing – at the outset of Radcliffe’s career were those of the Grand and Picturesque Tour. These are geographically and, to some extent, chronologically distinct traditions that are often treated separately in detailed studies.[[13]](#footnote-13) Yet they were also interlinked. Though the domestic tour may have originated as a successor, in the later eighteenth-century, to the increasingly problematic continental voyages upon which traditional Grand Tourism was predicated, it owed much to the former’s cultural impact. As Malcolm Andrews observes, it was the acquisition of landscape art by travellers to the classical Mediterranean that informed the Picturesque aesthetic, so that ‘the few Claudes already in England in the late seventeenth century’ grew to ‘over eighty [. . .] by the early nineteenth’ (Andrews 1989: 26). The same process is neatly summarised by Elizabeth Bohls, who writes of ‘the trunkloads of paintings and other art objects carried home by aspiring connoisseurs [. . .] that would later feed the fashion for picturesque nature’ (Bohls 1995: 89). The Picturesque aesthetic in turn would be absorbed into the vocabulary of later visitors to the continent (see Buzard 2002: 47). Radcliffe’s own works engage with both traditions; her European settings may be drawn from the continental tour (and its peripheries) but characters within them readily encounter ruins that can be appraised through the Picturesque, or, more often, against which the Picturesque itself can be reappraised. This is itself a testament to the adjacency and overlap between these forms of travel writing in the print culture that Radcliffe and her readers inhabited.

One explanation for this overlap is that, despite their apparent differences, Grand and Picturesque travel writing have much in common. Both involve familiar patterns of travel by travellers of sufficient means, pursuing specific objectives. The Grand Tour was an ‘ideological’ and educational exercise undertaken by ‘young men of the ruling classes’ with a ‘more or less common itinerary’ encompassing the sites and objects such travellers should see, appraise and, potentially, write of (Buzard 2002: 38-39). The Picturesque Tour may seem comparatively humble, yet its ‘indispensable prerequisites of means, leisure, and education still restricted it to a comparative elite’ (Bohls 1995: 90). Their goal was also to encounter a sequence of sites – often following ‘scrupulous directions’ to exact viewpoints (Andrews 1989: 30) – and judge them according to some version of what William Gilpin – the first and most popular Picturesque traveller and writer – loosely defined as ‘the rules of picturesque beauty’ (Gilpin 1782: 1-2). Both modes also hinge on a logic of management and control that worked through a literal or figurative appropriation of the travelled region. The Grand Tourist accumulated objects (including the aforementioned landscape paintings) which, ‘displayed at home, would testify to the quality of his taste and surround him with objective confirmations of his self-worth’ (Buzard 2002: 40). The Picturesque traveller, meanwhile, ‘processes’ their sites and scenery through sketching and description, turning them into a ‘frameable possession’ or ‘a commodity’ (Andrews 1989: 81). In this way, both types of tour involve a similar ‘travel performance’. This term is drawn from the sociological work of Judith Adler, who describes formalised travel ‘performed’ along a particular trajectory as a process that ‘draws significance’ to the traveller ‘who takes possession of a world defined through that trajectory’ (Adler 1989: 1369-1370). This model fits well with both of the forms of eighteenth-century tourism described in this chapter and provides a useful shorthand for the practices typical Grand and Picturesque travellers seek to demonstrate and affirm. Writing could be key to this process. The commodification of Picturesque scenery was literalised in best-selling tour books such as Gilpin’s whilst, as Chloe Chard observes, ‘a failure to appropriate the topography of the Grand Tour as a source of pleasure or benefit [. . .] is very often identified with a failure in writing’ (Chard 1999: 24).[[14]](#footnote-14) Of course, individual travellers – and authors – could deviate from or critique these performances. Radcliffe herself uses the opportunity offered by her own travelogue *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* (1795) to cast a wry glance at those ‘writer[s] of travels’ who ensure that ‘their prosperity shall be painted on their volumes’ (Radcliffe 1795: 104). In making this remark Radcliffe acknowledges the ‘censure thrown upon Smollett’ (Radcliffe 1795: 105) whose *Travels Through France and Italy* (1766) frequently expressed their disappointments, particularly with the economics of continental travel. Yet these critiques and deviations themselves acknowledge a predominant type of travel performance – the typical practice of Radcliffe’s ‘*writer* of travels’ and the criticism awaiting writers like Smollett who did not enjoy the Tour in the correct way and reflect this in their texts (see Chard 1999: 22-26).

Being centred upon their chosen regions and itineraries, these Grand and Picturesque travel performances and texts may be said to produce forms of imaginative geography: a collective re-presentation of travelled regions in forms that appropriate them for the purposes of a set of travellers whose privileged identities are affirmed in the process. The concept of imaginative geography was originally presented by Edward Said in his influential work on *Orientalism*. For Said, imaginative geography is a shared conception of real regions that incorporates ‘something more than what appears merely to be positive knowledge’. This process works to affirm (and potentially safeguard) the subjectivity responsible for it: helping ‘the mind to intensify its own sense of itself’ by ‘dramatising the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away’ (Said 1978: 55). It works through a process of “pre-familiarisation” as Said describes the way that encounters within imaginative geography are reduced to ‘a restricted number of typical encapsulations’ through which ‘something patently foreign and distant acquires [. . .] a status more rather than less familiar’ (Said 1978: 58). Said’s model works well for the kinds of travel performance and travel writing that provide a backdrop for Radcliffe’s work within “enlightened” eighteenth-century print culture: the continental and Mediterranean cities designated as finishing schools for the patrician Grand Tourist, or the British regions filtered into a series of static Picturesque landscape views.

This study is not the first to describe typical forms of eighteenth-century travel in terms of Said’s theory (or in terms that fit with it).[[15]](#footnote-15) However, the model of imaginative geography is useful for more than simply summarising the ways in which travellers might pre-inscribe and re-conceive a region. It is also a means of managing that imaginative appropriation according to what it should and should not include. Participants in imaginative geography police that imaginative geography so that its reproduction (in travel writing, for example) may sometimes be ‘not so much a way of receiving new information as [. . .] a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things’ (Said 1978: 63). For both Grand and Picturesque tourists such “threats” could include markers and materials that were – or would become – vessels for the eighteenth-century Gothic imagination. In this way the imaginative geography of eighteenth-century travel provides an arena within which responses to the “Gothic” were already being worked out and deployed in the decades before a taste for Gothic fiction was being popularised by Radcliffe and others. Understanding and investigating this can make a significant contribution to an understanding of the Gothic’s development (and cultural location) during the eighteenth-century. It is also necessary in order to reveal the significance of Radcliffe’s subsequent innovation in responding to and revising such treatments – relocating the Gothic in the process. The remainder of this chapter will therefore look at Grand and Picturesque tourism in closer detail, using exemplary texts to assess their treatment and representation of the Gothic. It will also set some earlier fictional works alongside these travel writings to consider the extent to which other writers responded to these imaginative geographies in developing their own Gothic fictions; doing so will provide a clearer context for the relationship between travel writing and Gothic materials as Radcliffe “finds it” and set her own innovations in relief.

**Gothic on the Grand Tour**

The Grand Tour was, at least ostensibly, an educational voyage across Europe, through which members of the British patrician elite acquired education and acculturation. Its itinerary usually involved a voyage south, culminating in an Italy imaginatively appropriated by the Tour as a kind of cultural ‘museum’ (Chaney 1998: xi) and centred upon its epicentre, Rome: ‘the goal of many tourists, the furthest point of numerous tours, both reality and symbol of what was desirable about foreign travel’ (Black 2003: 43).[[16]](#footnote-16) Though the practice of travelling to and writing about the Mediterranean could encompass a broad range of approaches and discourses (see Chard 1999), it was a ‘classical framework’ that defined the Grand Tour for much of the eighteenth-century (Sweet 2012: 5-7). Accordingly, the imaginative geography this kind of travel constructs is highly selective. Travellers’ representations of the landscapes and customs of continental Europe may seem like an ideal resource for those Gothic novels that would eventually take them as their settings, yet, as Rosemary Sweet observes, detailed recognition and consideration of medieval materials is conspicuously absent from most representations of the Tour (Sweet 2012: 236).

Of course, Grand Tourists encountered challenging objects and presences as they attempted to filter through to a classical imaginative geography. These included abrupt fault lines between the enlightened, Protestant and ‘Augustan’ traveller and the contemporary state of regions dominated, as Buzard observes, by ‘the colossal obstacle of the Catholic Church’ (Buzard 2002: 40). Italy in particular could also present more diffuse threats, manifesting as a ‘dark and obscure’ region ‘fractured and divided in more than a dozen different political entities, each of them rife with court intrigues, conspiracies and violence’ (Demata 2006: 4). Successful appropriation of actual geographies for the affirmation of the traveller therefore required an imaginative geography that could manage and mediate these problematic elements: situating them as the ‘obstacles’ implied by Buzard’s description, rather than intractable constituents of the travelled landscape. This is something achieved – and transmitted – by an early, but enduring, account of the Tour: Joseph Addison’s *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705).

There are two senses in which Addison’s text provides a model for the encapsulation of the Tour’s actual geography as a classical imaginative geography, made available to the enlightened British traveller. One is that he explicitly undertakes this kind of pre-inscription, approaching Italy with and through the works of ‘Classic Authors’, arranged into ‘such collections out of them as I might afterwards have occasion for’ (Addison 1705: 1). The second is that the text produced through this process would itself become a resource for later travellers, approaching the Tour through Addison’s own pre-inscription.[[17]](#footnote-17)

The version of Italy that Addison establishes (and transmits) accords with this process of pre-inscription. This landscape is not just textualised; it is also organised as a library or archive: ‘the great School of Music and Painting’ containing ‘the noblest Productions of Statuary and Architecture’ and ‘abounds with Cabinets of Curiosities, and vast collections of all kinds of Antiquities [. . .] there is scarce any Part of the Nation that is not Famous in History’ (Addison 1705: 9-10). The work of the Grand Tourist’s imaginative geography is clearly visible here. The terrain’s demarcation as an orderly repository of acculturating potential correlates with the pre-inscription of its ‘contents’ with a textuality that both familiarises it for the enlightened, classically educated traveller and prepares it for his privileged use.

The *Remarks* sustains this identification through the frequent use of appropriate classical intertexts to identify and evaluate the landscape and its contents. As Addison’s preface itself avows ‘it was not one of the least entertainments [. . .] met with in travelling, to examine these several Descriptions [. . .] and to compare’ them with ‘the Natural Face of the Country’ (Addison 1705: 11-12). The frequency of these quotations, meanwhile (*Remarks*’s first five pages alone cite from classical sources at a rate exceeding one per page) serves to imply and emphasise their contiguity within the contemporary landscape. This has the further effect of both enforcing the encapsulation of Italy as an agreeable imaginative geography for the enlightened traveller and investing its idealised contents with a robust immanence within the terrain: their sustained presence suggestively transcends and defies the temporal gulf that otherwise separates the eighteenth-century traveller from his desired objects.

This property of transcendence and durability is frequently associated with remarkable acculturating potential in the present. Responding to the plenitude of Rome’s antiquities, Addison observes of the variety of instruments in the hands of ancient statues that ‘it would be no impertinent Design to take off all their Models in Wood, which might not only give us some Notion of the ancient Music, but help us to pleasanter instruments than are now in use.’ (Addison 1705: 188) Addison thus not only registers the literal survival of the idealised object, but further implies the vigorous immanence of its presence on another level. These instruments are not merely there to be seen as silent – albeit exceptionally clear – relics of a former age: they might also be heard.

Descriptive strategies such as these correlate with the contiguity between the ideal and the experiential established through Addison’s frequent classical quotations. Together they invest the acculturating contents of this topographical library with an immanent presence transcending both historical distance and contemporary misinterpretation. The latter is a frequent preoccupation for Addison who is keen to expose and dismiss the misjudgements of native Italians. Such attitudes are typical of the Grand Tourist’s appropriation of the Mediterranean’s classical heritage, a tendency James Buzard finds subsequently epitomised in Goldsmith’s *The Traveller* (1764) and its criticism of locals who live heedlessly in the ruins of antiquity (see Buzard 2002: 40). Yet Addison provides an interesting example of this approach, however, as his disparagements directly contrast apparently inaccurate and inappropriate topographical conceptions favoured by local Italians, with their exposure by the superior judgements of the enlightened traveller. This is visible in the brief notice given to Mount Soratte in the Roman Campagna:

Seeing a high Hill standing by itself in the *Campania*, I did not question but it had a *Classic* name, and upon enquiry found it to be Mount *Soracte*. The Italians at present call it, because its Name begins with an *S*, St. *Oreste.* (Addison 1705: 103)

Addison’s disparagement of the Italian perspective is present in the comparison that implicitly renders it ridiculous: not only is the mountain’s designation as ‘St Oreste’ manifestly incorrect, but its justification here situates it as an empty signifier without any obvious referent, produced automatically in accordance with the prejudices of a Catholic optic that appears similarly incongruous and absurd. Contemporary interpretations – like contemporary materials – are thus removed from the imaginative geography projected by an enlightened British traveller who looks past them from that privileged vantage. The result almost bears out Buzard’s pithy summary of the *Remarks* as being ‘so focussed [. . .] upon traces of classical times that the “Italy” of its title can sometimes appear to be a land entirely lacking in living inhabitants or post-classical edifices’ (Buzard 2002: 40).

There are elements that might challenge and contradict Addison’s version of Italy, however, and chief among them are those that would come to be designated as “Gothic” within the eighteenth-century cultural imagination. These are present in Addison’s *Remarks*, but their recognition is carefully and strategically mediated in a way that exposes the values and underpinnings of the traveller’s – and text’s – imaginative geography.[[18]](#footnote-18) The most significant obstacles that Addison meets (to use Buzard’s apt term) are concerned with Roman Catholicism, both as an inconvenient presence within the Italian topography and an agency shaping it into a form incompatible with the imaginative geography the Grand Tourist wishes to construct. This is present in the ‘St Oreste’ example and it is accurate to observe, as Elizabeth Bohls and Ian Duncan do, that a ‘critique of Catholicism’ informs Addison’s Protestant, nationalist disparagement of modern Italian customs and institutions’ (Bohls and Duncan 2005: 5). The corruption, disorder, ambivalence and morbidity that Massimiliano Demata identifies as influentially Gothic characteristics of the Italian topography (Demata 2006: 4-5) are all registered and implied by Addison who regards them as primarily endemic to the benighted state of modern Catholicism. Accordingly, Addison describes the inherent vice, suffering, anarchy and barrenness produced by the Gothic play of Catholic authority and its superstitious mismanagement of the terrain’s human and economic resources:

It is not strange to find a Country half unpeopled, where so great a Proportion of the Inhabitants [. . .] is ty’d under such Vows of Chastity, and [. . .] an Inquisition forbids all Recruits out of any other Religion. [. . .] great poverty and want [. . .] are to be met with in a Country, which invites into it such Swarms of Vagabonds, under the Title of Pilgrims, and shuts up in Cloisters such an incredible Multitude [. . .] who, instead of increasing the common Stock by their Labour and Industry, lie as a Dead weight on their Fellow-subjects. (Addison 1705: 183)

The terrain thus governed is a suggestively Gothic space, combining the authoritarianism of its rigidly organised divisions and the incarceration of those who are ‘shut up’ or ‘ty’d’ by them, with an anarchic impression of the populace's ‘swarming’ idleness. What results is a similarly Gothic sense of the terrain’s sickly, self-consuming character as its occupants exist in a state that not only variously denies them active vitality and interaction, but also renders them a ‘Dead weight’; investing the landscape with a morbid character. This is characteristic of the Gothic’s configuration in the imaginative geography affirmed within *Remarks* and also key to its mediation therein. Meanwhile, the inconvenient visibility of obstacles associated with Catholicism and its Gothic agency is neatly illustrated by Addison’s disgruntled observation that ‘one seldom finds in *Italy* a spot more agreeable than ordinary, that is not cover’d with a Convent’ (Addison 1705: 201). The sense here is that such nascent Gothic features impose themselves upon the otherwise ‘agreeable’ topography mapped out within the traveller’s imaginative geography, ‘covering’ it in a manner that frustrates the identification and appropriation carried out by their gaze.

Responding to this problematic visibility, Addison frequently associates Catholic spectacles with a property of superfluous and repetitive layering of barren signifiers. This is apparent, for example, as he describes the decoration of churches with grateful representations of supposed miraculous intervention:

This Custom spoils the Beauty of several *Roman* Catholic Churches, and often covers the Walls with wretched Daubings, impertinent Inscriptions, Hands, Legs and Arms of Wax, with a thousand idle Offerings of the same nature. (Addison 1705: 62)

Catholic objects and spectacles are invested once more with a property of imposition that obscures and distorts what lies beneath. Addison’s description again implies the semantic barrenness of such signifiers, noting their ‘idle’ and ‘impertinent’ nature alongside their ‘wax’ construction in order to identify them as insubstantial representations of already chimerical events. This is enhanced even further by the fragmentary and incomplete quality invoked by Addison’s description of these ‘daubings’ and isolated limbs. Meanwhile, the transient quality of such objects – which reassuringly deprives them of a substantial stake in the travelled terrain – is here emphasised by their proto-Gothic qualities: Addison’s description of these artificial limbs not only supplies the church with a macabre, charnel atmosphere, but the Gothic atmosphere that results enhances the implicit insubstantiality of their wax construction with the additional associations of decay. Rather than being overlooked, these disjunctive and “Gothic” elements are directly confronted within the imaginative geography that results.

They also exist in sharp contrast to the vitality and substance of those materials that provide the ideal content for Addison’s archival Italy. It is therefore particularly interesting to examine the instances in which the traveller proceeds to compare the two sets of materials. This is fittingly exemplified in Addison’s approach to the epicentre of the Grand Tourist’s imagination of Italy: the city and environs of Rome. Here, the hierarchical organisation that operates the imaginative geography Addison deploys is clearly apparent as the traveller’s gaze immediately undertakes an imaginative archaeology of the ancient city: ‘It is generally observed that Modern *Rome* stands higher than the Ancient [. . .] the present City stands upon the Ruins of the former’ (Addison 1705: 300). The impression of the modern as a subsequent imposition upon the ideal that is elsewhere so characteristic of *Remarks* is now effectively literalised, but any initial sense that the contemporary might attain to superiority over the ancient’s ‘Ruins’ soon vanishes as Addison develops this relationship on a figurative level. Just as Rome features two urban ‘strata,’ so too are there ‘two sets of Antiquities, the Christian [Catholic] and the Heathen’ (Addison 1705: 176). The former correspond with the more immediate layer of the city, being ‘of a fresher Date,’ yet they are nevertheless ‘so embroiled with Fable and Legend, that one receives but little Satisfaction from searching into them.’ (Addison 1705: 301). Such frustrated exploration endows these ‘fresher’ surface elements with an implicit lack of depth as, once again, their excesses of content and visible immediacy belie an essential insubstantiality. Their fabular, legendary character associates them with the superstitious, epistemologically ambivalent and proto-Gothic features Addison has elsewhere confronted and dismissed, whilst denying them clarity and rendering them experientially unsatisfying.

In contrast, the older, classical, layer offers a far more fulfilling experience, particularly for those whose educated optic can penetrate to and recognise its contents which ‘give a great deal of pleasure to such as have met with them before in ancient Authors’ (Addison 1705: 301). The resilient acculturating potential of these ideal objects and encounters presents a stark alternative to the barren veil cast over it by more modern features. Indeed, in spite of the frequency with which these have ‘been describ’d by abundance of Travellers,’ they nevertheless possess an inexhaustible quality, there being ‘so much to be observ’d in so spacious a Field of Antiquities, that it is almost impossible to survey them without taking new Hints and Raising different reflections’ (Addison 1705: 302-303). This is a ‘field’ that clearly exhibits the transcendent immanence of the materials whose place in an imaginative geography Addison has elsewhere been so diligent to establish and sustain. It is against this standard that more modern, disjunctive and proto-Gothic elements are subordinated as insubstantial and transient impositions; challenging the traveller’s gaze, but easily dismissed by his enlightened discursive equipment.

This disparity is finally most obvious in the regions around Rome. Here Addison marks the contrast himself as he observes that ‘I found nothing so remarkable as the Beauty of the Country, and the extreme Poverty of its Inhabitants’ (Addison 1705: 179). Again, the essential positivity of the Tour’s ideal topography is apparent, but defaced by the modern characteristics which interpose themselves before the traveller’s gaze. The inferiority of this present situation to the classical ideal is also quickly established, for it is ‘an amazing thing to see the present Desolation of *Italy*, when one considers what incredible Multitudes of People it abounded with during the reigns of the *Roman* Emperors’ (Addison 1705: 179). Once more, this sterile quality is endemic to the condition of Catholicism for ‘this Desolation appears nowhere greater than in the Pope’s Territories [. . .] his State is thin of Inhabitants, and a great Part of his Soil uncultivated’ (Addison 1705: 180-182). The terrain’s modern mismanagement thus renders it morbidly Gothic in contrast to the innate ‘beauty’ it distorts. However, it is crucial to recognise that the modern landscape’s representation in this way is strategic and ultimately reassuring: its atrophy and infertility invests it with a transience and insubstantiality that denies it a substantial presence within the travelled terrain. Instead these disjunctive features are configured as an incongruous interposition that cannot reasonably possess any longevity.

It is this dynamic that variously inhabits all of Addison’s responses to the terrain’s “proto-Gothic” elements: their manifestations are repeatedly presented as self-consuming and self-defeating facades, either in the morbidity of Catholic governance and the economic dead weight of its citizens, or the insubstantiality and semantic incoherence of its spectacles and displays. In this way, the qualities that endow such features with a disturbing visibility are also the means of their discursive undoing within the imaginative geography the traveller produces and polices. Meanwhile, the transcendence and acculturating potential of the ideal elements the text identifies and sustains underpin a topographical hierarchy within which disjunctive elements are configured as secondary and subordinate. This too is visible in the Roman countryside as Addison’s discursive erosion of the Catholic present is soon followed by his emphasising, once more, the lasting presence of the classical ideal in ‘the Fields, Towns, and Rivers, that have been described by so many Classic Authors, and have been the Scenes of so many great Actions.’ (Addison 1705: 186) The vitality – almost “fertility” – of this ideal topography is sustained within the appropriately equipped gaze of the Grand Tourist which reaches it by breaching and dispersing an intervening, but ultimately “sterile”, Gothic screen.

The model – and imaginative geography – of Grand Tourism that Addison typifies and transmits is ultimately one in which the Gothic has a potential, but not a presence. Materials that will form part of the Gothic imagination can be glimpsed here, but they present no threat to the traveller’s person, or the enlightened perspective he adopts. Addison’s experience is a far cry from that of the traveller-narrators who frame Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Italian* (1797); recognising this already begins to reveal the scope of her innovation and intervention.[[19]](#footnote-19) Yet Radcliffe was not the first “Gothic” author to set her work within the locus of contemporary Grand Tourism.

**‘Undoubtedly laid in some real castle’ - Walpole’s *Otranto***

Between 1739 and 1741 – 23 years before the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) – Horace Walpole travelled across France and Italy in the company of his friend, Thomas Gray. The originator of the Gothic fictional tradition had also been a Grand Tourist and, though Walpole never published a literary tour, a partial account of his experiences is present within his correspondence. The question of a link between these two writings - and of the two Italys they represent - is one that Ann Williams has investigated. Analysing Walpole’s letters, Williams finds a biographical and psychological basis for *Otranto*’s setting, arguing that the ‘choice of Italy as the setting for [Walpole’s] Gothic story was determined, indeed overdetermined, by his Italian experiences’ (Williams 2006: 22). This is because there is much in Walpole’s experiences that would not seem out of place in the tradition he would go on to initiate and inspire. During his travels Walpole ‘dabbled in espionage, witnessed the violent deaths of two of his dearest friends, and quarrelled bitterly with his traveling companion, Gray’. As Williams observes, ‘it all sounds rather like a Gothic novel.’ Yet this is not an experience the letters reflect: ‘few reading Walpole’s lively accounts of his Italian experiences would perceive the Gothic elements lurking beneath the frivolous surface of his daily life’ (Williams 2006: 23). One way to approach this apparent paradox is to recall that those ‘few’ readers would need to be in possession of the biographical details Williams supplies – and which Walpole’s “travel writing” does not. Williams does not read Walpole’s account of his travels within a tradition of Grand Tour travel writing, but doing so can help to make some sense of them.

Though Walpole did not choose to publish his letters – or create a published account from them – his writing is clearly aware of the conventions that underpin an account of the Grand Tour and is, at times, content to adopt them. This may contribute to explaining the absence of traumatic and turbulent details from an account that plays with the travel performances of Grand Tourism. Yet, in appropriately Walpolean fashion, this process frequently draws attention to the *performative* nature of that practice and the inadequacy of its more famous actors. These include Addison who ‘travelled through the poets, and not through Italy [. . .] He saw places as they were, not as they are.’ Walpole also seems to understand – and dismiss – the organisation of the Tour’s objects and their function for the traveller. He writes that ‘making catalogues’ of sights and sites is ‘a vile employment’ whilst he himself has ‘made no discoveries in ancient or modern arts’ (Walpole 1948: XIII.231). The imaginative geography that a traveller like Addison constructs and transmits is present in Walpole’s letters, but only through denial: indicating the author’s awareness of the conventions he is – and is not – participating within. This scepticism extends to the Tour’s treatment of “Gothic” materials. At Bologna, for example, Walpole writes that ‘now and then we drop in at a High Mass, hear the music, enjoy a strange attire, and hate the foul monkhood’ (Walpole 1948: XIII.231). This customary ire for the representatives of Catholicism comes across as exactly that: a convention and a performance, its vitriol winkingly out of step with the pleasure of spectatorship and play that precedes it.

Walpole’s letters thus exist on the periphery of a tradition of travel writing and imaginative geography they refuse to enter fully upon. Restoring them to this context can also open up an intriguing parallel with the novel that (ostensibly) shares their setting.

*Otranto*’s first preface presents a playfully deferred link to Italy. Like its actual author, the supposed manuscript source has existed at one time in the Mediterranean – ‘being printed at Naples’ in 1529 – but it reaches the reader via ‘the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England’ (Walpole 1998: 5, 8). Its transcriber was an Italian priest, yet its translator is an English gentleman. This displaying of the stages in *Otranto*’s location and transmission keeps its supposed Italian origin resolutely in view whilst highlighting the stages across which that origin is deferred. It is as if the text seems to acknowledge that it *could* be located in Italy, but somehow is not – a sense that correlates with the conspicuous absence of exterior geography in the story itself. Walpole seems to play further upon this, having his fictional translator express their opinion that ‘the groundwork of the story’ – a choice of phrase already bearing subtle connotations of an original topography – ‘is founded upon truth.’ Indeed, ‘the scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle.’ (Walpole 1998: 8) Williams takes this consciously artificial reference to a real castle to refer ‘slyly’ to the explicit artifice of Walpole’s Strawberry Hill. However, this faux reference to a ‘real’ Italian Gothic castle may also be a broader, but similarly obscured, reference to the ‘real’ Italy and its Gothic contents and locales encountered on Walpole’s Grand Tour. This process of deferral is perhaps best compounded by the name that Walpole chooses for his Italian source. The ‘original’ author of the narrative is given a suitably Italian name, ‘Onuphrio Muralto,’ but one whose meaning is again suggestively significant; as Williams observes, ‘“*muralto*” means “high wall” in Italian’ (Williams 2006: 31). This choice brilliantly references the physical architecture of a ‘real castle’ even as it seems to “wall” the text off from it.[[20]](#footnote-20)

If Walpole’s travels seem to sit outside an imaginative geography that they refuse to join, so too does his novel remain playfully apart from the real geography upon which it was founded. Just as the masks Walpole wears as the author of Otranto both recall and hide his own status as a traveller in Italy, the epistolary record of that tour implies that Grand Tourism itself might be a kind of performance in costume. The first Gothic novel thus looks askance at the travelogues that accompanied it in the eighteenth-century marketplace, almost as if providing an oblique outlet for some of the content that must be suppressed as part of the Tour’s performance. Again, recognising these earlier circumstances in the relationship between Gothic and travel writing helps to illuminate the extent of the innovations to be examined by this study. Radcliffe, who was never to participate fully in the classic tradition of Grand Tourism, produces Gothic fictions that actively intervene upon its imaginative geography. Walpole, who had been a Grand Tourist, does not. In the decades between these two authors’ careers, however, a different form of tourism was developing, with its own way of viewing the Gothic.

**Popularising the Gothic - William Gilpin and Picturesque travel**

The decades following the publication of *Otranto* can easily appear as something of a fallow period in the history of the Gothic imagination (see Miles 2002: 42-3; Mandal 2014: 164-165). Yet this is only true for a perspective that focusses upon fictional novels – or romances. In fact, 1782 saw the publication of a popular book that contained more detailed representations of ruined castles and abbeys than are to be found across all the novels Radcliffe published in her lifetime. The book in question was William Gilpin’s *Observations Upon the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty Made in the Summer of 1770*.It might be argued that its author, a clergyman and retired schoolmaster, did more to initiate a popular taste for the Gothic amongst the eighteenth-century reading public than either Walpole or Radcliffe. Of the 15 plates included in the *River Wye*, 12 feature views of ruins, usually accompanied by detailed written descriptions. These illustrations – created using an expensive, complicated and relatively novel aquatint process – were a key part of the book’s appeal and its success was followed up by a series of other regional *Observations*, largely drawn from notes taken during Gilpin’s summer excursions in the 1770s.[[21]](#footnote-21) Gothic materials are thus central to the Picturesque aesthetic so that Gilpin – whose ‘eye rests with delight on the shattered arches of a Gothic ruin’ (Gilpin 1782: 24) – played a significant and largely overlooked role in popularising the eighteenth-century Gothic imagination.[[22]](#footnote-22) The present study offers a way to remedy this by demonstrating the extent to which Radcliffe draws upon and revises the treatment of the Gothic within Gilpin’s works. First though, it is necessary to consider the kind of imaginative geography produced by Gilpin’s Picturesque tourism and properly situate the Gothic within it.

Gilpin’s Picturesque is presented as a new aesthetic category, albeit one that is put forward more as ‘a new object of pursuit’ for travellers than as a rigorously organised system; indeed, Gilpin defines the appeal of the proper Picturesque view as being ‘not the offspring of theory’ but ‘taken from the scenes of nature’ (Gilpin 1782: 1-2). In principle, the Picturesque conjoins the Sublime and the Beautiful by privileging roughness and irregularity within a coherent frame, capable, by definition, of being reproduced (at least imaginatively) as a picture. It is this organising and framing function that is arguably more significant than any intervention in existing aesthetic concepts, which themselves tend to be inconsistent, whether drawn from Gilpin’s Picturesque travelogues or later, more ambitiously theoretical works such as Uvedale Price’s *Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1794).[[23]](#footnote-23) In this sense the vital difference between the Picturesque and the Sublime has more to do with control than affect. As David Punter observes: ‘the Picturesque frames roughness and variety; the Sublime has to do with being taken out of one’s frame’. In essence, the Picturesque represents ‘the ego’s certainty about what it can hold and manage’ (Punter 1994: 223, 226). Replacing Punter’s ‘ego’ with ‘traveller’ begins to indicate the way Picturesque *travel* and *travel writing* in particular work to produce an imaginative geography.

The Picturesque traveller, like the Grand Tourist, takes possession of an actual geography organised for their use and appreciation and viewed from a privileged perspective supplied by means, leisure and education in Picturesque principles. Therefore Gilpin can elsewhere describe landscapes as ‘rich volumes of nature, which, like the works of established authors, will bear a frequent perusal’ (Gilpin 1786: I.118-119). The pre-inscription and plenitude that define Addison’s Italy are also present here in Gilpin’s response to Cumberland. Elsewhere the Picturesque traveller is equipped with a discursive lexicon for *reading* those volumes: the ‘area’ and ‘screens’ that make up different classes of scenic view, along with the ‘constituent parts’ (including ruins) that are appropriate to them (Gilpin 1782: 8-15). Thus properly equipped, the tourist can manage and mediate the contents of a landscape, following Gilpin’s assertion that the most effective Picturesque observer (or writer) is one ‘who culls from nature the most beautiful parts of her productions – a *distance* here; and there a *fore-ground* – combines them artificially; and remov[es] everything offensive’ (Gilpin 1786: I.xvi-xvii). This process is the conversion of real geography into imaginative geography, based on the recognition of those objects that the traveller wishes to possess and appreciate and the subordination or removal of those that do not. It is within this dynamic that Gilpin’s Gothic must be properly understood.

For all the prominence that it allows to Gothic materials, Gilpin’s Picturesque is not an invitation to affective meditation on supernatural manifestations or mysterious secrets. Instead the Gothic ruin within the Picturesque is defined by its utter lack of political agency: ‘where popery prevails’ and an abbey ‘is still entire’ it cannot be ‘adapted’ to Picturesque landscape (Gilpin 1786: I.13).[[24]](#footnote-24) Similarly, the border castles in the north of England are only Picturesque because they are now found ‘adorning the country they once defended’. Such Gothic ruins are not the sites of revenant histories, but the markers of an inevitable historical process and the political progress it embodies; they ‘raise pleasing comparisons of present times with past’ (Gilpin 1786: II.86).[[25]](#footnote-25) This is ingrained in the vocabulary of Picturesque description, which makes plain the Gothic structure’s subjection to the traveller’s gaze, rather than the reverse; Gilpin’s eye *‘rests*’ at leisure upon his imagined Gothic arch, relaxed in his freedom from feudal tyranny or religious superstition. When speaking of real ruins Gilpin frequently emphasises their transition from a human structure to a natural feature – ‘naturalised to the soil’ they may ‘be classed among its natural beauties’ – with history further elided (Gilpin 1786: I.12). Fictional “travellers” such as Radcliffe’s La Motte, would come to approach ruined abbeys whilst imaginatively conjuring reproval by ‘the mysterious accents of the dead’ (Radcliffe 1986: 16), but such responses are absent in Gilpin’s Picturesque. Here, as Dale Townshend aptly observes, history’s ghosts are excluded along with history itself (Townshend 2014a: 2-4).[[26]](#footnote-26)

The manner in which this process works is well-exemplified by the description of Tintern Abbey, in Monmouthshire, that Gilpin presents in his *River Wye*. The ruin’s situation provides a natural instance of the kind of framing the Picturesque aesthetic works to locate or construct: ‘it occupies a gentle eminence in the middle of a circular valley, beautifully screened on all sides by woody hills.’ Gilpin accordingly finds a harmonious combination of ‘the splendid ruin’ and ‘objects of nature’ framed by ‘the elegant line formed by the summits of the hills’ making ‘all together a very enchanting piece of scenery’ (Gilpin 1782: 32). The Picturesque properties of this description of the Gothic site are exemplified in the first illustration Gilpin provides (Fig.1):

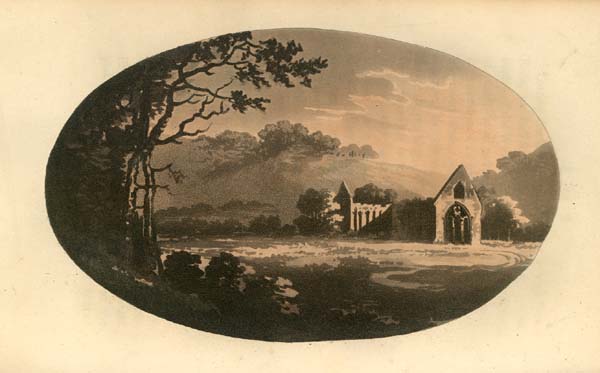


Fig.1 – William Gilpin, Tintern Abbey (1782)

Bounded by the wooded hills and overshadowed by the trees in the left side screen, the Gothic object appears subordinated, rather than dominant. Moreover, the abbey building is itself broken up by and intermingled with the adjacent trees. Far from signifying as an authority in or over the landscape, the ruin is absorbed and subjugated by it. The extent to which it is the observer who instead controls and manipulates the Gothic object is amusingly demonstrated by Gilpin’s comment that features of the abbey – in this distant view – actually frustrate and ‘hurt the eye with their regularity’ and that ‘a mallet judiciously used [. . .] might be of service’ in remedying the failing (Gilpin 1782: 33). Ruination, the property that defines the Gothic object in this vision, is not a source of ambivalence and agency; it is part of the currency of Picturesque control.

Gilpin is much more satisfied with a nearer view of the abbey, from the road rather than the river. Here he reiterates the way in which ‘Nature has now made it her own’ and ‘Time has worn off all traces of the rule.’ The word ‘rule’ here ostensibly refers to the regularity of the building’s form and line. Its alternative meaning seems present in the background, however, as Gilpin identifies the way in which ‘the ornaments of time’ seem also to negate the building’s power and authority. Ivy, for example, has ‘taken possession of many parts of the wall’ (Gilpin 1782: 33): the abbey has been successfully besieged by an overgrowth that reads as overthrow. These effects seem embodied in the second illustration Gilpin provides (Fig.2):



Fig.2 – William Gilpin, Tintern Abbey (1782)

Gilpin now focuses upon one of the gables whose regularity previously affronted his aesthetic and now presents it with the kind of roughness and irregularity his imaginary mallet might have achieved. The effect heightens the sense of the ruin’s overgrowth as the fragmented edge of the stonework becomes difficult to distinguish from what appears to be vegetation upon or behind it. Meanwhile, a wooded side-screen once more overshadows the building, this time also concealing and breaking up the abbey wall so that its west face stands in suggestive isolation: the social and political structures that once bolstered and upheld it having fallen away along with the rest of its architecture.

As important as it was in drawing attention to Gothic materials in pre-Romantic print culture, then, the Picturesque Gothic is aesthetically, historically and imaginatively framed: part of a careful system of ‘limits and elisions, inclusions and exclusions’ (Townshend 2014a: 2).[[27]](#footnote-27) Though endowed with far more visibility and attention than in accounts of the Grand Tour, the “Picturesque Gothic” is still part of a carefully managed imaginative geography that denies it any affective agency and whose travellers experience none of the anxieties that would be provoked by fictional ruins such as Radcliffe’s.

Of course, the Picturesque frame is defined by its exclusions as well as its inclusions and, under certain circumstances, a Gothic affect could resist its management within Picturesque imaginative geography. This might happen in limited or even designed ways, as later travellers and tourists revisited and / or reimagined certain sites following the rise of the Gothic imagination the Picturesque had helped prepare for.[[28]](#footnote-28) However, it could also be a more troubling experience for earlier Picturesque travellers, who, like Grand Tourists, had to negotiate stumbling blocks presented by the contemporary political and economic situation of those landscapes they sought to view as aesthetic tableaux. Of chief concern was the ownership and management of the landscape itself, which was being fundamentally changed by processes of agricultural enclosure, funding physical improvements that presented the estate itself as an artwork: its ‘capabilities’ often realised in the style of premier landscape architect, Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown. This threatened to commodify the estate, removing it from stable traditions of local stewardship into a new nexus of investment, sale and absentee ownership. At the same time, rural populations were disconnected from their place as tenants: deprived of smallholdings by enclosure and their habitations hidden or removed from prospect views that now isolated the exceptional status of the landowner. This could be a source of some political anxiety when, as Tim Fulford demonstrates, improvements such as Brown’s ‘produced a manicured green desert, leaving the gentleman isolated from the historical patterns of agriculture and settlement in the locality of which he was squire’ (Fulford 1996: 118). This abstraction from the communities for which they were politically responsible was exemplified (and, indeed, exacerbated) by the ‘growing tendency of many of the landed interest to give up their paternal duties in the countryside for an absentee life’ (Fulford 1996: 129). Such concerns were taken up by landowning theorists of the Picturesque, chiefly Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, for whom the chief question was one of estate management and the preservation – and presentation – of the ‘rural estate visibly produced by the efforts, made over many generations’, of the tenants a landowner governed and represented (Fulford 1996: 118).[[29]](#footnote-29)

Being concerned with the historical basis for local political authority (and its potential usurpation), it is perhaps unsurprising that literary reflections on these issues possess a certain Gothic resonance. Oliver Goldsmith’s ‘The Deserted Village’ (1770) for example, speaks of improvement in terms of the decidedly un-Picturesque ‘desolation’ and ‘shapeless ruin’ that is the work of a suggestively disembodied, ‘tyrant’s hand’ (Goldsmith 1770: ll.38, 47, 37). There are echoes here of Walpole’s *Otranto*, published six years earlier, where usurped sites and spaces are similarly “haunted.” For William Cowper in *The Task* (1785) Brown himself is endowed with a disturbing and deleterious supernatural agency:

Improvement too, the idol of the age,

Is fed with many a victim. Lo! He comes-

The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears.

Down falls the venerable pile, th’ abode

Of our forefathers

(Cowper 1785: ll.764-768)

The improved estate, like the Gothic castle, becomes a site that consumes its legitimate owner and falls to ruin. These discursive parallels are not merely intriguing: they also resonate with the developing literature of Picturesque tourism, for which real ruins were to encode steady political progress rather than rapid and disruptive contemporary change. As such, these concerns can reintroduce an anxiety about the Gothic into Picturesque travelogues that ostensibly exclude it.

In particular, Gilpin is frequently concerned by the association of Gothic remains with modern improvements. The ‘mixture of old buildings and new’, for example, is likened to ‘uniting living bodies to dead’ (Gilpin 1804: 51). This metaphor reveals what is at stake for the Picturesque when the ruin is mistreated: a process of reanimation and revenance, couched in a disturbingly Gothic language. Specific examples evoke similar concerns. At Fountains Abbey, for example, Gilpin is dismayed to find the ruins being brought within the compass of the wider landscaped park of Studley Royal. The ‘present proprietor’ is represented as a sinisterly encroaching usurper of the Abbey’s remains: ‘long had he wished to draw them within the circle of his improvements [. . .] at length [. . .] the legal possession of this beautiful scene was yielded to him; and his busy hands were let loose upon it’ (Gilpin 1786: II. 183-184) – a recurrent metaphor that recalls Goldsmith’s ‘tyrant’s hand’. This process disrupts the chronology that the ruin embodies and becomes itself a kind of primitive political despotism, as Gilpin writes that only ‘a goth may deform’ in this way (Gilpin 1786: II.189).

Associated with improvement’s uneasy annexation of the Gothic ruin is another, more disturbing, “intrusion” into the Picturesque landscape. This is the presence of improvement’s victims, the rural vagrants whose apparition undermines the traveller’s idealisation of the landscape. There are moments in Gilpin when such presences break uneasily into the foreground of the text and its images. One such occurs at Tintern Abbey. In order to produce a properly Picturesque view of the abbey – emblematised as a deserted, naturalised, site – Gilpin has had to “edit out” the presence of a local semi-vagrant population, whose ‘shabby houses’ encompass the structure and whose ‘little huts’ are raised among the ruins’ (Gilpin 1782: 33-35). Some of these are actually visible in another illustration of the ruin, published thirty years later as the frontispiece to Richard Warner’s *A Walk Through Wales* (1798) (Fig. 3).

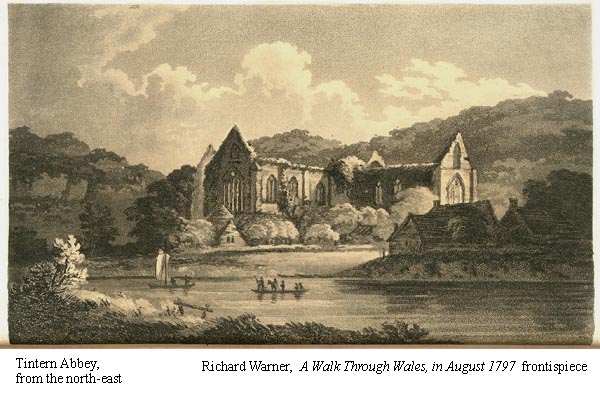


Fig. 3 – Richard Warner, Tintern Abbey (1798)

This, like the first illustration in Gilpin’s *River Wye* (Fig. 1), is a view of the ruin from the north-west. The contrast between the two images clearly illustrates the way in which the Picturesque prospect is the result of an active compositional process undertaken to produce particular effects. The prominence of the side and rear screens that reduce the abbey in Gilpin’s view is absent in Warner who also provides a more accurate foreground, including the river itself along with other more modern dwellings and their inhabitants. However, though he ‘culls’ them from the finished Picturesque prospect, Gilpin’s account records a more challenging confrontation. Upon leaving the abbey, Gilpin is met by these dwellers, ‘soliciting alms [. . .] under the pretence of carrying us to some part of the ruins’ (Gilpin 1782: 35). This threatens to transfer control of the landscape from the traveller to its occupants; indeed, being lead into the ruin means losing both the exterior vantage that composes and frames the prospect *and* the freedom of movement that defines the peripatetic traveller. Perhaps more significantly though, this process pulls Tintern out of the Picturesque frame into a contemporary political and economic landscape. Its impoverished populace are an indictment of that landscape’s present management and their inactivity must be separated from Gilpin’s own ‘contemplative leisure’ and the vicarious “ownership” it performs (Copley 1994: 57). Further description picks out the ‘poverty and wretchedness’ of the Abbey’s interior spaces and their inhabitants, exemplified by an old woman who ‘could scarce crawl’ supporting ‘her palsied limbs, and meagre, contracted body, by the help of two sticks’. This guide leads the traveller to ‘the remnant of a shattered cloister’ she claims is ‘the monk’s library’ but which is merely – or perhaps also – her ‘own miserable habitation’. The Picturesque exterior is briefly replaced here by an affective Gothic interior: a ‘cell of misery’ complete with its ‘wretched inhabitant’ (Gilpin 1782: 36-37). Yet Gilpin’s use of the Gothic works more generally to manage the anxieties raised by these contemporary presences. His description works to associate the vagrant population themselves with the “Gothic” history of the site they threaten to re-animate, noting that it is as if ‘a place, once devoted to indolence, could never again become the seat of industry’ (Gilpin 1782: 35). Though counter-intuitive, this works strategically. Imaginatively associated with Tintern’s monks (and not with the leisure of the modern traveller) these vagrants cease to be a symptom of the contemporary landscape and become instead part of the Gothic history the Picturesque is equipped to frame.[[30]](#footnote-30) This history also remains silent on both levels. Gilpin shows no interest in ascertaining whether his guide has taken him to what was once the ‘monk’s library’ or in finding it elsewhere. Meanwhile, whilst he acknowledges her desire to tell ‘the story of her own wretchedness’ (Gilpin 1782: 36), none of this is recounted within the text. The overall effect is similar to the criticism of “Gothic” deformation at Fountains. As in the writing of Grand Tourism, recognition of the Gothic as “Gothic” is a means of downplaying its presence in the traveller’s imaginative geography.

Episodes such as this register the ambiguities and ambivalences within Gilpin’s travel writing, as the attempt to view the Gothic through the Picturesque frame can still find itself obliquely registering presences that it tries to avoid. These are issues that Radcliffe’s writing will explore more fully by presenting ruins at which the exterior view moves inexorably to the anxious interior and encounters with the troubling histories that are edited out of Gilpin’s descriptions. However, there is also another significant aspect of Gilpin’s “popularising” of Gothic materials and of the Picturesque more generally.

Gilpin writes as a tourist, not a landowner, and thus exists at something of a remove from debates about landscape as managed property. Yet his writings also participate in and make available a vicarious form of estate ownership. As Fulford puts it, the popularity of Picturesque tour books ensured that ‘every middle-class townsperson of a little leisure and mobility could become a purchaser of an almost infinite variety of scenes’. This could raise its own questions of commodification and disconnection as the tourist as Picturesque connoisseur uproots landscapes from their ‘local origin’ and, if only implicitly, gains the basis for a better and more disinterested judgement than the landowner (Fulford 1996: 142). Gilpin is generally respectful of traditional and attentive land ownership, being politely critical of improvements at Fountains, or at Roche Abbey where he finds Brown himself at work, noting that ‘many a modern palace he has adorned, and beautified: but a ruin presented a new idea; which I doubt whether he has sufficiently considered’ as ‘there is little judgement shown in this mode of improvement’ (Gilpin 1789: 21-23). Yet he could also be unashamedly forthright about the wider impact of his works’ popularity, including their role in opening up landscapes to those readers whose means – or gender – preventing them from owning or managing an estate.

These issues – and Gilpin’s position on them – can be traced in correspondence with William Mason, the poet and landscape designer who had encouraged the publication of his friend’s tours. The two came to differ on several related issues: the imaginative license of the Picturesque onlooker, his capacity (and entitlement) to criticise the practices of landowners and the increasing social and gendered democratisation of Gilpin’s readership. Despite being the dedicatee for Gilpin’s *River Wye*, Mason found its illustrations to be ‘outrageously deficient in point of verity,’ a point he maintained in spite of Gilpin’s appeal to the imaginative function of the Picturesque which ‘if nature gets wrong [. . .] cannot help putting her right’ (qtd in Barbier 1968: 71-2). Later he would focus these criticisms upon the travel writer’s capacity – and entitlement – to critique the practices of landowners. Speaking of the later *Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (1786) Mason advised Gilpin to:

Print only that part of it which relates to scenes, not to places [. . .] do not print any thing that will either hurt of offend the Owners of Places, when in so doing, you will bring upon you much, & I fear, some well-deserved Criticism from Real Connoisseurs. (qtd in Barbier 1968: 73)

The right to judge estates is bound up with their ownership. The Picturesque travel writer may “trespass” upon them in print, but they will there be pursued by Mason’s ‘Real Connoisseurs’. As this debate became more heated it revealed what was also at stake in the expansion of Gilpin’s readership. Having quoted (or invented) a ‘Person eminent both in Learning & taste’ who observes a debasement in Gilpin’s style from manuscript to publication, Mason writes that:

As you tell me that you are revising & correcting all your tours, which I construe into making them fit for the perusal of the Ladies, I think I shall do well to keep my Copy of the Western tour as an Estate in fee, not as I now hold it for Life only, in order that Posterity may learn you could once write like a Man. (qtd in Barbier 1968: 78)

Mason’s misogyny channels the anxiety generated by Gilpin’s creation of a separate aesthetic community validated by the ownership of print, not land. Meanwhile, his metaphorical description of the manuscript as a property attempts to reintroduce that register as the basis of an exclusive and continuous masculine standard of taste.[[31]](#footnote-31) Gilpin’s emphatic response adapts the metaphor to turn Mason’s criticism upon its author:

Get you along - get you along, you & your friend, out of the precincts of taste. Go, cultivate some clod of earth. In the regions of landscape - of lights, & shades, & glowing tints, you have nothing to do. - I write for the ladies! - No, sir, - nor for such critics as you, & your cold, unanimated friend. I write merely, & solely for people of picturesque genius - whether gentlemen, or ladies, I reck not. (qtd in Barbier 1968: 79)

Far from holding his “estate” against Gilpin’s growing readership, Mason is summarily evicted from it.

This debate is important to the development of the “Picturesque Gothic” for two reasons. Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, Gilpin’s “Lady” readers would include those writers, such as Radcliffe, who would respond to his aesthetic in Gothic fiction. Secondly, those works would themselves play out the implications of Gilpin’s success: opening up Picturesque landscapes, estates and ruins to exploration by the ‘traveling heroines’ who were now entitled to participate in this imaginative geography. This would eventually lead to Radcliffe’s substantial revision of the Picturesque Gothic, but the process begins in the works of her predecessor and contemporary, Charlotte Smith.[[32]](#footnote-32)

**Picturesque (dis)Appearances – Charlotte Smith’s *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde***

As her biographer and critic, Loraine Fletcher, reveals, Charlotte Smith was introduced to landscape aesthetics at an early age, had read Thomas Gray’s influential *Journal in the Lakes* (1775) and may have visited Grasmere herself before depicting it in her *Ethelinde*, *or The Recluse of the Lake* (1789). Fletcher also includes Gilpin amongst those travel writers who ‘supplied Smith with an aesthetic vocabulary’ (Fletcher 2003: 24). In fact, Smith’s first two novels follow the trajectory of Gilpin’s published tours. Smith’s *Emmeline: The Orphan of the Castle* (1788), like Gilpin’s *River Wye*, is primarily set in Wales, whilst her *Ethelinde* begins and ends in the Lake District that had been the focus of his *Mountains and Lakes*. Smith was also aware of the political context for the Picturesque, being a friend of Cowper (whose *The Task* had been critical of Brown) and having personally suffered through transitions in estate ownership and the errors of feckless improvers.[[33]](#footnote-33) These are a recurrent feature in her early novels. *Emmeline* features the Staffords, a fictionalisation of Charlotte and her husband. Mr Stafford ‘is fond of improvements and alterations’ (Smith 2003: 81). His impecuniousness leads Mrs Stafford and her children to lose their estate at Woodfield where, as Fletcher observes, ‘she has designed picturesque grounds in the taste of her creator’ (Fletcher 2003: 33). In *Ethelinde*, the heroine’s brother and uncle descend into selfish avarice and display: expending ‘eight or ten thousand pounds’ to remove ‘a hill that intercepted the view’ from a recently purchased country house (Smith 1789: V.171). These novels thus enter fully into the imaginative geography of Picturesque travel. Accordingly, they each centre upon “Gothic” ruins that provide a focus for characters’ aesthetic and political responses. In this way Smith is the first fictional inheritor of Gilpin’s Picturesque Gothic and her earliest works play out its attitudes, together with their potential ambiguities and anxieties.[[34]](#footnote-34)

Mowbray Castle in *Emmeline* is a site whose Gothic associations are largely lacking in agency. The implication is that this is because of the way they are regarded by the eponymous heroine. The Castle possesses an old library containing materials written in ‘black letter’ and thus quite literally constituting a “Gothic” archive. Their age and obscurity renders such texts completely illegible, however, and Emmeline instead turns to a more congenial selection of poetry and criticism, present in volumes of ‘more modern appearance’ (Smith 2003: 47). Emmeline seems aware that, in Fletcher’s terms, the older materials contain only ‘obfuscation and dead letters’ (Fletcher 1998: 96). Unlike those of later Gothic novels, Mowbray’s textual relics are inert without the stimulus of a protagonist who declines to provide it. This dynamic is typical of Emmeline’s response to Mowbray, which is not a site of Gothic threat or incarceration, but is, as Fletcher observes, ‘a picturesque place for her to grow up in [. . .] freedom’ (Fletcher 1998: 94). This is sustained, even when the arrival of a new and unsympathetic steward and housekeeper provoke Emmeline’s retreat to a more remote region of the building. The turret apartment she selects here has obvious Gothic connotations, but it is significant that its windows have been carefully renovated with wider panes increasing its own illumination and enhancing the view of ‘the beautiful prospect it commanded between the hills’ (Smith 2003: 53). The Gothic is not a cause for concern here, but is reduced through and for aesthetic means; altered to produce a Picturesque frame. The incident is important, because it presages Emmeline’s response to the arrival and influence of the novel’s villains, of whom these uncongenial cohabitants are harbingers.

These are the family of Emmeline’s uncle, Lord Montreville, who have arrived at Mowbray to evaluate it as a seasonal shooting retreat for her cousin, Delamare. Significantly, the Montreville characters are incapable of properly appreciating Mowbray on a Picturesque level. Lord Montreville is an absentee landlord – visiting only once in twelve years – and Delamare’s attitude to the estate is equally inadequate. Upon arrival he provides a telling evaluation of its merits: ‘I already begin to see great capabilities about this venerable mansion. I think I shall take to it, as my father offers it to me; especially as, I suppose, Miss Emmeline is to be included in the inventory’ (Smith 2003: 61). Delamare’s explicitly Brownian desire to level the estate underlines his political unsuitability for it; the authority he exercises is focussed on possessive self-gratification rather than responsible management of the estate and its community. This attitude is clearly designed to contrast with Emmeline’s. Smith’s heroine has hitherto exercised the paternal responsibility of the estate’s squire: her Picturesque exploration and appreciation of its landscape occurs alongside regular ‘enquires into the immediate necessities of the cottagers in the neighbourhood of the castle’. Such attentive governance is appropriately rewarded as the local people look upon Emmeline as ‘a superior being’ and ‘throughout the country’ she is ‘almost adored’ (Smith 2003: 48). In contrast, releasing the ‘capabilities’ Delamare sees in the estate would likely involve the destruction of at least some local dwellings and the displacement of their occupants.

Delamere’s attitude to the estate is quickly associated with a self-indulgent possessiveness that begins to invoke Gothic archetypes: Delamare will ‘take’ the castle his father offers him, on the supposition that he will also gain control of the heroine within it. His subsequent conduct plays out the consequences of this possessive desire, pursuing Emmeline in spite of her wishes. This culminates in an episode with clear Gothic pedigree: Emmeline’s nocturnal reveries are disturbed by strange noises from outside her chamber before Delamare himself ‘burst[s] into the room’ the door having been despatched by ‘a violent effort with his foot’ (Smith 2003: 71). Smith’s novel thus interweaves the Gothic with her criticism of the irresponsible or “despotic” authority embodied in inadequate forms of estate management and their aesthetic correlatives. Obstacles between Delamare and the heroine are “levelled” by the physical violence of his possessive self-gratification, just as the estate might be. This is then presented as precisely the kind of Gothic agency that the Picturesque works to exclude. Brownian levelling and Gothic tyranny are brought together as despotic alternatives to the superior aesthetic and political perspective embodied in Smith’s heroine.

This association is reinforced as the Montrevilles begin to activate the Gothic qualities that had been left inert under Emmeline’s management. This process is promptly introduced in the figure of the French valet who precedes his master’s party. His response, upon arriving at the castle is ‘Horrible! Does my lord think anyone can live in a hell like this?’[[35]](#footnote-35) Appropriately, Millefleur is soon lost in the castle’s passages. With his mind filled with ‘ideas of spectres’, he mistakes the appearance of Emmeline for that of a ghost. The comic nature of this Gothic episode identifies it as incongruous rather than appropriate to the castle, arising from a ridiculously mistaken response. However, Millefleur’s white livery and horrified countenance contribute to his ‘grotesque appearance’ in a way that identifies him – and, by extension, the party he precedes – as a Gothic presence (Smith 2003: 56). Smith thus suggests that the failure to correctly interact with the castle is itself a source of Gothic threat and this is borne out when, ascertaining Emmeline’s corporeality, Millefleur attempts to force himself upon her. Emmeline’s retreat back into the castle’s passages then provides a real, rather than absurdly imaginary, example of flight and pursuit in the Gothic space.

The Montrevilles’ attitudes eventually ‘level’ Mowbray in a figurative sense: compromising its ability to offer a Picturesque refuge as Emmeline is forced to leave the castle and drift across several other locations, subject to pursuit and persecution. Occupants of the local village then bid farewell to ‘the last of that family by whom they had been employed when in health and relieved when in sickness’ and Emmeline herself bemoans this departure in terms of its effect on the traditional management of the estate. She notes that ‘the present possessor of the castle’ is ‘not at all interested for the peasantry, among whom he [is] a stranger’ and that they seem, therefore, to have lost ‘the last of the race of their benefactors’ (Smith 2003: 75). Once again, the activation of a Gothic quality in the contemporary landscape is associated with alterations in its management that disrupt a Picturesque aesthetics *and* politics. Crucially, however, Emmeline herself sustains the viability of a Picturesque perspective throughout this process. Her parting view of Mowbray composes it as:

One of the most magnificent features of a landscape which now appeared in sight [. . .] bounded by a wood of oak and pine, among which the ruins of the monastery, once an appendage to the castle, reared its broken arches; and marked by grey and mouldering walls, and mounds covered with slight vegetation, it was traced to its connection with the castle itself, still frowning in gothic magnificence [. . .] the citadel, which was totally in ruins and covered with ivy, crowning the whole. (Smith 2003: 75)

This Picturesque prospect, bounded to the West by the ‘bold and rocky shore’ and to the East by ‘blue and declining hills’, significantly frames Mowbray. The inclusion of details such as the abbey and citadel fortifications, along with the castle’s anthropomorphic *Udolpho*-esque ‘frowning in Gothic magnificence’, underscores the emerging Gothic agency that necessitates this departure. However, it is these most Gothic features that are also the most ruinous and which, as in a Gilpinian description, have been overgrown and absorbed into the scenery. The reader is then informed that Emmeline sees ‘nothing but the castle’ in its initial guise as a ‘magnificent’ landscape centrepiece: the succeeding image of its Gothic appendages is thus edited even further out of her response to the perspective (Smith 2003: 76). The heroine’s parting vision thus reiterates a Picturesque arrangement of Mowbray, suppressing its Gothic qualities despite their current ascendancy.

Emmeline maintains this Picturesque vision of Mowbray throughout her subsequent wanderings, carrying it in her recollection like an imaginative substitute for one of Gilpin’s aquatint figures. Her perseverance is rewarded when the novel’s providential conclusion restores Emmeline to the Castle in the company of the hero. Significantly, it transpires that documents proving her legitimacy and inheritance were in Emmeline’s possession all along, having been located amongst papers whose perusal was disturbed by the arrival of the Montrevilles. The narrative has thus worked to identify the estate’s rightful, traditional, owner – and her contrast with inferior alternatives. Meanwhile, Smith’s castle is thus the site of a positive, rather than disruptive, archive: its Gothic quality emerging not from the site itself, but from the intervention of those who manage it incorrectly. These are ultimately victims of their own Gothic associations. Delamare is killed in a duel by candlelight which, as Fletcher notes, is ‘in the manner of the last century’: exemplifying an ‘aristocratic recklessness and self-indulgence [. . .] on its way out’ (Fletcher 2003: 73). Meanwhile, Lady Montreville dies of grief and her daughter, Lady Frances, is punished for sexual indiscretions with imprisonment through a lettre de cachet: a fate her mother had wished upon Emmeline. Lord Montreville himself acknowledges, with suitable bombast, that ‘I and my house are low in the dust [. . .] dreadful sacrifice to vain and empty ambition!’ (Smith 2003: 272).

Like the illegibly obscure black letter texts within Mowbray itself, the novel’s primary villains are thus reassuringly anachronistic and self-defeating. In affirming this and reconciling Emmeline to Mowbray, Smith’s conclusion restores the politics of her Picturesque perspective, wherein the Gothic’s aestheticised presence is symbolic of its cultural passage. Emmeline herself is carefully balanced between traditional and progressive social politics. She is both the heir to the Mowbray line and the product of an inter-class marriage. Her ancestral right to and responsibility for the estate is affirmed in superiority to the Montreville’s neglectful absenteeism and violent alterations, yet at the same time, Emmeline is also associated with ‘much needed new ideas and less formal manners’ (Fletcher 1998: 96). Her Picturesque politics thus embody an ideal model of traditional but socially responsible management. This is equally opposed to the effects of absenteeism and Brownian levelling and the anachronistic Gothic despotism with which the novel associates it and which a perspective such as Emmeline’s so effectively suppresses.

This relationship between the Picturesque and the Gothic is developed in Smith’s second novel, where it is both more direct and more sophisticated. *Ethelinde* opens with a Picturesque tour to Cumberland and a fictional Grasmere Abbey which, as Fletcher relates, was later to provide much frustration for Wordsworth as tourists came inquiring after Smith’s original (Fletcher 1998: 112). Sir Edward Newenden is arriving to reclaim and re-administer this family estate which, though ‘venerated as the abode of his ancestors’ he has not seen ‘for above four years’. This is because ‘his father, a man of boundless profusion, had at his death left every part of his property deeply mortgaged’. Sir Edward has been able to recover Grasmere through the fortune acquired by marriage to ‘the heiress of Mr. Maltrevers, (a gentleman who had acquired an immense fortune in the East Indies)’. Sir Edward is thus positioned as an attentive and concerned landowner, seeking to restore his family’s place within the Picturesque landscape, in contrast to his father’s dissipated absenteeism. However, Sir Edward’s wife, whose dowry enables the recovery of Grasmere, also fails to appreciate its merits. Maria Newenden has ‘never been farther from the metropolis than to some of those places of public resort where all its conveniences and amusements are to be enjoyed’ and she has accordingly ‘conceived a dread of a journey into Cumberland’ (Smith 1789: I.2). It is in fact her disinclination to visit Grasmere that has necessitated her husband’s recent absence from the estate. As in *Emmeline*, absenteeism defines negative characters and will once more be associated with a wider failure in Picturesque politics and aesthetics, which produces or enables the Gothic. Once again, the heroine’s vision is contrasted with that of these characters, but here the dynamic is more nuanced.

As the party arrives at Grasmere different characters express their appreciation, or lack thereof, for its scenery. First Sir Edward attempts to instruct his wife in a Picturesque appreciation of the surrounding hills. He calls her attention to their ‘varied and bold outline [. . .] the effect of the sun’s rays on the summits of the craggs’ and ‘the numberless shades’ produced by the ‘swelling clouds’ above them. This injunction is lost upon his wife who ‘with a cold and disdainful smile’ answers that she sees ‘but little beauty in those dreary looking mountains’ (Smith1789: I.31). Whereas Sir Edward is capable of the painterly appreciation of form and light that betokens a Picturesque taste, Maria Newenden’s perspective divests it of colour altogether; indeed to her, ‘all was a blank’ (Smith 1789: I.34). It is next the turn of Sir Edward’s sister to evaluate the prospect. Ellen Newenden is primarily interested in equine pursuits and her dominant pride and concern is for the quality of her stables. Tellingly, this leads her to ‘like many countries better than I do this, to be sure. Great part of Dorsetshire for example, and Hampshire; where one may gallop upon turf for ten or twelve miles an end, without check or leap’. Perhaps ironically, Miss Newenden declines riding with her brother on this occasion and remains within the carriage. Here she is concerned not with admiring the surrounding scenery, but with a ‘sporting calendar, where she was endeavouring to trace the pedigree of an horse’ (Smith 1789: I.33). As her reading signals, Ellen has an aristocratic pride in lineage and descent. Her taste in landscape is aesthetically and politically anti-Picturesque: favouring levelled and flat countryside that suits her sporting pursuits and whose geographical scope displays the wealth and power that enable them.

Whereas Emmeline focussed primarily on the incapability of the aristocratic and self-interested Montrevilles to properly appreciate the Picturesque landscape, Ethelinde locates its heroine between the two poles presented by Ellen and Maria Newenden. Both are associated with an aloof absenteeism that echoes the Montrevilles, but their different motivations help to distinguish the social and political middle ground Smith intends for her heroine and hero. This extends to their attitudes towards the Abbey’s Gothic qualities.

Lady Newenden is representative of an incoming commercial class who cannot properly engage or integrate with the estate and its landscape. This is demonstrated in her Picturesque insensibility and is subsequently applied to her view of the abbey itself. She exhorts her husband not to ‘keep me [. . .] in this great cold place; it strikes as damp as a family vault.’ In her view the abbey is ‘fit only for the nuns and friars that [. . .] used to inhabit it’ (Smith 1789: I.35-36, 40). Far from eliding the presence of its Gothic associations, Lady Newenden invests the Abbey with an imaginative history that fails to see it as anything other than a site of isolation, privation and literal and figurative burial. This is reiterated in her later suggestion that Sir Edward – whom she wrongly suspects of infidelity with Ethelinde – wishes to isolate his real wife and force her to ‘walk tamely about’ Grasmere Abbey (Smith 1789: II.249). The ironic significance of Lady Newenden’s hyperbolic fears is that her occupation of the Abbey’s interior proceeds from her own disinclination to explore the external landscapes she fails to appreciate and which she cannot comprehend as part of the wider estate and its surroundings. As with the arrival of the Montrevilles at Mowbray, a Gothic atmosphere is produced by the failure to properly adopt or appreciate a Picturesque view.

Ellen, meanwhile possesses the Montreville’s aristocratic prejudice and family pride and is accordingly contemptuous of her sister-in-law’s complaints. This does not actually involve a dismissal of her Gothic fears, however. Instead Ellen herself expresses a somewhat “Gothic” hauteur as she describes the abbey’s historic inhabitants as ‘persons, of whom I venture to say, that few of our present nobility are so *well*, certainly none *better* born. They were of a family with which at least *mere modern opulence* may be proud to boast its alliance’ (Smith 1789: I.41 [italics original]). Though she does not appreciate it otherwise, Ellen nonetheless adopts the Grasmere estate as a marker of family pride and consequence.

It is left to the heroine to correct the deficiencies of these attitudes and it is her vision that therefore presents Grasmere Abbey to the reader. This includes an important response to its Gothic potential. The abbey is:

Embosomed among the hills and half concealed by old elms which seemed coeval with the building [. . .] its Gothic windows and long pointed roof of a pale grey stone, bearing everywhere the marks of great antiquity [its] great projecting buttresses [. . .] covered with old fruit trees which [. . .] seemed to have been planted by the first inhabitants of the mansion. (Smith 1789: II34-35)

Echoing Emmeline’s parting vision of Mowbray, this ancient building is, as Fletcher observes, ‘in the process of assimilation into the landscape’ (Fletcher 1998: 109). Again, this accords with a Gilpinian view of the Gothic that suppresses any active presence or agency. Moreover, the heroine’s Picturesque vision – appreciated and encouraged by Sir Edward – expresses both a suppression of the abbey’s Gothic agency and a principle of connection that, as in Picturesque management, associates the great house with the landscape of the surrounding estate. The abbey building is not aloof from that landscape, but is contemporaneous with the ‘coeval’ natural features that interweave themselves with it. Emmeline accordingly engages in exploration of the surrounding landscape, examining and praising its scenery. Much as Smith herself may have done, she compares her responses with a copy of Thomas Gray’s *Journal*: associating her with the pioneers of Picturesque taste.[[36]](#footnote-36) Sir Edward occasionally accompanies these journeys, indicating a shared concern for the estate’s surrounding landscape and community that is absent in the rest of the party. It is in this way that Ethelinde encounters the hero, Montgomery, who presently resides with his mother in a lakeside cottage, not far from the abbey.

Like *Emmeline*, *Ethelinde* explicitly juxtaposes successful and flawed responses to the Gothic within the Picturesque. Gothic agency in the novel is also connected more directly to such failures in perspective. In addition to her ridiculously self-fulfilling fear of incarceration at Grasmere, a more sinister agency is introduced as Lady Newenden’s disinclination to participate in her husband’s Picturesque recovery of Grasmere sees her turn instead to a group of metropolitan acquaintances. The figurehead of this group is Lord Danesfort, a dissipated aristocrat whose influence draws Lady Newenden is drawn into gambling, flirtation and scandal: incorrectly suspecting her husband of an adulterous relationship with Ethelinde. Grasmere is accordingly corrupted and Ethelinde forced from it. This is suitable to Danesfort who hopes to separate the heroine from her protectors and take advantage of her, marriage being ‘no part of his scheme of life’ (Smith 1789: II.73). Sir Edward’s pliable ward, Davenant is to aid in this by marrying and corrupting Ethelinde. A version of this plan is almost enacted when Ethelinde, adrift and of suspect character, subsequently becomes vulnerable to Davenant’s violent advances: a frightening culmination of the events at Grasmere.

Ellen Newenden is also implicated in this process: aware of Ethelinde’s vulnerability, Sir Edward requests that his sister shelter her on her estate at Bracknell. Bearing out Ellen’s lack of aesthetic appreciation, the landscape here is associated with a levelled barrenness; its landscapes are extensive but uninhabited: ‘no human being appear[s] on the whole extent of the open country’ the view of which is unbroken by ‘a cottage or a haystack’. As in *Emmeline* the absence of the Picturesque corresponds with the heroine’s vulnerability: ‘the world was to her only as a vast wilderness’ (Smith 1789: V.38). It is here that Davenant’s assault is threatened as Ellen’s aloof lack of compassion for her brother’s protégée poses no obstacle to their machinations. Indeed, she herself is in the process of becoming an unwitting victim to Davenant and his friend Woolaston: a fortune hunter intent on fooling Ellen into marriage and possessing himself of her property. As at Grasmere, Ellen’s failing is associated with the limits of her vision. Her aristocratic pride and “Gothic” attitude to land and lineage is vulnerable, as her inability to recognise these modern threats to it indicates. The loss of her estates corresponds with a failure to sensitively and attentively administer them as her brother does. The result increases Ethelinde’s existing vulnerability and threatens to render Ellen a Gothic victim too: a forerunner of Radcliffe’s Madame Montoni.

As in *Emmeline*, these threats are not innate to Smith’s Gothic sites, but are rooted in flawed responses to them. Ethelinde’s suffering literalises Lady Newenden’s fear of isolated subjection to masculine tyranny at Grasmere, but stems from the latter’s own failure to properly appreciate and participate in the site’s Picturesque qualities. It is this that opens it up to the influence of Lord Danesfort, whose machinations destabilise Grasmere and mobilise the narrative’s Gothic elements. Ethelinde nevertheless mirrors Emmeline in her imaginative maintenance of an uncorrupted Grasmere and she is similarly rewarded with the means to reside there alongside her hero at the novel’s conclusion. All that is required is the return of Montgomery himself, who has travelled abroad to seek a fortune. Smith uses this interlude to stage a final confrontation between a Gothic threat and her heroine’s Picturesque vision, clearly establishing the latter’s ascendancy. Awaiting Montgomery, the hero finds herself at Abersley, the ancestral home of her own family, occupied by a miserly uncle attended by Ethelinde’s selfish brother.

Her wanderings within the house lead her to a remote chamber containing a portrait of her deceased father and commanding a view of the family mausoleum in which he lies buried. Here, subject to the atmosphere of ‘gloom and obscurity’ and imagining her father’s disappointment at her brother’s lapse and her own friendlessness, Ethelinde experiences an apparently supernatural vision and loses ‘all powers of action and recollection’ (Smith 1789: V.210, 212). As Fletcher notes, this incident is a key crisis point: its ‘Gothic trappings’ focus ‘the threats [Smith] has created for her heroine in the previous four volumes’ (Fletcher 1998: 110). What is crucial, however, is the way in which Ethelinde overcomes it. Whereas a Radcliffean heroine – or, indeed, a Radcliffean narrative – might persist in suspense and uncertainty as to the true nature of such an apparition, Smith leaves the reader in little doubt that Ethelinde herself has raised this ‘phantom’. Accordingly, her paralysis is promptly and conveniently explained by a stray lightning bolt striking her through the open window. Ethelinde’s subsequent reaction is then contrasted with the household servants’ who, aware that this room ‘so near the churchyard, had always the reputation of being haunted’ mistake the prone heroine for a ghost (Smith 1789: V. 213). Ethelinde, however, walks out to this churchyard at the first opportunity and contemplates its:

Picturesque appearance [. . .] adjoining the church, which was very antique, and its narrow windows half hid by mantles of ivy; while from among the mouldering buttresses young ash trees waved their light leaves and the fern, and the wall flower, with variety of lichens and mosses, were scattered about the broken grey stone of the roof [. . .] A group of yew and cypress, relieved [. . .] The more solid and regular mass of stone which composed the mausoleum [whilst] an extensive wood of very ancient elms formed a dark and magnificent background. (Smith 1789: V.217-218)

Details such as the overgrown buttresses tellingly echo Ethelinde’s first view of Grasmere Abbey, whilst the overall description of the ancient building’s natural assimilation echoes similar descriptions in Gilpin’s Picturesque travel writing (and *Emmeline*’s Mowbray). Far from being disturbed or threatened by the funereal site, Ethelinde’s Picturesque aesthetic views her father’s burial place with ‘mournful pleasure’ (Smith 1789: V.217). In sharp contrast to the servants’ fearful conjuration of the Gothic from the churchyard into the house, Ethelinde confronts it and roots it within the Picturesque.

In this way Smith reiterates the ability of a Picturesque aesthetic to organise landscape in a way that confronts Gothic signifiers and subordinates their agency or affect. As in *Emmeline*, this dynamic may be disturbed by those characters who fail to adopt it, but the shortcoming of their approaches is never in doubt, whilst the viability of a Picturesque ideal is sustained in the heroine’s imagination and restored at conclusions which do away with the novels’ villains. This is the case in *Ethelinde* where the antagonists’ fates echo those of the Montrevilles. Lady Newenden commits suicide whilst Davenant succumbs to physical and economic dissipation and Lord Danesfort ends in illness, looking like ‘a walking skeleton’ (Smith 1789: V.335). Such a description effectively conveys the incongruity of such Gothic figures in the social vision Smith’s early novels embody and convey through the politics and aesthetics of the Picturesque. Yet, there is something revealing in the way Smith subtly alters her model between *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*. The former heroine inherits and comes to inhabit the Gothic site in a way that restores her family line, yet the latter never recovers her family home at Abersley and neither does she reside at Grasmere Abbey. Instead Ethelinde and Montgomery adopt a more humble cottage near to Sir Edward’s seat. The ownership and management of the Abbey estate is left to Sir Edward who is now a childless widower; though the novel endorses his Picturesque politics, it does not seem able to connect them with those of the age. This is significant both because it obliquely reflects anxieties and uncertainties within the travel writing Smith draws upon and because it anticipates a revision of the Picturesque in her later work, to be discussed later in this study.

In her first two novels, however, the Gothic remains fixed by the aesthetic and political mediation that frames it within the imaginative geography of Picturesque travel upon which Smith draws. Her work is significant, offering what Diane Long Hoeveler has fairly described as ‘the forgotten urtext for the female Gothic novel tradition’ (Hoeveler: 1998: 37). It does so in a way that locates the Gothic, for the first time, within a version of the contemporary landscape, moving it away from the archival origin favoured by Walpole and other earlier authors. Understood in this way, the ‘tangentially Gothic’ (Miles 2002: 45) nature of Smith’s *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde* becomes central to their significance within the developing Gothic imagination: they represent a point of convergence between Gothic fiction and eighteenth-century travel writing at which the working of the latter’s imaginative geography still predominates. This is the point at which Radcliffe would begin to intervene as her first novel adopts a setting partly inspired by Smith’s Picturesque British Gothic.

Chapter Two

Radcliffe at the Peripheries, Part One: Scotland and the Limits of British Gothic

All was rudeness, silence and solitude. Before me, and on either side, were high hills, which by hindering the eye from ranging, forced the mind to find entertainment for itself [. . .] yet the imaginations excited by the view of an unknown and untravelled wilderness are not such as arise in the artificial solitude of parks and gardens [. . .] the phantoms which haunt a desert are want, and misery, and danger.

(Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1775)

The eye was presented with only the bold outlines of uncultivated nature, rocks piled on rocks, cataracts and vast moors [Osbert] looked in vain for the objects which had directed him, and his heart, for the first time, felt the repulse of fear. No vestige of a human being was to be seen, and the dreadful silence of the place was interrupted only by the roar of distant torrents, and by the screams of the birds which flew over his head. He shouted and his voice was answered only by the deep echoes of the mountains.

(Ann Radcliffe, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, 1789)

Excepting her posthumously published *Gaston de Blondeville* and ‘St Alban’s Abbey’ (1826), *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) is Radcliffe’s only work not to be set in continental Europe. As Alison Milbank observes in her introduction to the novel, this ‘may come as a surprise’ to the reader used to Radcliffe’s later work and its detailed descriptions of ‘exotic’ European landscapes (Milbank 1995: vii). In 1789, however, Radcliffe’s readership would have been far less surprised by a “Gothic” novel set in – and offering (relatively) detailed descriptions of – the British landscape. In the decades following Walpole’s “Italian” *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Britain had provided settings for most, if not all, of the novels now considered as part of the Gothic canon.[[37]](#footnote-37) What is more, it had been amidst these settings (as the last chapter has shown) that an engagement between the Gothic and the landscapes of eighteenth-century travel writing had begun to develop, as Gilpin’s Picturesque aesthetically and politically resituated the Gothic within popular print culture, making it available for fictional responses such as Smith’s. At the outset then, Radcliffe’s first novel should be read as a deliberate participation in the tradition of Gothic fiction that immediately preceded it and the putative relationship with contemporary imaginative geography therein. This chapter will explore the way in which *Athlin and Dunbayne* participates in that process. In particular it will examine how Scotland provides an apposite setting for Radcliffe’s first intervention in the writing of Gothic and travel – and for their relationship across a particularly “British” imaginative geography.

Scottish settings were not without some limited fictional precedent for Gothic fiction at the end of the 1780s: a short part of Sophia Lee’s *The Recess* (1783-85) takes place in Scotland and there are also connections in Smith’s *Ethelinde* (1789).[[38]](#footnote-38) However, Radcliffe’s is the first Gothic novel to make this setting so complete and to endow it with the significance of an overt subtitle: ‘A Highland Story’.[[39]](#footnote-39) The novel does find Radcliffe responding to her predecessors, including revising the Picturesque domestic Gothic of Smith; yet, at the outset of her career, a significant – and easily overlooked – impetus may be found in contemporary travel writing. Scotland had in fact been the subject of a nexus of travelogues, primarily undertaken and published during the preceding decade. These include Thomas Pennant’s *A* *Tour in Scotland 1769* (undertaken 1769, published 1771); Samuel Johnson’s *A* *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* (undertaken 1773, published 1775); the anonymous *Journey to the Highlands of Scotland with Occasional Remarks on Dr Johnson’s Tour by A Lady* (undertaken 1775, published 1777); and William Gilpin’s *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776, on Several Parts of Great Britain; Particularly the High-Lands of Scotland* (undertaken 1776, published 1789), all of which are likely to have been available to Radcliffe in some form as she wrote her first novel.[[40]](#footnote-40) Each represents an attempt to assess Scotland and accommodate it to existing frameworks of expectation and understanding: imaginative geographies of enlightened travel, British scenic tourism and responses to them. Their successes and failures position Scotland as a highly apposite setting for a novel that also raises questions about Picturesque politics and “Gothic” history. This context will be examined in more detail during the second part of this chapter. First though, it is worth considering how certain features of Radcliffe’s setting interact with her plot. This reveals the way in which *Athlin and Dunbayne* responds to the Picturesque framework established by Smith whilst raising related questions about the “Gothic” histories that framework could contain. Contextual details from the travelogues will be used to inform this reading, beginning, appropriately enough, with the source of Radcliffe’s eponymous castles.

**The Castles of Atholl and Dunbar? – sourcing Radcliffe’s architecture**

The historical setting for *Athlin and Dunbayne* is uncharacteristically vague.[[41]](#footnote-41) The action presumably takes place sometime in the Middle Ages, as Milbank reasonably concludes from its invocation of ‘feudal’ politics and characteristics (Radcliffe 1995: 3; Milbank 1995: 114n). This broad periodisation is rendered subject to various anachronisms, however, at least some of which appear to be thematic. The villain, Malcolm, for example, is described as ‘still residing in the pomp of feudal greatness’. This suits his characterisation as ‘proud, oppressive, revengeful’ but also means that the ‘feudal’ is both that which establishes the novel’s historical period *and* that which is seemingly out of keeping with it. Something similar occurs with respect to the eponymous castles and their occupants. The family of the ‘noble Earl of Athlin’ are promptly distinguished from the Baron Malcolm, whose aggressive ‘encroachment’ seems to leave the origin of their feud sufficiently unambiguous for the two families to be morally polarised (Radcliffe 1995: 3). Meanwhile, as Milbank observes, the Athlin and Dunbayne titles arrange their bearers into opposed political systems. The Earl is a recognised peer of the realm: ‘one of an order of thirteen Earls in Scotland’ whose authority derives thereby from organised political consensus. In contrast, Malcolm’s Baronial power stems from his localised judicial authority within a particular fiefdom. This means that ‘Athlin represents the order of emerging statehood, but Malcolm the local despotism of the clan system’ (Milbank 1995: 114n). For Sue Chaplin, Radcliffe’s Scottish setting offers a space in which ‘various contemporary meanings of the Gothic in nationalistic, political and cultural terms collide and coalesce’ (Chaplin 2007: 96). Part of this ‘collision’ concerns the presence of the politically and chronologically opposed systems of government at Athlin and Dunbayne:

As an “ancient seat” of legitimate, Celtic feudal government, Athlin evokes a northern European Gothic past posited in legal and literary discourses of the period as the origin of a just, modern system of British government. [. . .] Against this Gothic precursor of modernity is set the illegitimate tyranny of Malcolm of Dunbayne. (Chaplin 2007: 97)

As such, the castles oppose two senses of the “Gothic” within the eighteenth-century political imagination: the ‘primitive barbarity’ of Dunbayne, an ‘antithesis of cultural modernity’ against the ‘benevolent, rational “Gothic” law’ – the foundational Whig mythology – of Athlin (Chaplin 2007: 97). This political differentiation further complicates the clarity of the novel’s setting. Historical distancing seems to be at work, yet the chronology that operates it is in flux as the benighted and the “modern” are co-mingled.

Radcliffe’s castles provide a peculiar focus for this ambiguity. They may be presented as opposed poles, housing positive and negative characters and the attitudes they represent, yet, architecturally, the sites themselves are almost identical. The ‘Gothic structure’ of Athlin is ‘an edifice built upon the summit of a rock’ whilst Dunbayne is also ‘built with Gothic magnificence upon a high and dangerous rock’ (Radcliffe 1995: 1, 13). For Chaplin, this ‘striking similarity [. . .] establishes points of comparison and contrast’ that highlight the aforementioned ‘tensions’ between different political conceptions of the Gothic (Chaplin 2007: 97). The key point seems to be a lack of inherent differentiation between these sites; whereas no one is likely to mistake the *locus amoenus* of La Vallée for the gloom of Udolpho, the distinction between Athlin and Dunbayne seems to depend entirely upon the political systems and attitudes they house at any given time. This contributes to the sense of flux in Radcliffe’s landscape by implying that, rather than being fixed as the architectural basis of ideology, its organisation must remain subject to change (such as that currently threatened by Malcolm’s encroachment upon the Athlin territory).

These descriptions also draw on the same models: familiar descriptions of Scottish castles constructed on defensible rock formations.[[42]](#footnote-42) As George Dekker remarks, the Athlin ‘sketch’ includes ‘just enough detail for reader to visualise a romantic coastscape with a solitary castle as its most striking feature’ and ‘if the narrative so required, the same scene could be shrouded in darkness’ for the description of Dunbayne (Dekker 2004: 96). Allowing that Radcliffe was not just being uncharacteristically constrained by descriptive economy, the shared appeal to a common object of travel description is itself significant. This is because the novel’s implication that these castles might be interchangeable in terms of their ability to house Gothic agency suggests a process of slippage that obliquely troubles the framing and differentiation of such sites within travel accounts.

It is unlikely that Radcliffe selected exact models for her castles yet, it is possible that she may have had the names and general features of some specific sites in mind. Amongst the castles remarked in the travelogues Radcliffe is likely to have read are Blair castle (in Blair Atholl) and Dunbar castle. Any temptation to straightforwardly map Atholl and Dunbar onto Athlin and Dunbayne should be checked by incongruities in their specific features. Blair castle is not built upon a promontory as is Athlin, whilst Dunbar castle is situated on an island and Dunbayne’s location in relation to the coast is not specified. Meanwhile, neither castle, strictly speaking, is in the Highlands (though travellers were happy to discuss them within tours centred on the Highlands or Hebrides and they may therefore be said to partake in a Scottish imaginative geography broadly marked as “Highland” for the audience of eighteenth-century travel literature). Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to assume that Radcliffe may have had these castles in mind when naming her own and that the assignment of those names may not have been arbitrary if so.

The most remarkable feature of Blair castle in the eighteenth century was its recent role in the 1745-46 Jacobite uprising when, as Gilpin observes: ‘Sir Andrew Agnew seized it with a body of horse, and held it for the king. The rebels twice attacked it, but each time without success’ (Gilpin 1789: I.139). Thomas Pennant similarly remarks that ‘the house was once fortified, and held a siege against the rebels in 1746’ (Pennant 1771: 97). Pennant describes Blair Atholl as a ‘house’ rather than a castle because, since the rebellion, its fortifications had been dismantled in order, as Gilpin writes, ‘that it might never again be an object of military concern’ (Gilpin 1789: I.139). The associations suggested by Atholl are therefore not inappropriate to Radcliffe’s Athlin. As described by Gilpin and Pennant, the site represents a stronghold in the cause of limited authority against the violent resurgence of apparent tyranny. It is furthermore a castle that seeks to consign its military function to the past and become instead a modern “house,” decorative rather than defensive: ‘its inside highly finished by the noble owner’ (Pennant 1771: 97). Dunbar, on the other hand, provokes a very different response when Pennant describes it:

The ruins of the castle [are] seated on a rock above the sea; underneath one part is a vast cavern [. . .] it appears to have been the dungeon, there being a formed passage from above, where the poor prisoners might have been let down, according to the barbarous custom of war in early days. There are in some parts, where the rock did not close, the remains of walls; for the openings are only natural fissures. (Pennant 1771: 43)

This association with anachronistic barbarity contrasts with Atholl’s status as a holdout of modern government and is clearly appropriate to Dunbayne under the sway of the Baron Malcolm. A functional parallel is equally obvious, to a degree that makes the site an intriguingly close fit.

Radcliffe’s Dunbayne is not given a specifically coastal location (though it is less than a day’s journey from Athlin, which is) but it does seem to possess a subterranean part broadly equivalent to that Pennant describes at Dunbar and we can deduce this based on the description Radcliffe gives of the imprisonment and subsequent escape of her heroes, Osbert and Alleyn.[[43]](#footnote-43) Osbert is initially held at ‘the summit of a tower built on the east side of the castle,’ but is subsequently removed ‘for greater security’ to a ‘more centrical part of the castle’. Though not itself equivalent to Dunbar’s prison cavern, this new dungeon is eventually escaped via a ‘winding’ descent ‘into the vaults’ (Radcliffe 1995: 17, 49, 70). Here, apparently beneath the castle, ‘hollow blasts’ are heard to ‘burst suddenly through the passages’ in a manner suggestive of the natural ‘fissures’, which, as per Pennant’s description, might also have admitted the coastal wind into the caverns beneath Dunbar (Radcliffe 1995: 70; Pennant 1771: 43). Alleyn’s prison ‘in a distant part of the castle’ is presumably far below the tower which initially contains Osbert and is reached via ‘dark and winding passages’ that suggest it actually lies within the castle vaults (Radcliffe 1995: 17). Escape in this case proceeds through a trapdoor, further down into a ‘vault’ that is ‘of considerable depth’ *and* ‘considerable extent’ features that suggest Radcliffe may well have in mind Pennant’s Dunbar, whose dungeon caverns are accessed via a ‘passage from above’ (Radcliffe 1995: 22; Pennant 1771: 43).

Atholl and Dunbar may reasonably be said to have offered Radcliffe some formal and thematic materials along with the basis for her fictional names. This begins to reveal the extent to which her Scotland is informed by the travel narratives she would have read. Furthermore and more importantly, it starts to identify the aforementioned interchangeable quality of her castles as a *deviation* from those narratives. This is made more visible, appropriately enough, by their presentation as objects of scenic contemplation.

Pennant incorporates both sites into a visual system that, whilst not the primary focus or appeal of his tour, partakes broadly of the aesthetic and political vision of the Picturesque. The description of Atholl draws attention to some of the Picturesque qualities of the Blair estate, including a ‘fine walk surrounding a very deep glen finely wooded’ (Pennant 1771: 97). A view such as this even forms a candidate for one of only nine landscape illustrations provided as plates for the first edition (Fig. 1):[[44]](#footnote-44)

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Fig.1 – View Near Blair (1771)

This illustration is broadly Picturesque, with a focus upon a middle distance carefully framed by screens at the side and rear. Such a composition establishes the rocky, mountainous landscape as nonetheless manageable for both the onlooker and travellers here illustrated in the foreground: a status implicitly underwritten by the political connotations of Blair Atholl itself, from which this view is made available. Dunbar castle, on the other hand, is not illustrated. Being a ruin it has no such estate whose modern management can redeem its ‘barbarous’ historical associations. It is a site the traveller looks *at*, rather than *from* and must therefore be managed as an object of the Picturesque gaze, rather than adopted as a physical and political platform for it. Pennant largely achieves this: his description withdraws from an imaginative rendering of the ‘infernal’ interior, taking in the ruin of the subterranean architecture that re-naturalises the site as ‘the openings’ after all ‘are only natural fissures’ now that the barbarity of ‘early times’ has receded. To complete the process Pennant turns upon the same coastal vantage point and offers the reader an explicitly ‘picturesque view of the Bass Isle’ nearby (Pennant 1771: 43, 44). The landscape’s susceptibility to the organising principles of the modern traveller is thus progressively affirmed and its Gothic history confidently bracketed.

A traveller such as Pennant can therefore find appropriate ways to manage such sites within a Picturesque rendition of the Scottish landscape. They are ideologically distinguished, but this simply entails differences in visual practice that mutually incorporate the castles into the traveller’s imaginative geography. Radcliffe, on the other hand, is clearly responding to an existing corpus of Scottish travel writing, yet only takes up the thematic distinction between sites such as Atholl and Dunbar without mapping this onto their visual representation. The travel writer assigns his castles appropriate places in a political and aesthetic vision; the novelist leaves them visually interchangeable and undermines this fixity. In fact, neither Athlin nor Dunbayne is, strictly speaking, positioned as an aesthetic focus. We are given a sense of their design and situation, but little else. Neither castle is framed within a landscape in a way that ideologically distinguishes them or assigns them a fixed place in a political chronology such as that which underlies Pennant’s different treatments of Atholl and Dunbar.

Instead, what separates Radcliffe’s castles is not their status as objects of political and aesthetic vision, but the different visions they presently *house* and which look out from them. Thus, whilst Athlin encloses ‘virtues’, Dunbayne follows Smith’s Mowbray and anticipates Radcliffe’s own Udolpho with its ‘frowning’ outlook (Radcliffe 1995: 1, 13). The apparent nod to *Emmeline* is significant. As the last chapter demonstrated, the Gothic agency of Smith’s castle is determined entirely by attitudes to it: managed by the heroine it is a locus of Picturesque paternalism; once she has been expelled its Gothic animus comes to the fore and the ‘frowning’ begins. Radcliffe’s novel, in which Gothic castles are *also* distinguished by the attitudes of their possessors rather than any innate political identity, takes up and develops Smith’s Picturesque model. This is because the novel quickly makes it clear that one of the key points of differentiation between Osbert and Malcolm – Athlin and Dunbayne – is their attitude to landscape and its management.

**Picturesque politics – usurped landscapes**

Early in the novel Radcliffe sends her hero away from her under-developed castles to ‘wander among the romantic scenes of the Highlands’. Radcliffe tells us that Osbert ‘delighted in the terrible and in the grand, more than in the softer landscape; and [. . .] would often lose himself in awful solitudes’ (Radcliffe 1995: 5). This apparent preference for the Sublime over the Beautiful is immediately complicated, however; having ‘strayed’ and lost his path the hero is confronted with the landscape described in the second epigraph to this chapter, one that baffles, rather than pleases him:

The eye was presented with only the bold outlines of uncultivated nature, rocks piled on rocks, cataracts and vast moors [Osbert] looked in vain for the objects which had directed him, and his heart, for the first time, felt the repulse of fear. No vestige of a human being was to be seen, and the dreadful silence of the place was interrupted only by the roar of distant torrents, and by the screams of the birds which flew over his head. He shouted and his voice was answered only by the deep echoes of the mountains. (Radcliffe 1995: 5-6)

Feeling ‘a degree of terror not to be endured’ Osbert turns back ‘dejected,’ but is unable to make sense of the return route either: ‘his memory gave him back no image of the past’ (Radcliffe 1995: 6). This passage seems to give the lie, at least partially, to Osbert’s love of Sublime solitude. Instead, what Radcliffe dramatizes is her hero’s forlorn search for a way to make sense of the landscape: to compose its ‘objects’ into the familiar ‘image’ his memory cannot produce. Meanwhile, the frequent reference to sound highlights Osbert’s unsuccessful attempt to “communicate” with the scene before him; its ‘dreadful silence’ and incoherent ‘roars’ and ‘screams’ highlighting the failure of this attempt at connection and composure. In effect, for all his initial interest in the ‘awful solitudes’ of the ‘terrible and the grand,’ it quickly becomes apparent that Osbert is really seeking a version of the Picturesque: a means of experiencing these features in a landscape with which the onlooker can enter into an aesthetic “dialogue” and which can be made sense of compositionally, as an “image.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

The novel promptly confirms Osbert’s aesthetic inclinations as ‘an abrupt opening in the rock’ reveals a ready-made Picturesque prospect, eagerly taken up by the hero:

It was a valley almost surrounded by a barrier of wild rocks, whose base was shaded with thick woods of pine and fir. A torrent, which tumbled from the heights and was seen between the woods, rushed with amazing impetuosity into a fine lake which flowed through the vale, and was lost in the deep recesses of the mountains. (Radcliffe 1995: 6)

The echoing mountain recesses Osbert has previously encountered still lie beyond, but here nature is obligingly drawn up within a prefabricated Picturesque frame filled with all the features necessary to such a prospect. The torrent and lake provide a focal point in the middle distance, evoking illustrations in several contemporary Highland tour books, whilst the thick woods that ‘shade’ the rocky side screens both mediate against the stark exposure of Sublime rock formations and provide the irregularity and roughness necessary to prevent the Picturesque being merely Beautiful.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Thus far Osbert’s vision is that of a tourist, whose aesthetic echoes that exhibited in some of the novel’s travelogue intertexts.[[47]](#footnote-47) However, Radcliffe provides additional details that gesture towards the Picturesque’s political consciousness and remind the reader that Osbert is also a landowner:

Herds of cattle grazed in the bottom, and the delighted eyes of Osbert were once more blessed with the sight of human dwellings. Far on the margin of the stream were scattered a few neat cottages. (Radcliffe 1995: 6)

The Picturesque landscape’s habitation relieves Osbert’s sense of isolation and reaffirms its amenability to human organisation. The passage further marks that organisation as both aesthetic and functional: the landscape satisfies Osbert’s aesthetic needs, whilst also providing subsistence for its ‘tenants’. The cottages here are inter-connected with the natural landscape in a way that the hero appreciates. Osbert’s apparent credentials as a sensitive governor – as well as appreciator – of Picturesque landscape are particularly important for, unlike the Gilpinian tourist, his aesthetic response to the landscape is not a simply vicarious exercise in estate-management. This is because Osbert, as the Earl of Athlin, is both governor of his own lands and – quite possibly – traditionally responsible for the prospect he now views.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Radcliffe accordingly develops a political contrast between Osbert and Malcolm that continues to draw upon a Picturesque theory of estate-management. This begins as Osbert encounters Alleyn – the novel’s secondary hero – and the two return to Athlin via a walk that brings into view ‘at some distance the castle of Dunbayne’. At this point their conversation becomes explicitly political: examining the conduct and credentials of Baron Malcolm as a landowner. For Alleyn, Malcolm is an instance of

The bad policy of oppression in a chief [. . .] these lands [. . .] are his, and they are scarcely sufficient to support his wretched people, who, sinking under severe exactions, suffer to lie uncultivated, tracts which would otherwise add riches to their Lord. (Radcliffe 1995: 7)

Radcliffe’s villain is thus exposed – in so far as makes sense within the historical context – as an insensitive and improvident landowner whose short-term greed overburdens his tenants and damages the long-term prosperity of his estate. Whilst he does not proceed directly by despotic enclosure and improvement, Malcolm’s effect on the landscape is nonetheless turning it into a wasteland that may eventually echo Goldsmith’s *The Deserted Village* (1770) or the dispossession and disconnection witnessed by Cowper in *The Task* (1785). Accordingly, Malcolm’s imprudent management threatens to provoke the kind of mass-agitation that worried eighteenth-century landowners and domestic travellers and which the politics of the Picturesque were in part designed to circumvent; as Alleyn informs Osbert, Malcolm’s people are ‘oppressed by their burdens [and] threaten to rise and do justice to themselves by force of arms’.[[49]](#footnote-49) For Osbert, on the other hand, these tenants are soon revealed as potential allies. Alleyn’s description of Malcolm as a ‘tyrant’ and ‘murderer’ recalls his crime against the late Earl and proceeds to the revelation of Osbert’s identity as the present master of Athlin. This procedure confirms the suspicion that the lands and tenants in question have previously been associated with Osbert’s family as Alleyn recognises ‘the son of the late Lord whom he had been taught to love’ before revealing that his own clan – the Fitz-Henry’s – are ready to support Athlin against Dunbayne (Radcliffe 1995: 7). The implication of Alleyn’s recollection and allegiance seems to be that the occupants of the mountain valley have traditionally been vassals of Athlin, now brought beneath the sway of Dunbayne.

The distinction between positive and negative attitudes to landscape and land management is made clearer as the novel’s plot develops. Imprisoned by Malcolm, Osbert encounters Louisa, the wife of Malcolm’s brother and mother – it will transpire – of Alleyn. Her retrospective narrative allows Radcliffe’s Scottish novel to briefly anticipate the Swiss landscapes that will also be incorporated into *The Romance of the Forest* (1791). Louisa’s father, the Marquis of St Claire, is quickly established as the benevolent and responsible owner of an estate situated, like Osbert’s earlier vision, within the frame of a Picturesque valley:

In which the beautiful and the sublime are so happily united; where the magnificent features of the scenery are contrasted, and their effect heightened by the blooming luxuriance of woods and pasturage [. . .] and the peaceful aspect of the cottage. (Radcliffe 1995: 60)

Here is everything necessary for both the aesthetic and political dimensions of the Picturesque. The Beautiful and Sublime are mutually present: offering variety and contrast within the boundaries of the Picturesque frame. Meanwhile, the ‘pasturage’ and ‘cottage’ that represent St Claire’s tenants are interwoven with his aesthetic view, rather than displaced from it. The elderly Marquis’s credentials are underlined by his disinclination to leave this estate upon his daughter’s marriage and removal to Scotland. Like Smith’s Sir Edward, St Claire feels a traditional responsibility for his family’s ‘natal land’ and, unlike her Montrevilles or Lady Newenden, is concerned not to be an inattentive absentee: ‘consigning the care of his estates to trusty agents’. The death of St Claire, the “good” Malcolm (the present Baron’s brother), and – apparently – his heir (Alleyn) exposes these estates to the interests of the present “bad” Baron Malcolm, whose character forms ‘a mournful and striking contrast to that of the deceased Lord’ (Radcliffe 1995: 61, 62).

Much like the lack of a stark distinction between Radcliffe’s Gothic castles, this rapid shift emphasises that the attitudes which determine the world of Radcliffe’s novel are provisional, and subject to “contemporary” change. As with the oppression of his Scottish lands, Malcolm’s attitude to his sister-in-law’s Swiss estates is recognisable in terms of the eighteenth-century debates on estate management that inform the Picturesque. His interest is purely economic, castigating the ‘generosities’ of his brother which have ‘diminished the value of the lands which are mine by inheritance’ and thus justify ‘an indispensable right to repay myself from those estates which he acquired of you [Louisa]’. The fact that Malcolm views the Swiss estates in purely financial terms befits the fact that he never actually views them at all. In contrast to the Picturesque appreciation of Osbert or St Claire, Malcolm is here an absolutely absentee landlord, seeing his property and tenants as a purely economic resource and entering into no reciprocal responsibility for their long-term welfare or even sustainability (he merely waits until ‘the receipts’ from Switzerland have satisfied his perceived debt) (Radcliffe 1995: 63). Thus Radcliffe’s first novel makes explicit the eighteenth-century correlation between despotic land-management and the Gothic that has been hinted at as early as Goldsmith, absorbed into the politics of the Picturesque and carried into the Gothic novel proper by Smith.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Attending to the novel’s Picturesque politics in this way provides additional bearing and nuance for Miles’s suggestion that the text alludes ‘anachronistically’ to ‘the language of “equitable” government’ (Miles 1995: 77). From the outset of her novel Radcliffe takes up the established Gothic motif of usurpation, but centres it upon *landscape*. Though the secondary narrative – which reveals Alleyn as the true heir to Dunbayne – will reveal a more traditional usurped castle, the primary contest between Athlin and Dunbayne is set up around the territory which lies between them: land which has been ‘encroached’ upon and ‘oppressed’ by the villain in a way that politically differentiates him from the primary hero. As with the limited differentiation between the eponymous castles themselves, this focus upon attitudes to landscape ultimately serves to complicate any simple opposition between the Athlin and Dunbayne parties. Radcliffe’s first Gothic is not set up as a Manichean contest between absolute heroism and abject villainy, but between different forms of political practice familiar within the contemporary discourse of Picturesque theory and travel writing. However, the possibility – and one the novel develops – is both that these may not be absolutely distinct and that, by implication, organisational discourses such as the Picturesque may not finally succeed in making sense of the Scottish landscape and its Gothic potential. This is brought into greater focus by the novel’s engagement with an existing narrative of “Gothic” politics and history.

**Discredited politics – re-writing Gothic merit**

So far *Athlin and Dunbayne* has remained close to the model Radcliffe would have found in Smith’s recently published *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*. The Gothic is located within a setting drawing upon the imaginative geography of contemporary travel writing; its agency and effect is largely dependent upon the attitudes operating within that geography, which remains structured by the aesthetic and political vision of the Picturesque. Replacing a villain who does not appreciate and employ that discourse with a hero who does – the Montrevilles with Emmeline and Godolphin at Mowbray, Malcolm with Osbert and Alleyn at Dunbayne – will restore this order. This, more or less, is the state of affairs at the conclusion of Smith’s early novels. What is interesting about *Athlin and Dunbayne*, however, is the way in which it proceeds towards such a resolution only to undermine it almost at the moment of its arrival. This occurs through an examination of Osbert’s character that must cause the attentive reader to re-evaluate his credentials as a source of benevolent governance, affirmed through a deliberate problematizing of the Picturesque vision that has differentiated him from Malcolm.

Just as Osbert’s function as a sensitive landowner with Picturesque sensibilities finds Radcliffe echoing elements of Smith, the providential realisation of Alleyn’s virtues, capabilities and (eventually) titles, nods to another earlier Gothic novel. The Alleyn sub-plot mimics that of Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (1778) in which an obscure character is similarly revealed to be a legitimate and, crucially, a deserving, landowner. As critics such as James Watt have explained, this novel’s plot is informed by contemporary eighteenth-century values founded in a Gothic history that proceeds towards them. The novel identifies its hero, Edmund, as both the embodiment of those qualities (foregrounded by ‘the thematic centrality of the hero’s merit’) and their political antecedent as the legitimate heir of a Gothic castle evoked in terms of ‘ancestral familiarity’ (Watt 2003: xv, xix). The ‘distribution of property’ and its correct management are central to this plot, where heroes are ‘benevolent paternalists who recognise the duties incumbent upon their privilege’ (Watt 2003: xx). There is a significant overlap here with the Picturesque politics Radcliffe derives from Smith. Both models locate the noble or genteel landowner within an essentially Whiggish history: as the demonstrably deserving custodian of benevolent authority opposed to despotic and absolutist self-indulgences. As historical plots reward the merit of Edmunds or Alleyns with their rightful castles and estates they establish them at the head of a line of benevolent local landowners whose descendants will presumably provide a check to insensitive “improvements” and absenteeism in contemporary settings such as Smith’s. Radcliffe seems to produce this result by allowing Alleyn to succeed Malcolm at Dunbayne and marrying him to Osbert’s sister, Mary. Her novel even appears to nod quite specifically to Reeve’s: Watt sees Alleyn as ‘based on’ Reeve’s hero, Edmund, and Norton suggests that Radcliffe gives Alleyn the name of Reeve’s Baron – Philip – in a ‘gracious salute’, whilst Milbank additionally notes that the description of Osbert as ‘the champion of virtue’ echoes Reeve’s original title (Watt 2014: 70; Norton 1999: 58; Milbank 1995: 117n35). Radcliffe seems to intend that her reader keep Reeve’s novel in mind, yet she also crucially reworks it as *Athlin and Dunbayne* insists on delaying the discovery of Alleyn’s title whilst drawing attention to Osbert’s stubborn refusal to recognise his merit without it. Radcliffe is explicit about this, characterising her erstwhile hero with the ‘darkness of prejudice and ancient pride’ (Radcliffe 1995: 109). As Watt observes, this means that any simple political and historical transition between ‘malign and benevolent’ feudalism is ‘complicated’ *after* the ‘resolution’ of the novel’s plot (Watt 2014: 70-71). In fact, this development actually prevents the plot from resolving, as the defeat of Malcolm leaves the remaining characters congregated around Athlin, awaiting the pattern of marriages that will establish a new social order at the text’s conclusion. As in Reeve, the villain’s defeat presages a period of social adjustment in which a network of relationships and alliances are confirmed. However, whereas Reeve’s novel – which lacks any realised geography – smoothly resolves a network of regional connections anticipating a meritocratically-governed British unity (Watt 2003: xx); Radcliffe’s – which *is* informed by the imaginative geography of eighteenth-century travel – draws attention to the frustration of this process. [[51]](#footnote-51) Her marriages and alliances are anticipated only to be deferred as Osbert stubbornly refuses to accept the (apparently) low-born Alleyn as a suitor for Mary. Confronted with his companion’s aspirations Osbert’s ‘hereditary pride chilled [his] warm feelings of friendship and of gratitude’ (80). Radcliffe’s language is quite specific in underlining Osbert’s difficulty in valuing Alleyn for his meritocratic qualities in the manner Reeve’s Sir Phillip immediately does with Edmund. The ‘gratitude’ that should reciprocate them is not sustained and the ‘warmth’ they have developed is ‘chilled’ as the Earl regresses to a value system based solely on rank and title.

This delayed conclusion leaves space for the arrival of a new character and secondary villain: the Count de Santmorin. Like Malcolm, Santmorin is associated with a suspect attitude to land and estates: arriving in Scotland on a voyage to seek out debts and incomes, rather than adopt responsibilities. It is no surprise therefore when, true to the pedigree that his title will obtain in Radcliffe’s oeuvre, the Count presses his own suit to Mary by abducting her away from Athlin to a ruined abbey: a manoeuvre made easier by the absence of Alleyn, whose position Santmorin effectively fills. The obvious implication of this supernumerary episode is that, by preventing a Reevian denouement, Osbert’s pride has left Athlin exposed to the dangers of grasping, “Gothic” aristocrats despite the defeat of the initial villain: as if the world of the novel will remain politically benighted until its heroes begin to adopt a more progressive social order. Indeed, as Toni Wein has demonstrated, this vulnerability is rooted in Osbert’s failure to look past the Count’s rank and judge his merits. The reader is aware of Santmorin’s transparent economic self-interest and can presumably draw the obvious parallels with Malcolm, but Osbert’s judgement of character fails here just as with Alleyn. Indeed, Osbert refrains from executing justice upon the Count and, addressing him still as ‘my lord’ urges him to depart with ‘forgiveness’ (Radcliffe 1995: 106) a detail which, as Wein observes, further questions Osbert’s ability to provide justice in his territory given his inability to police the failings of his own class, where abduction and threatened rape become somehow allowable as crimes of passion (Wein 2002: 108). Alleyn’s timely arrival assists in Mary’s recovery and the chief characters once again gather at Castle Athlin. The narrative is now again prepared to conclude yet still ‘the darkness of prejudice and ancient pride’ (Radcliffe 1995: 109) prevent Osbert’s acceptance of Alleyn’s suit. It is only when the Baroness, Alleyn’s mother, serendipitously recognises her lost son that the Earl can accept him as a brother-in-law and the narrative concludes with a speech by Osbert that attempts to reconcile personal merit with divine providence: ‘it is now seen, that those virtues which stimulated him [Alleyn] to prosecute for another the cause of justice mysteriously urged him to the recovery of his rights’ Radcliffe 1995: 113). Familiar as it is, the equation seems unavoidably incongruous in a novel that has drawn deliberate attention to the frustration and delay of this supposedly inevitable conclusion as the direct or indirect result of Osbert’s own politics. The Earl’s reasoning cannot help appear tendentious when the attentive reader reflects that Alleyn’s ‘virtues’ were powerless to procure him recognition without the providence (or serendipity) of the Baroness’s recognising him well after this ‘cause of justice’ had been successful. Chaplin addresses this problem in detail, focussing on the implicit shortcomings of the “law” that should embody and enact the “justice” of Osbert’s summation. This cannot acknowledge ‘what the text posits as an essential moral truth – namely that Alleyn’s juridical metamorphosis depends only upon a superficial reordering of *names.*’ As such the working of justice is separate from the recognition of a ‘moral “self”’ that exists independently of it and this thereby ‘undercuts’ Osbert’s appeal to a justice that, as Chaplin observes, is revealed as the justification of his ‘will-to-power, of his ongoing commitment to the reproduction of his own family history’ (Chaplin 2007: 100).

Osbert’s established status as a benevolent authority figure is thus called into question as the novel develops and concludes. Radcliffe’s representation and arrangement of landscape remains important at this point. The implicit critique of Osbert’s character refreshes the vagaries of the Athlin / Dunbayne distinction, which could only be resolved by contrasting the attitudes they contained, not – as in source material such as Pennant – by aesthetically and ideologically distinguishing them as components of a coherent imaginative geography.[[52]](#footnote-52) Notwithstanding the rearrangement of its estates, Radcliffe’s novel cannot unproblematically resolve its Gothic into the meritocratic chronology or Picturesque ordering it inherits from writers such as Reeve and Smith if Osbert’s political qualities are left so benighted. Instead the ambiguous chronology of the novel’s opening is maintained at its conclusion as *Athlin and Dunbayne* does not resolve its history into an easily progressive chronology or its landscape into the kind of political ordering that might express that. This disjunction – and the significance of landscape to it – is made clear in a final Gothic set piece.

As part of her brief abduction by Santmorin, Mary is carried to ‘the ruins of an abbey’ and the reader is accordingly presented with Radcliffe’s first great Gothic landscape – easily eclipsing the limited descriptions of Athlin and Dunbayne themselves. Mary observes that the ruin: ‘stood the solitary inhabitant of the waste, – a monument of mortality and ancient superstition [. . .] the frowning majesty of its aspect seemed to command silence’. She is then taken to ‘a part of the building [. . .] now fallen to decay, and overgrown with ivy’ (Radcliffe 1995: 102-103). The Picturesque is once more invoked as the ruin is placed within an associated landscape and decorated with overgrowth familiar from Gilpin’s travelogues and Smith’s Gothic novels. Yet this Picturesque register is undermined in several crucial ways. A typical Gilpinian view would play down the agency of the Gothic site, boxing it within carefully chosen rear and side “screens” and emphasising its subjection to both the natural landscape which over mantles it and the observer who organises it within this Picturesque frame. Here, however, the abbey itself ‘commands’ a landscape of ‘waste’, one ‘to whose wide desolation’ Mary’s eye can ‘discover no limits’. Just as the ruin cannot thus be framed and contained by the onlooker, neither can it be spoken of: ‘commanding silence’ it implicitly resists descriptive ordering. Moreover, the historical closure and present stasis achieved within a conventional Picturesque prospect is clearly impossible as the Gothic site is “reactivated” by the very fact of Mary’s abduction to it. The site itself has no apparent historical or political context within the narrative: none is provided for it and, strangely for a novel concerned with redistributing Gothic properties, no one takes charge of it. Instead this ruin lies outside the conclusion it briefly punctuates (and which is not contingent upon it) and does so in a way that qualifies that conclusion in tandem with the implicit critique of Osbert’s character.

The sense here is that the Picturesque – which has previously identified Osbert’s aesthetic and political suitability to govern the novel’s landscapes, does not invariably succeed in resolving them. The ‘silence’ commanded by the Abbey ruin recalls the ‘dreadful silence’ that confronted Osbert in his mountain wanderings. This ‘silence’ is crucial to Radcliffe’s sense of Picturesque and non-Picturesque landscape. The former, almost by definition, is one that submits to description: to the clarity and closure of the traveller, or landowner’s, arrangement and ordering. The latter sees Radcliffe developing a version of the Gothic that resists or eludes this crucial function of imaginative geography. By punctuating her conclusion with this silent and silencing Gothic landscape, Radcliffe presents it as a qualifying statement on the novel’s sense of the Gothic’s relationship to imaginative geography and the forces that organise it. The novel’s opening adopted Smith’s aesthetic and political conversion of threatening landscapes into the Picturesque, yet its conclusion refuses to occur until that vision has been discredited: both through the critique of Osbert’s character and through the presentation of a landscape upon which the Picturesque does not operate either aesthetically or politically; aesthetically, because its framing cannot work and politically because the Abbey is not reconciled to the re-ordering of landscape and its governance that the novel is undertaking at this point. These anxieties about the organisation of Radcliffe’s landscape have been signposted by the lack of fixed distinction between Athlin and Dunbayne (contra their sources in contemporary travelogues) and implication that this might be provisional and contingent, rather than chronological and progressive. The anonymous Abbey makes this clear as it remains outside the novel’s (now politically vexed) chronology and outside the work of history itself, within a landscape that cannot be reconciled to the organising functions it inherits from other travelogues and novels. It is appropriate that this scene easily eclipses the eponymous castles, for this unnamed ruin is the first great *Radcliffean* Gothic site: one that occupies a recognisable imaginative geography, but refuses to succumb to it.

In producing this Gothic site Radcliffe intervenes in the tradition of Gothic writing that precedes her. Like Smith she situates the Gothic within a recognisable topography developed within contemporary travel writing and rendered proximate thereby. Yet Radcliffe is far more explicit in indicating that the discourses that operate that imaginative geography do not work to contain the Gothic within an aesthetic and political frame. In this she is informed by the tradition of contemporary travel writing itself, of which she was an avid – and active – reader.

**Why (Gothic) Scotland? Nationhood, travel writing and political myths**

Having established the way in which Radcliffe revises her predecessors’ framing of the Gothic and its place in the contemporary – British – landscape, it remains to examine how the ambiguities and anxieties associated with Scotland in the later eighteenth century are enlisted in this process. These are transmitted to Radcliffe’s novel via the travel literature that informs it. In actual fact Radcliffe is here responding to a relatively recent phenomenon, as Scotland became a tourist destination only from the middle of the eighteenth century (Ott 2010: 39). Scholars have identified a series of factors contributing to this growth in Scottish travel. Glenn Hooper, for example, notes the importance of Highland road-building in the wake of Culloden (1746) together with the inspiration of MacPherson’s “Ossian” material during the 1760s – a development that Kristin Ott locates within a wider trend in Scottish travel where ‘tourism was book-based from the beginning’ (Ott 2010: 39). Hooper also acknowledges the paradoxical impetus provided by Samuel Johnson’s criticisms of Scotland – and of Ossian – which other travellers set out to investigate or challenge (Hooper 2002: 176-178).[[53]](#footnote-53) These factors are all important, but do not entirely account for the clustering of published tours in and around the early- to mid-1770s: Pennant’s *A Tour in Scotland, 1769*, Johnson’s *Journey to the Western Isles*, the anonymous “Lady’s” *Journey to the Highlands of Scotland with Occasional Remarks on Doctor Johnson’s Tour by A Lady* and Gilpin’s *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776, on Several Parts of Great Britain; Particularly the High-Lands of Scotland*. These texts do not seem to be immediately occasioned by new programmes of Highland road building, much of which began in earnest in the later 1740s, following Culloden (Hooper 2002: 176). Meanwhile, though they deal with Ossianic material, with the exception of Johnson most do so briefly and all are directed by their own organising principles and agendas, which, contra Ott’s general point, are not always substantially ‘literary’. These range from Pennant’s naturalism (and geology) to Gilpin’s continuing Picturesque survey of ‘Several parts of Great Britain’ through to Johnson’s examination of historiography and philology as part of a re-orientated Grand Tourism.[[54]](#footnote-54) By the same token, responding to Johnson’s remarks is not the primary interest of Gilpin or even The Lady who, despite her title, makes few direct references to him. In fact, what associates and seems to occasion these texts is a shared concern to make sense of Scotland according to and within the systems they individually adopt. For these writers, Scotland at the end of the 1760s is not simply a site of Ossianic alterity or – at the other extreme – a region that can be incorporated into the new United Kingdom and its imaginative geography by the building of roads alone. These texts are not interested in Scotland simply as a site of irreconcilable difference, but nor do they proceed as if it can be made trivially familiar (or as if this has already been achieved). Instead these travellers set themselves the task of accommodating Scotland within existing schema and / or investigating the viability of this endeavour. It is therefore the question of Scotland’s accommodation within a greater physical and political geography that inspires this endeavour to reconcile it with the work of eighteenth-century tourism’s imaginative geography. This is a question that was particularly acute in the decade preceding this cluster of tours and texts.

As historians such as Linda Colley have revealed, the 1760s were a crucial point in the eighteenth-century ‘forging of the British nation.’ Following the Seven Years War, Britain was faced with an expanded sphere of influence comprising geographically, linguistically and religiously diverse peoples. In Colley’s view this made the definition of ‘Britishness’ all the more important; yet, this was also a process in which – theoretically at least – Scotland was now a partner. This participation took various forms, ranging from expanding participation in British trade, increased state-employment of Scottish MPs and the public recognition of intellectuals such as Hume and Smith (Colley 1992: 128-131). At the same time, it inspired the Scottophobia of individuals such as John Wilkes, whose rhetoric identified Scottish influence not as contributing to British power, but as threatening a concept of Britishness anchored in Englishness. Unsurprisingly, Jacobite anxieties contributed to Wilkesite attacks, which asserted that a preference for arbitrary governance was ingrained in the Scottish people (Colley 1992: 121). As Colley makes clear, however, critical perception of Scotland had as much to do with its *ongoing participation* in the present Union as it did with specific fears of a revenant Stuart monarchy.[[55]](#footnote-55) Evidence of this anxiety is also present in the “Bute Myth” that haunted the disempowered Whig party during the 1760s. ‘A Scot and a Stuart’, the Earl of Bute provided the chief focus for Wilkes’s attacks. However, the unease he provoked was not chiefly rooted in a sense of his Scottishness or potential Jacobitism as an “external” threat. Instead it was Bute’s ‘secret influence’ on George III and the Hanoverian establishment that concerned his political opponents (O’Gorman 1982: 2-3). As such he offered a political metonym for the ambiguous and deleterious effects of Scottish participation from within, not antagonism from without.[[56]](#footnote-56)

This social and political anxiety provides an important context for travellers heading to Scotland during the late 1760s and 1770s. With the idea of Britain being resituated on a global stage, these writers set out to make sense of a region – to make imaginative geography of a physical geography – that needed to be reconciled as a participant in this new idea. Despite their manifold differences, these texts are therefore united by the attempt to accommodate Scotland to established forms and positions of eighteenth-century travel writing and to evaluate their efficacy. Their concentration in the wake of anxieties over nationhood and participation in the 1760s therefore makes sense; yet, as should already be clear, they do not all succeed in confidently resolving these anxieties. At moments of actual or potential doubt over the traveller’s ability to comprehend and organise their object, aspects of the Gothic may enter a text. This is most obvious in Johnson, who makes explicit reference to ‘the fictions of Gothick romances’, (Johnson 1775: 174) but is present to a degree in other texts. What makes this engagement with the Gothic interesting – and relevant to Radcliffe – is that it arises as an artefact of a traveller’s unease when their methods fall short of making sense of their objects. As such it does not proceed from Scotland’s innate alterity, but from its ability to provoke or suggest failures in the systems that should comprehend and resolve the region and which already – at least implicitly – underpin the broader imaginative geography Scotland is now part of. As such Scotland’s Gothic potential in travel writing of the 1760s and 1770s *also* stems from its ongoing participation in Britain and not simply from its “otherness.”[[57]](#footnote-57)

This Gothic potential is heightened by uncertainties regarding the relationship of Scotland to the Gothic itself and to some of the systems and ideas it is accommodated to in the eighteenth-century imagination. This ambiguity exists in embryo as early as the first preface to Walpole’s *Otranto* which claims for its provenance ‘the library of a Catholic family in the north of England’ (Walpole 1998: xx). As Angela Wright observes, this setting might be understood by contemporary readers as a reference to Scotland - itself notoriously associated with recalcitrant Catholicism and ‘often referred to as “North Britain”’ – so that Walpole’s source ‘gestures north to an occluded space’ (Wright 2007: 74). Tellingly, *The North Briton* was itself the title of Wilkes’s chief periodical, which had begun publication in 1762 and reached one of its most controversial points in 1763: the year before *Otranto*’s publication (see Colley 1992: 108). In this way Walpole’s Gothic is immediately associated with a peripheral landscape around which the limits and comprehension of Britishness were being fiercely debated.[[58]](#footnote-58) The ambivalence is caught up yet further in *Otranto*’s provenance as Wright remarks the way in which the Catholic, Northern setting both distances the Gothic manuscript and constitutes the means of its preservation and ‘transmission’ (Wright 2007: 74). Thus, whilst Walpole’s novel stillrefrains from establishing a direct relationship with eighteenth-century imaginative geography, its framing sets up another potential, but deferred, association with that field. Current scholarship has identified a more extensive ambiguity with respect to Scotland and the Gothic, that stems directly from the issue of its differentiation within the new British nation, its history and its political mythology.

Such myths are apparent in *Athlin and Dunbayne*, where, as Chaplin observes, they contribute to the distinction between Radcliffe’s castles. In constructing these, Radcliffe gestures to a political myth within which Athlin – ‘an ancient seat of legitimate, Celtic feudal government’ – should signify:

A northern European Gothic Past posited [as] the origin of a just, modern, system of government [. . .] the chivalrous martial heroism of Osbert and Alleyn and their commitment to justice in government evokes the eighteenth-century mythologisation of the Gothic ancestors of the British constitution. (Chaplin 2007: 97)

However, as Chaplin herself demonstrates, and as the previous analysis of the novel develops, this is problematically realised. Osbert’s “justice” cannot comfortably develop into a Reevian meritocracy it does not recognise and remains grounded in a genealogy of violent and arbitrary right that – as Chaplin observes – is ‘radically out of joint’ with the legal and political myth it supposedly upholds (Chaplin 2007: 98). Radcliffe’s invocation and undermining of Gothic mythology in Scotland may be further elucidated by Dale Townshend’s identification of a recurrent ‘problem’ in historiographical attempts to reconcile “Scotland” and the “Gothic”: terms which ‘had been inscribed in a complex relationship of tension, opposition and mutual antagonism in historical and political discourse from the end of the seventeenth century onwards’ (Townshend 2014b: 222) Townshend traces this relationship back to a foundational opposition of ‘Gothic valour’ with ‘Caledonian cruelty’ in Sir William Temple’s *An Introduction to the History of England* (1695) and follows it carefully across a range of other historiographical positions during the eighteenth century. Here ‘wide-ranging dispute’ leads to the conclusion that ‘the only constant that is sounded is that Scotland’s political and historical relationship to things ‘Gothic’ was a vexed and complicated issue’ (Townshend 2014b: 222, 226).

What Townshend’s work makes clear is that Scotland’s relationship to the Gothic parallels its ambiguous incorporation within a Britain where those myths – ‘the eighteenth-century construct of the Enlightened, freedom-loving Goth’ – might make sense of the Gothic.[[59]](#footnote-59) Denied coherent access to this positive political sense of the Gothic, Scotland, as Townshend reveals, was left open to ‘uptake’ by a more troubling Gothic imagination: ‘as a place of darkness, violence, superstition and bloodshed’ (Townshend 2014b: 228). It is therefore far from surprising that an ambiguity over the Gothic myth should be visible in Radcliffe’s novel or that it should arrive there, in part, through the work of travel writers who attempt to make sense of Scotland’s place within a British imaginative geography. In both cases, the anxieties or ambiguities located within Scotland are not simply the result of indigenous and revenant political or supernatural content spilling across the border. Instead the issue is with the ability to make sense of Scotland according to existing schema: to accommodate it within a broader sense of eighteenth-century Britishness, its origins and organisation. This is obliquely reflected in Radcliffe’s novel, which includes no explicit or even feigned supernatural elements and instead focusses upon making sense of the relationship between different lands, their heritage and ownership. The abbey which forestalls the conclusion is not anomalous because it houses a haunting or a revenant history, but because it seems impossible to reconcile with the history and ownership the novel resolves. Radcliffe’s first novel adopts an apposite setting in which to take up the Gothic, not as a (supernatural) ontological rupture, but as an epistemological problem within the organising work of imaginative geography. This is a problem she would have encountered in contemporary Scottish travelogues, the first of which was Thomas Pennant’s *Tour in Scotland*.[[60]](#footnote-60)

**Conciliation: Thomas Pennant’s *Tour in Scotland***

Thomas Pennant’s *Tour in Scotland* is not only the first detailed Scottish travelogue in the wake of anxieties surrounding that region in the 1760s – in its author’s words ‘a novelty’ – it is also partly conceived as a response to them. In a later autobiographical account, Pennant writes that his Scottish tours ‘laboured earnestly to conciliate the affections of the two nations [England and Scotland], so wickedly and studiously set at variance by evil-designing people’ (Pennant 1793: 13). Accordingly, Pennant’s text works hard to establish Scotland within a coherent and continuous imaginative geography, using familiar equipment from the arsenal of eighteenth-century enlightened tourism.

Throughout his *Tour*, Scotland is in continuum with England as part of a greater Britain.[[61]](#footnote-61) Thus, like Gilpin after him (but *unlike* Johnson and the Lady) Pennant begins and ends the written account of his tour in the north of England. This connection is underpinned by the author’s zoological interests and expertise, which provide part of the stimulus for the author’s attempt at a complete account of the British geography *and* a means of integrating Scotland within it.[[62]](#footnote-62) Political and cultural boundaries invariably fade as the landscape becomes one British ecosystem.[[63]](#footnote-63) Pennant’s technical command extends to the format of his text, which employs numerous footnotes to expand upon its objects and, where necessary, mediate their anxieties. As such Pennant’s Scotland is easily amenable to comprehension and explanation by the learned traveller whose arsenal of scholarly materials is already prepared for it. In fact, despite the apparent difference of their constituent geographies, Pennant’s approach is comparable at times to that of a Grand Tourist and his Scotland is mediated in much the same manner as Addison’s Italy. Both regions are pre-inscribed by and for the educated observer. Indeed, Pennant’s approach to Scotland’s major cities is akin to an earlier traveller ticking off the acculturating potential of cities like Rome or Florence. His description of Edinburgh, for example, lists artworks, architecture and attractive walks whilst also offering helpfully itemised information on the cost of living (Pennant 1771: 50-56). Not only does Pennant’s Scotland make sense within this schema of enlightened acculturation, but his text makes it available for others wishing to travel in a similar fashion, with similar objectives. Meanwhile, as previously discussed, Pennant also utilises aspects of the Picturesque, in both its aesthetic and political capacity. Such techniques organise Scotland for the traveller, bringing its physical geography into line with the imaginative geographies of eighteenth-century Grand and Picturesque tourism. As such they provide a means of managing alterity in Scotland and are typically successful in doing so. What makes Pennant’s text interesting, however, is its apparent sensitivity to this need. For all his confidence, Pennant seems acutely aware of a requirement to confront and dismiss discordant material, much of which – ranging from storied ruins to supernatural superstitions – carries a significant Gothic potential. The *Tour* remains confident and successful in its approach, but this is partially belied by the repeated need to confront content that other travellers will manage with less success.

As the examples of Blair Atholl and Dunbar Castle have already illustrated, the Picturesque is a key component of Pennant’s methodology and vocabulary; it allows for the differentiation and management of alternative sites so that the politically progressive Atholl provides a platform for the traveller’s aesthetic whilst that same vision plays down any sense of threat at more benighted ruins such as Dunbar.[[64]](#footnote-64) This technique is employed elsewhere to manage potentially discordant landscapes and features. Entering the Highlands, Pennant describes an experience that clearly informs the description of Osbert’s mountain wanderings:

The pass into the *Highlands* is awfully magnificent; high, craggy and often naked mountains present themselves to view, approach very near each other, and in many parts are fringed with wood, overhanging and darkening the Tay, that rolls with great rapidity beneath. (Pennant 1771: 74)

Like Radcliffe’s ‘bold,’ ‘uncultivated’ ‘rocks’ (Radcliffe 1995: 6) these ‘naked’ mountains exist in a Sublime confusion that eschews the foliage and order that gives shape to the Picturesque prospect. Where they are wooded this covering serves only to obscure the foreground from which the sound of the rapid river presumably echoes, much like the ‘roar of distant torrents’ and the ‘amazing impetuosity’ of the river in Radcliffe’s mountain description (Radcliffe 1995: 6). Though Pennant does not share Osbert’s fears, he is similarly pleased when the scene transitions into a ‘most beautiful knowl [*sic*], covered with pines’ and containing ‘the town of Dunkeld’ now ‘seated under and environed’ by the surrounding mountains and forests (Pennant 1771: 75). Like the unnamed settlement of ‘neat cottages’ that relieve Radcliffe’s hero (Radcliffe 1995: 6), Dunkeld is centred within the kind of Picturesque landscape that was not previously forthcoming. The “Beautiful” is situated within mountain details that gesture towards the Sublime, but ultimately serve a framing function: the mountains offering rear and side-screens pleasingly – and Picturesquely – diversified by their covering of pines.

In this way Pennant rapidly and confidently negotiates a key landscape encounter – the entrance to Scotland’s most geographically, culturally and politically distanced geography – through means of the Picturesque. Because the region is connected with the Atholl estate, this scene ties into the Picturesque landscapes discussed earlier, which are enabled by the Duke’s sensitive and politically validated land ownership. Following the Jacobitism of Lord George Murray, first Duke of Atholl, the successors in his brother’s line had been restored to their dukedom and, in the time of Pennant’s visit (and, subsequently, Gilpin’s), served as Scottish Representative Peers. By effectively linking the lowlands and highlands, the Dukes’ estate emblematised such political and geographical continuity. As such, their management becomes a key subject of commentary within travellers’ use of the Picturesque: an aesthetic invested in the continuity of legitimate Whig gentry, validated by the management of their estates and correlating with the chronological symbolism of overgrown “Gothic” ruins elsewhere in the landscape. The sequence of scenes in Pennant therefore speaks to the same concern with Picturesque land management as is established at the opening of *Athlin and Dunbayne*, but – in a crucial difference – finds it present rather than absent as the “correct” landowner governs the estate.

In Pennant, this governance extends to exactly the sorts of scenes that will ultimately problematize the Picturesque in Radcliffe’s novel. This is because the Duke’s gardens produce not only ‘the most beautiful and picturesque views of wild and gloomy nature that can be conceived’ they also include an ecclesiastical ruin. The ‘ruins of [Dunkeld] Cathedral’ lie ‘within the gardens,’ where they participate in the Picturesque prospect. Like the ‘wild and gloomy’ nature there tamed, this structure is prevented from unsettling the scene and instead becomes accommodated within it as ‘a magnificent edifice’ with some ‘beautiful pillars still standing’ (Pennant 1771: 75). This arrangement is confirmed as Dunkeld provides another of Pennant’s few illustrations (Fig. 2):

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Fig.2 – Dunkeld Cathedral (1771)

This scene clearly participates in the Picturesque register set up by the accompanying prose.[[65]](#footnote-65) The ‘ruin’ is overhung by the surrounding woods that also break up its outline so that it is enmeshed within rather than dominating the prospect. This prospect itself is clearly identified as an organised garden space, as the properly situated ruin is approached by a walk upon which modern sightseers are duly enjoying the same view of it as Pennant’s reader. Unlike Radcliffe’s abbey, no Gothic animus is apparent and the ruin is easily managed within the prospect. Across this short sequence of “Highland” scenes then, all the materials that progressively frustrate the Picturesque and animate the Gothic within Radcliffe’s Scottish landscapes are present, but arranged very differently by the confident traveller.

Pennant’s ability to transition from the initially imposing Highlands to the composure of a Picturesque estate that also checks Gothic gloom and ruins is matched elsewhere in his text – for example at Dunbar – when potentially discordant sites are tackled with similar confidence. Meanwhile, the political management that enables Picturesque appreciation in and around the Atholl estate is more explicitly praised at other sites. Bamborough Castle, for example, offers an example of a ruin’s modern rehabilitation by owners who inhabit a part of it whilst ‘the rest of the spacious edifice is allotted for purposes which make the heart to glow with joy [. . .] an ample grainary (sic); from whence grain is allotted to the poor without distinction’ (Pennant 1771: 38). Correct governance not only maintains the feudal ruin as an aesthetic object, but replaces its repressive political function with benevolent local paternalism. As befits Pennant’s sense of British continuum, this Northern English example is corroborated in Scotland at sites such as Lord Breadalbane’s estate near Loch Tay. Here the modern ‘chieftain’ replaces ‘feudal tenure’ and ‘vassalage’ with a policy that rewards industrious tenants with the right to ‘live rent free, on condition they exercise some trade’ (Pennant 1771: 83). This paternalism rehabilitates those earlier models for the sake of local modernisation; meanwhile, the lord himself is engaged in improving the local infrastructure, having ‘erected thirty-two stone-bridges over the torrents that rush from the mountains’ (Pennant 1771: 86). An implicit contrast is drawn here between the results of Breadalbane’s management and the otherwise benighted ‘habitations of the *Highlander*’ Pennant describes a few pages earlier. These are ‘small, mean’ and ‘the disgrace of *North Britain*.’ Such cottages are described as clustering together ‘as if they loved society or clanship’ and Pennant thereby shows his hand: associating these impoverished dwellings with an anachronistic ordering, awaiting the rectifying hand of a modern governor such as Breadalbane (Pennant 1771: 78).[[66]](#footnote-66) Through such descriptions Scotland’s history and geography are easily brought to heel by land management partaking of the politics of the Picturesque, whilst the traveller looks on and records his approval.

Other encounters evoke troubling historical or traditional narratives of violence or superstition, yet Pennant is generally keen to confront and manage these. At Lough Leven Pennant pauses to consider ‘the captivity of *Mary Stuart*.’ The traveller’s enlightened present seems threatened with a slippage into a Gothic vignette as Pennant considers first the general site, then the ‘ruins, where, it is said, the unfortunate princess was lodged [. . .] a dungeon with a vaulted room above.’ Nearby are some trees ‘probably coeval with *Mary*, under whose shade she may have sat’. The historical fixity of the Picturesque is shaken as the ruin becomes animated by nascent Gothic narrative and the traveller is drawn into empathy with its past sufferings. Pennant rapidly shifts his ground, however, so that the hearsay and folk legend – ‘where it is said’ – of Mary’s captivity is replaced by scholarship. A footnote informs that ‘historians differ’ as to the details of Mary’s escape before resolving this with the present traveller’s learned opinion (Pennant 1771: 64). The text itself resumes with some brief details of the castle’s broader history and ownership: placing it within an ordered historiographical progression that checks the transcendent significance of particular episodes. Pennant then devotes a paragraph to the various fish and birds that make up the local ecosystem: his antiquarian expertise succeeded by his naturalism as the focus shifts from Gothic history to the technical methodologies that make sense of the site in the present. The various species serve, as elsewhere, to confirm Scotland’s zoological continuum with the rest of Britain as the fish ‘certainly are our Char, only of a larger size than any we have in *England* or *Wales*’. Zoology comes to Pennant’s assistance again soon after, at an excursion to the nearby ‘Rumbling Brig’ which crosses a ‘horrible’ chasm where waters gush ‘with great violence’ over the ‘gloom’ of a glen. The encounter faces the traveller with Sublime threat as he looks from the ‘bridge of one arch, slung over’ the chasm. Yet the framing as an excursion is important and it soon becomes apparent that this prospect does not face the naturalist with a silencing incoherence (as it might a Radcliffean hero). For all the ‘noise of the waters’ Pennant is still able to pick out and remark ‘the cawing of daws’ and ‘the cooing of pigeons’ (Pennant 1771: 65) – an impressive feat of auditory expertise, significantly checking his bewilderment by a landscape that remains interpretable to him on this technical level.

As Pennant travels further north his text becomes increasingly aware of supernatural accounts and the traditions of superstition in and around the Highlands. His responses to these are interested, but consistently incredulous: references are made to ‘less enlightened times’ (Pennant 1771: 24, 55) yet those customs that persist are addressed within a scholarly framework that distinguishes them as the result of ill management, not irreconcilable alterity. So, having been as far north as Fortingall, Pennant pauses to offer a systematic account of ‘antient customs and superstitions’ that ‘decline daily’ in case their ‘memory should be lost’. The announcement and explanation prevents this from appearing as a deviation from enlightened judgement to supernatural ambiguity; instead the exercise is broadly ethnographic. Furthermore:

Such a record will have this advantage when the follies are quite extinct, in teaching the unshackled and enlightened mind the difference between the pure ceremonies of religion, and the wild and anile flights of superstition. (Pennant 1771: 89)

The apparent antithesis of enlightenment forms part of its archive, co-opted in aid of its project. Accordingly, the descriptions that follow this pre-scribed ordering bring to bear the full range of the traveller’s technical confidence, marshalling scholarly sources and acknowledging the local political function of good governance. A lengthy account of spectral visitation and prophecy is thus recognised primarily in terms of the mischief it does as ‘the good minister will have many a weary discourse and exhortation before he can eradicate the absurd ideas this idle story has revived’. Here the anachronistic belief, not its objects, are the only source of a revenance which manifests only as an exasperating inconvenience that the correct authority is already in place to resolve. This episode, which centres on the visitations of ‘a female sprite’, is immediately followed by a general observation that:

The notion of witchcraft is quite lost [and] was observed to cease almost immediately on the repeal of the witch act; a proof what a dangerous instrument it was in the hands of the vindictive. (Pennant 1771: 90)

The focus is once more on the function of governance. Witchcraft is not a threat in its own right, but as the tool of a despotic legal and political authority that has now been replaced following reform and a final execution in 1727.[[67]](#footnote-67) A range of superstitious folk customs are then confronted and in each case brought within the purview of Pennant’s scholarly apparatus, accommodating the unfamiliar to an existing standard of comprehension and performing the work of imaginative geography thereby. Thus funeral customs such as the ‘Late-wake’ are ‘Scythian-like’, whilst the ‘Coranich’ sung at these occasions may be ‘performed in the fullness of horror’ but is nonetheless a topic on which ‘etymologists’ might ponder a relationship to Greek and Latin analogues – with precedence duly found in Virgil and the ‘Roman Poets’ (Pennant 1771: 92-3). The sacrifices held on ‘Bel Tein’, meanwhile, are described in detail, but also provided with a substantial footnote in which various sources are cited in order to demonstrate a parallel with traditional customs in Gloucestershire and that a common ancestor for these English and Scotch practices may be ‘a custom of the antient *Danes*’ (Pennant 1771 91). The alterity of the Highlands is doubly diffused as it becomes decipherable through an existing scholarly apparatus *and* moved thereby into continuity with the rest of Britain.

Pennant’s *Tour in Scotland* is thus largely successful in its aim to make sense of Scotland within a British continuum. Its various methodologies – zoological and historical scholarship, Picturesque aesthetics and politics – combine and reinforce each other. They accommodate the landscape to existing models of eighteenth-century tourism, travel writing and the kinds of imaginative geography these uphold. At the same time the traveller confronts sources of alterity and brings this structure to bear upon them. The result is a text that remains confident, but nonetheless invariably highlights the challenges it must face. Pennant has a clear sense of what does and does not belong in his imaginative geography and what can and cannot be said about it, but at the same time his text must be an active exercise in policing this distinction.

**Extending the Picturesque: Gilpin’s Scottish *Observations***

Pennant’s was the first major Scottish travelogue of the 1760s and 1770s, but other popular eighteenth-century travel writers soon followed, including William Gilpin, whose theory of the Picturesque Pennant’s own *Tour* is partly indebted to.[[68]](#footnote-68) Returning to England on the 13th of June, 1776, Gilpin wrote to his friend, William Mason, that:

I have got safe from my Scotch expedition; which I feared indeed, when I left you, I should not have had time to execute. I have been much entertained indeed, & saw the face of country wholly new. (qtd in Barbier 1963: 54)

There is a sense here that Gilpin recognises the scope of his undertaking, yet remains quietly confident about it. Scotland and its highlands present a ‘wholly new’ challenge for the activities of Picturesque tourism, yet Gilpin’s concern is pragmatic, not methodological: allowed sufficient time, the execution of his aesthetic is apparently never in doubt. The attitude is broadly appropriate to Gilpin’s Scottish tour. Published in 1789, the *High-Lands of Scotland* present themselves as a successful undertaking yet reveal occasional signs of strain as the Picturesque attitude – hitherto applied to England and Wales – works to incorporate elements of a ‘new’ subject.[[69]](#footnote-69)

For Fulford, this tension is visible across the tour-book as Gilpin ‘displays considerable ambivalence with regard to the Highland landscape and to the great landowners whose estates he visits’ (Fulford 1996: 153). This speaks to the politics of the Picturesque, because Gilpin struggles to reconcile the practices of Hanoverian landowners with the freedom and independence of highland populations to whom they are ostensibly responsible as traditional governors. As always, this is reflected in an aesthetic register as ‘landscape parks, domesticating the wildness of the scene and avoiding commanding views, seem to show the nobility’s abandonment’ of this connection (Fulford 1996: 155). The result is an often wild and forbidding landscape that is not always sufficiently reconciled to the political structures upheld by and upholding the Picturesque aesthetic. Fulford’s relatively brief reading offers a valuable approach to the Scottish *Observations*, born out by evident tensions in various descriptions concerning the political relationship between landowners and the landscapes (and people) they are responsible for. Responses to the Gothic invariably focalise this tension around the political management of a ‘wild’ and potentially violent region. The Picturesque aesthetic prevents these from being explicitly anxious, but the Gothic is nonetheless incorporated within the growing scepticism of Gilpin’s twin aesthetic and political registers.

An early example of this tension around the Gothic is offered at Holyrood House in Edinburgh. Here Gilpin offers a brief historical vignette detailing the murder of David Rizio (whose supposed bloodstains are still shown to tourists). Details such as the surprise arrival of Lord Ruthven through ‘a private door’ clad in ‘complete armour’ convey the anecdote through the register of popular eighteenth-century fiction. Of course, Gilpin consigns such activities to ‘the barbarity of those times’ whose benighted political and legal system saw ‘the lord high chancellor of Scotland [. . .] joined with a band of ruffians in perpetrating this murder’ (Gilpin 1789: I.64). This closure is complicated, however, as the Picturesque turns its attention to architecture and a commentary on repairs, carried out ‘some years ago’, on part of Holyrood’s original ‘Gothic’ structure:

A modern heavy roof was thrown over light, airy Gothic walls; the consequence of which was, it crushed them [. . .] the roof, walls, and monuments were all blended in one confused mass of irretrievable ruin. (Gilpin 1789: I.65)

The description is not offered as an explicit metaphor, yet – as an attempt to bring Gothic structures into contiguity with modern designs – the Holyrood improvement cannot fail to carry certain connotations when coming from Gilpin’s pen. The reincorporation of sites and memorials of Gothic history appears architecturally *and* politically unsound, not least because their collapse into ‘irretrievable ruin’ confirms the destruction of the chronology their unity confuses, taking it beyond the capacity of the Picturesque to recognise or remedy. The improvement and its failure takes place during the 1760s: at the height of political suspicion over the effects and success of Scottish “union”.

Other examples locate the Gothic more clearly in relation to improvement and estate-management. Following in Pennant’s footsteps, Gilpin visits Dunkeld after entering the Highlands (offering another likely source for Radcliffe’s descriptions). Like Pennant and Osbert his progress through the mountains proceeds from disorder into something more amenable to the Picturesque. The ‘wild, unshapely desert begins to separate into parts; and form itself into hills, hung with wood, and broken with rock’. A succession of “several scenes” passes before the traveller’s eyes, anticipating the various details of the prospect ahead and echoing the settled view that appears to Radcliffe’s hero through ‘an abrupt opening in the rock’ (Gilpin 1789: I.112; Radcliffe 1995: 6). Once more, the stage is now set for the condition of the estate to reflect upon the broader status of the landscape. However, whereas Pennant places the Duke of Athol’s estate at the centre of well-managed Picturesque landscape, Gilpin is less approving. Observing that the area has ‘been the object of much attention, and expense’, Gilpin quickly establishes a tension with the proper ‘limits of the duke’s improvements’ set by ‘Nature’ within ‘very decisive boundaries’ (Gilpin 1789: I.113). Criticism is prompt and candid. The landscape:

Would have been a still more beautiful scene, if art had done as much as nature. Much indeed it has done, but nothing well. Cascades, and slopes, and other puerilities deform a scene which is in itself calculated to receive all the grandeur of landscape. (Gilpin 1789: I. 114)

The criticism is directed at the duke’s management of the estate, rather than the landscape itself which – it is implied – would appear far better under better management. The abbey ruin is viewed next. It stands:

Shrouded in wood [. . .] on the edge of the lawn; but rather too near the house. The solitude which naturally belongs to ruins, and the embellishments which are necessary about a habitable mansion, interfere rather too much. (Gilpin 1789: I. 114)

The description echoes Pennant’s, as the abbey is offered some Picturesque foliage and framed within the duke’s gardens. This time, however, that proximity is a source of critique and implicit concern that is bolstered by a footnote reference back to Gilpin’s description of Brown’s ‘improvement’ of Roche Abbey.[[70]](#footnote-70) Rather than representing the ascendancy of the Hanoverian gentry over the region’s wild past, this incorporation of Scotland’s Gothic history is a little too close for comfort. Gilpin’s calm prose is ostensibly concerned only with aesthetics, yet his choice of terms speaks to an underlying political register in which the ‘solitude’ of the Gothic site is a disconcertingly short distance from the ‘habitable’. This discomfort may also speak to the broader challenges Gilpin faces in extending the Picturesque to Scotland. As James Kelly notes, the emptying of a ruin’s history from its aesthetic frame might resonate awkwardly outside England, where the remains of abbeys in particular could speak to ‘continuing sectarian tension’ (Kelly 2014: 41). This pertinent observation recalls Ann Janowitz’s own reminder that the aesthetic naturalisation and ahistoricisation of ruin could also work to obscure the ‘violence of nation-making’ and its ‘cost to both ancient and local communities’ (Janowitz 1990: 4). Gilpin is generally complacent as to the causes and mechanisms of ruination, speaking of castles ‘adorning the country they once defended’ and even comparing the ‘picturesque genius’ of Cromwell and Henry VIII as respective ruiners of castles and abbeys (Gilpin 1786: II. 86, 122). Accordingly, Dunkeld’s history is not considered. Yet the slight anxiety over the too-prominent place of the ruin in the Scottish political present may still be revealing, particularly given the awareness of recent conflict Gilpin demonstrates at sites like Blair Atholl.

Episodes like Dunkeld indicate the way in which Gilpin’s text sits alongside, but slightly apart from Pennant’s within a broader chronology of late eighteenth-century Scottish travel writing. Ostensibly, Gilpin’s text is the fruit of a similar project to incorporate and make sense of Scotland and the Picturesque is one of a shared set of methodologies through which this can be achieved. However, the text that Gilpin finally publishes in 1789 finds his Picturesque critique of the aesthetics *and* management of landscape newly validated by the success of his previous works.[[71]](#footnote-71) As such, it is particularly responsive to the ambivalent potential of Scotland: in which the relationship between history (including the Gothic) and landscape already exists in tension. As one of many readers following Gilpin’s works during the 1780s, Radcliffe may well been sensitive to the shift in his critique when the *High-Lands of Scotland* appeared as she prepared her own debut publication. Though, as Fulford observes, Gilpin ‘explicitly aligns himself’ with landowners such as the Duke of Athol and ‘the Hanoverian order they represent’ (Fulford 1996: 154) his descriptions nonetheless raise questions about the correlation between Gothic remnants and the ownership and management of landscape that Pennant’s does not. These are questions that Radcliffe’s novel subsequently takes up and centres on a ruined abbey of its own, placed within a landscape whose governance is variously left questionable or discredited by the time her plot concludes.

**Imagined in the wildest tale: Samuel Johnson’s “Gothic” Scotland**

In Pennant and Gilpin’s tour-books, Scotland’s ambiguity is more implicit than explicit. Pennant works hard to mediate potentially discordant materials and Gilpin finds the Gothic located at points of political and aesthetic strain. Nonetheless, both texts ostensibly succeed in their epistemological, aesthetic and / or political projects: taking up Scotland within a more or less continuous and contiguous British imaginative geography. Samuel Johnson’s *Western Isles* is a very different text. Far from being recognised as a similar attempt to conciliate and incorporate Scotland, the *Western Isles* became (in)famous for its arch criticisms of the country’s landscape and lifestyle. A flavour of these is given by the anonymous critic who wrote that the author’s ‘prejudice, like a plant, has gathered strength with age – the shrub [. . .] nursed so many years in the hothouse of confidential conversation, is now become a full-grown tree’ (qtd in Rogers 1995: 53). The metaphor cleverly rephrases Johnson’s critique of the barren Scottish landscape. More interestingly, it implies that such ‘prejudices’ stem from an *overgrowth* of attitudes nurtured in the scholarly climate of southern isolation. This is – perhaps unwittingly – an apt evaluation of Johnson as a traveller who attempted to comprehend Scotland and was frustrated less by the shortcomings of what he found there than by his inability to fit material to the standards he wishes to apply.

Johnson initially appears focussed upon a quest for alterity in Scotland: a reading supported by his own disappointed realisation that ‘a longer journey [. . .] must be taken by him whose curiosity pants for savage virtues and barbarous grandeur’ (Johnson 1775: 129). The irretrievable loss of various aspects of Scotland’s past is a persistent concern in Johnson’s Journey, which is ambivalent in its response to ruins and ruination and engages in a concerted effort to make sense of what materials remain. For this very reason, however, the disappointment he describes must be qualified by the text’s overall earnest to arrive at a stable comprehension of Scottish geography and history and its commitment to recording the difficulties this meets with. There is an ironic distance between Johnson and the merely panting curiosity of a traveller who does not submit ‘savage virtues and barbarous grandeur’ to the same rigour – even if that rigour forces them to disappoint. Ultimately, Johnson’s *Journey* is a text that cannot sustain a confidence in the models provided to Pennant by a pseudo-Grand Tourism or to Gilpin through the aesthetics of the Picturesque. The empirical and evaluative function of Johnson’s tour has something in common with Pennant, but is never as complacent. As critics such as Pat Rogers have observed, the *Western Isles* participates in aspects of the Grand Tour and is accordingly edited and composed as a “public version” of the tour that participates in this genre of travel writing.[[72]](#footnote-72) As such, the *Western Isles* is disciplined, empirically grounded, carefully edited and ostensibly highly organised. It echoes Pennant’s technical and scholarly approach to Scotland, appealing at various times to geographical, anthropological and philological investigations and explanations of its objects.

Grand Tourism is an anxious register in Johnson’s text, however. Lacking more conventional associations, the urge to access a classical vein within the travelled terrain needs to be transposed onto Shakespeare and the supposed place at which Macbeth ‘met the weird sisters in his way’. Johnson further writes that ‘this to an Englishman is classic ground’, thereby gesturing, as Rogers notes, to an established tradition of classical intertexts in Italy (Johnson 1775: 50; Rogers 1995: 52). Townshend similarly observes that Johnson’s emphasis upon Englishness (with which Shakespeare is implicitly aligned) is important because it offers a way to ‘colonise’ the Scottish landscape with the scholarly experience and expectations of the educated traveller (Townshend 2014b: 239). In this way Johnson’s acquisition of Shakespeare also speaks to the anxieties about the Union in and around the 1760s; assertions of Shakespeare’s Englishness resist ‘the threat of Scottish cultural nationalism’ represented by ‘the canonisation’ of “writers” such as Ossian (Townshend 2014b: 239). As an explicit reference to the ‘classic ground’ of the Grand Tour, however, the reference feels uneasy. The invocation of Macbeth’s encounter with the moorland witches does not suggest an inert, archival landscape pre(in)scribed, in an Addisonian manner, with the expectations of the traveller it awaits. Instead, the anecdote invests the landscape with a more ambiguous property and establishes a very different precedent for a traveller’s movement through it. Such an imaginative geography is liminal, active and speaking. Like Macbeth, the traveller may be confronted by inhabitants who redirect his ‘journey’ and whose nature and testimony he is *not* properly equipped to interpret or judge. Appearing early in Johnson’s text, this reference foreshadows some key features of his encounter with the Scottish landscape and its contents. The model of educated, confident, Grand Tourism is gestured to in a way that tacitly admits its severe limitations in a landscape the traveller does not fully comprehend and which may (and will) speak in voices he cannot satisfactorily decipher about material he cannot satisfactorily judge.

At the same time, the Gothic is clearly being invoked by Johnson, but in an oblique manner that is typical of his text as a whole. No direct revenant presence is conjured – even imaginatively – here. Instead *Macbeth* (1606) functions, in Townshend’s words, as a ‘lens’ through which Scotland can be interpreted by ‘English eyes’. The “Gothic” quality of this lens is ambivalent, however. For Townshend, Johnson’s association of Shakespeare with Englishness – the eighteenth-century construct of the ‘Gothic Bard’ – is part of a broader refusal of Scotland’s participation in the myths of political Gothicism (Townshend 2014b: 239). Situated as a text *about* Scotland rather than *of* Scotland, *Macbeth* can be made to identify it with a ‘Gothic’ hinterland: a ‘place of ghosts and regicide’ that is ‘excluded from the ideological construct that was the noble Gothic past’ (Townshend 2014b: 228). This exclusion is certainly part of what Johnson’s use of a Gothic register in Scotland achieves, but its specific connotations always find the traveller in a much less confident position: one which the substitution of Macbethian for Grand Tourist landscapes speaks to at the tour’s outset.

Johnson’s invocations of the Gothic are far more explicit than Pennant’s or Gilpin’s, but they do not represent an indulgence of alterity so much as a rift in the traveller’s ability to comprehend and manage the landscape and its materials. In this manner they follow the allusions of the *Macbeth* reference, which confronts Johnson himself with no actual ghosts or witches, but nonetheless points to the local limits of a model of Grand Tourism and the imaginative geography it constructs.[[73]](#footnote-73) This is important, because it means Johnson’s Gothic speaks not to what the traveller finds within the terrain so much as his ability to organise and finally comprehend it. In fact Johnson had several opportunities to indulge a more simplistic Gothic atmosphere in Scotland. His diary of the tour includes more than one mention of superstitious fears, usually expressed by his companion, Boswell, and arising, for example, at the ruined chapel of Inch Kenneth. These are completely omitted from the published travelogue Johnson produced from his notes, however (see Rogers 1995: 226). Johnson’s Scotland is not “haunted”; like Radcliffe’s Abbey it is not home to any ghosts or even any troubling revenant histories. Just as the abbey draws ambiguity from the fact that it lacks a historical narrative and political place about which the novel (or its characters) can speak, so too does Johnson’s Scotland trouble the traveller by presenting content that even the foremost of English critics cannot satisfactorily judge. In both cases the ambiguity of a ‘Gothic’ Scotland stems not so much from what it says as what it is (or is not) possible to say about it. The invocation of *Macbeth* sets this up for Johnson because it simultaneously pre-inscribes the landscape for the traveller *and* encodes its status as a region in which such expectations are baffled and disorientated. It is both an attempt to subordinate Scotland to the educated English traveller – a less cordial version of Pennant or Gilpin’s attempts at national contiguity – and an allusion to the shortcomings of that traveller’s perspective if he, like Macbeth, is within a “Gothic” landscape that will misdirect his judgement whilst speaking in a cryptic discourse he cannot understand.

One of the most consistent issues Johnson faces in Scotland concerns chronology. Characteristically though, this is not simply a problem of revenance, but of organisational clarity. Attempts to acquire a history of the Highlands and Islands are baffled by a traditional reliance on oral narratives that Johnson finds to be incomplete and unreliable: ‘books are faithful repositories, which may be a while neglected or forgotten; but then they are opened again, will impart their instruction: memory, once interrupted, is not to be recalled’ (Johnson 1775: 257). The paradigm of archival stability and recovery Johnson here appeals to is familiar within the literary tradition of Grand Tourism exemplified by texts such as Addison’s *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705). As elsewhere, Johnson gestures to the Grand Tour, with its imaginative geography of the Mediterranean configured as a classical library, laid open to the appropriately educated British traveller. This mode of historiography and interpretation will not work in Johnson’s Scotland and nor can the indigenous oral tradition be substituted for it. It is the lack of coherent materials, not historiographical scepticism, that prevents him from employing oral records. The problem is not that a volatile Bardic counter-testimony enters Johnson’s text to challenge the traveller’s assumptions. As his dismissal of Macpherson’s Ossian on linguistic and philological grounds indicates, such material is well within Johnson’s capacity to manage and is, in fact, exactly the kind of literary and linguistic encounter he invites. When empirically seeking a record of Scottish history for himself, however, Johnson is left without the requisite material upon which to exercise the scholarship that he wishes to underpin his account. The result is not a confrontation with clamouring and discordant voices, but the quite opposite impression of a silence that outlasts the closure – in both a literal and symbolic sense – of a book and to which the content Johnson seeks cannot be ‘recalled’ in spite of all his scholarship.

Johnson’s recurrent difficulties in organising and mastering his materials eventually become visible on a formal level. Like many eighteenth-century travel accounts, the *Western Isles* is organised as sections labelled with the most significant locations there described. This emphasises the text’s claim to reflect the systematic organisation and evaluation achieved through the traveller’s judgement. This system breaks down in the *Western Isles* as a section on ‘Ostig in Sky’ exceeds a hundred pages: over a quarter of Johnson’s text in its first edition. Here local description is overtaken by an unannounced attempt to overview the characteristics and history of the Islands and Highlands. The Ostig in Sky section recalls Pennant’s treatment of Scottish folk custom, yet lacks both its orderly situation in his text and that author’s scholarly complacence; unlike Pennant, Johnson does not employ extensive footnotes to mediate strange material by pulling it into an established scholarly archive. Instead the traveller’s position feels more isolated and immediate as he confronts the landscape and its contents directly, in his own person and employs his own means to wrest a coherent account of or from it.[[74]](#footnote-74) Thus, at ‘Ostig in Sky’ the impression is of Johnson marshalling his own considerable faculties, yet finding insufficient purchase for them. Describing the belief in ‘second-sight’ Johnson suggests ‘strong reasons for incredulity’ that echo Pennant’s characteristic reference to ‘less-enlightened times’ as the custom is ‘ascribed only to a people very little enlightened; and among them, for the most part, to the mean and ignorant’ (Johnson 1775: 252-53). Yet Johnson’s own position is that of enlightened uncertainty: ‘considered in itself’, the faculty of second-sight ‘involves no more difficulty than dreams [or] the regular exercise of the cognitive faculty’. As such Johnson’s position is neither that of supernatural gullibility or incredulous prejudice: ‘I never could advance my curiosity to conviction; but came away at last only willing to believe’ (Johnson 1775: 253, 256). It is telling that this long semi-digression concludes with the aforementioned expression of scholarly futility in the absence of clearly written records. Johnson’s “Grand Tourism” is thus very different to Pennant’s. Out “on the ground”, Johnson takes the demands of rational enquiry and scholarly clarity further than Pennant – whose footnotes keep him tethered to an existing body of work that, as per Said’s model, achieves a secure imaginative geography of Scotland, based upon its prior ‘encapsulation’ (Said 1978: 58).

Johnson’s frustrated attempt at Grand Tourism is also evident in his responses to architectural sites – particularly ruins – where it crosses over into a fraught aesthetic register that represents an interesting refusal of the Picturesque. Johnson’s attitude to architectural description is established early on in the *Western Isles*: ‘Of Fort George I shall not attempt to give any account. I cannot delineate it scientifically, and a loose and popular description is of use only when the imagination is to be amused’ (Johnson 1775: 53). Johnson may not feel personally able to comment upon the site, but nor does he fall back upon its aesthetic contemplation through “imaginative” strategies such as the Picturesque. Instead, the implication is that the traveller will turn his attention to other material of which he *can* give a satisfactory and “scientific” account. As his tour and text progress, however, an “imaginative” element does resurface within the *Western Isles’* responses to architectural structures and ruins. As Rogers reveals, this is another important component of Johnson’s “Grand Detour” because it speaks to an inability to find analogues for the monuments that should function as objects of correct contemplation and description in accounts of Grand Tour locations such as Florence or Rome (Rogers 1995: 53-55). What Johnson finds instead is Scotland’s ‘relative absence of historical monuments’ in the form of ‘intelligible and decipherable relics’ (Rogers 1995: 54). Johnson’s realisation of this lack parallels the realisation of the broader limitations in his ability to give a “scientific” account of Scotland and its materials. As Rogers notes, ‘the absence of well-preserved monuments’ leaves historical enquiry adrift, particularly in the Highlands and Islands where Johnson notes that ‘edifices, either standing or ruined, are the chief records of an illiterate nation’ (Rogers 1995: 54; Johnson 1775: 164). Fort George (constructed in 1769) is of little concern due to its lack of historical depth, but other sites increasingly come to focalise Johnson’s anxiety about the evanescence of history into unintelligible markers or records.

Key to these responses is a critical response to the Reformation and to the work of John Knox in particular. Whereas such work – and the ruins they produce – are a key component in the chronology of Picturesque aesthetics and associated Whig politics, Johnson’s position is much more ambivalent. At St Andrews he writes that ‘we read with as little emotion the violence of Knox and his followers, as the irruptions of Alaric and the Goths’ (Johnson 1775: 15). The remark ostensibly speaks to the present’s disassociation from the “violence” of the past, yet the equation of Knox and Alaric ensures that the former cannot escape criticism. This is made clearer if the anecdote is read, as Rogers suggests it should be, through the lens of Johnson’s Grand Tourism (Rogers 1995: 54). As such it speaks to a destructive effacement and obscuring of significant monuments that Grand Tourists such as Addison (and those who followed his model) work to redress. This reading is borne out by the *Journey* as a whole, where reformation (and Knox himself) repeatedly appear as intervening between the traveller and the histories he wishes to access. At Elgin, for example, ‘the waste of reformation’ is only barely redressed by ‘a paper’ which ‘deduced from sufficient authorities the history of this venerable ruin’ (Johnson 1775: 46-47). Crucially though, what concerns Johnson even more at both St Andrews and Elgin is a current indifference to the preservation of the past as a record and monument. Thus Elgin shall be ‘at last not destroyed by the tumultuous violence of Knox, but more shamefully suffered to dilapidate’ (Johnson 1775: 47). These attitudes to the ruin’s historical property keep interesting company with those of Gilpin and the burgeoning vocabulary of Picturesque tourism. Johnson derives no comfort from seeing the structures of past political and ecclesiastical authority sinking into ruin and his language quite specifically spurns the aesthetic terms that would emblematise this as a progressive overgrowth. Elgin’s ‘dilapidation’ is ‘shameful’, not attractive, and the sight of a ‘church hastening to the ground’ at St Andrews is registered as profanation, not naturalisation (Johnson 1775: 14). However, there is more to this distinction than a simple political divide between Whiggish momentum and Tory nostalgia. Though they differ as to the ruin’s function, Gilpin and Johnson’s perspectives are similar in so far as they seek to locate such sites within a chronology that may be more or less vocal about its historical contents, but is dependent upon the maintenance of correct perspectives in the present. In this way Johnson’s *Western Isles* expresses a similar set of anxieties to those of Gilpin’s *High-Lands of Scotland*, which may not worry as much about the archival materiality of ruins like Dunkeld, but *is* concerned that they are properly managed within a contemporary aesthetic and political landscape. As such these opposed positions speak to a shared ambivalence about the management of Scottish sites and landscapes in travel writing of the 1770s.

By the end of his *Western Isles* Johnson’s responses to the erosion of monumental structures and records have become far more sentimental - belying his deprecating references to imaginative stimulation at Fort George. On the island of Inch Kenneth Johnson visits a partly ruined chapel, once part of a seminary. His initial description is as measured and precise as earlier comments might lead the reader to expect. Johnson estimates the chapel’s dimensions and briefly inventories the disposition of its contents. Otherwise the ruin is un-visualised, with no reference to the effects of light and shade and no attempt to offer any kind of prospect view. Upon parting, however, Johnson does offer an affective response, noting that ‘it was not without some mournful emotion that we contemplated the ruins of religious structures, and the monuments of the dead’ (Johnson 1775: 336). Though far from redefining him as a latter-day graveyard poet, this association of ruined buildings with mortuary markers invests Johnson’s yearning for monumental and historical clarity with a suggestively Gothic melancholy. In a very different fashion to the Picturesque, Johnson’s response to the ruin renders history as fragile and vulnerable, rather than aesthetic and emblematic. This is the more significant, both because the monuments in question include the ‘grave-stones of chiefs and ladies’ and because the ground ‘still continues to be a place of sepulchre’ (Johnson 1775: 336). What is at stake here, as elsewhere in the *Western Isles*, is the *persistent* loss of a politically and culturally significant history.[[75]](#footnote-75) The ruined church and grave-stones represent a failed monumentalisation that has instead become a kind of historical aporia. Johnson’s response is more than the merely conventional sentimentality he has previously eschewed: it speaks also to his own proven inability to redress this loss. By Inch Kenneth, Johnson has given up recovering Scotland’s history and can now only mourn it. Confronted with such an attitude, Radcliffe may well have been inspired to shape the isolated ecclesiastical ruin that appears near the end of her own text. Like Johnson’s, her ruin also disconcerts through an absence of historical clarity that speaks to a broader ambiguity in the geographical and political landscapes it cannot be reconciled to.

Johnson’s own responses to landscape – like his responses to ruins such as Inch Kenneth – are rarely extensively aestheticised. Paradoxically, however, this is another feature of his text that appears to have informed Radcliffe’s novel. This is because the lack of a stock aesthetic vocabulary in Johnson emphasises both the unmanageability of the terrain he faces and the isolation of the traveller from that mediating discourse. Just as he refuses to fall back on the footnoted scholarship that supports Pennant, Johnson also eschews the aesthetic formulae that allow Gilpin to at least imaginatively correct objects that concern him. Instead Johnson typically restricts himself to his own (increasingly limited) ability to make sense of his objects: locating himself directly within the landscape rather than an existing pattern of responses to it. This isolation is akin to the characteristic situation of Radcliffe’s travelling protagonists who most frequently encounter landscapes in solitude, unmediated by trustworthy guidance or companions (both of which they have frequently been separated from). Osbert’s mountain wanderings at the beginning of *Athlin and Dunbayne* are the first instance of this trope in Radcliffe’s work and are one area in which her debt to Scottish travel literature is most evident. The gradual revelation of an inhabited valley following a more disconcerting encounter with mountain obscurity draws upon descriptions – by travellers such as Pennant and Gilpin – of the entry into the Highlands and the appearance of Dunkeld. It is Johnson, however, who provides the closest model for Osbert’s initial alienation within the Scottish mountains. As he does so, he himself begins to allude to literary treatments of the Scottish landscape and to include explicit references to the Gothic.

Relatively early in his *Western Isles*, Johnson sits down ‘upon a bank, such as a writer of Romance might have delighted to feign’. Before him all is ‘rudeness, silence and solitude’ – a curt description that lacks Radcliffe’s expressive feel for the Sublime, but is very much akin to the features marked out by the hero of her own “Romance.” Meanwhile, like the valley with which Osbert’s gaze is eventually reconciled, Johnson’s prospect is delimited by ‘high hills, which by hindering the eye from ranging, forced the mind to find entertainment for itself’ (Johnson 1775: 86-87). The opportunity is here for a set-piece Picturesque view, but Johnson does not take it: instead his gaze turns inward and considers his own particular – rather than aesthetically formulated – response:

The imaginations excited by the view of an unknown and untravelled wilderness are not such as arise in the artificial solitude of parks and gardens, a flattering notion of self-sufficiency, a placid indulgence of voluntary delusions, a secure expansion of the fancy, or a cool concentration of the mental powers. (Johnson 1775: 87)

Whereas Gilpin might bridge this gap between natural and improved landscape, the Picturesque view continues to be absent for Johnson who discredits any attempt at aesthetically framing and overmastering such scenery. Anticipating Osbert, he finds something more in the mountain view than a version of the Sublime as synechcoche – ‘a secure expansion of the fancy’ within the prescribed limits of a managed park (or imaginatively framed prospect). As Johnson turns to consider what *is* suggested by the landscape before him, the imaginative products of ‘romance’ become more explicitly Gothic:

The phantoms which haunt a desert are want, and misery, and danger [. . .] man is made unwillingly acquainted with his own weakness [. . .] whoever had been in the place where I then sat, unprovided with provisions and ignorant of the country, might, at least before the roads were made, have wandered among the rocks, till he had perished with hardship. (Johnson 1775: 87-88)

These ‘phantoms’ are not the supernatural encounters or premonitions Johnson elsewhere excises from his text. They speak to anxieties about the landscape’s comprehension and control, not its content. Specifically, they speak to the limited and provisional nature of a *traveller’s* management of such geography. Because it is dependent upon the mediating infrastructure of maps, roads – even aesthetics – the traveller’s control over landscape is always contingent and never absolute. This is a position Pennant and Gilpin never reach, in spite of their own more limited anxieties. Yet it is clearly paralleled in Osbert’s response to mountains that are also invested with ‘dreadful silence’ and ‘unmarked by the foot of traveller’ (Radcliffe 1995: 6).[[76]](#footnote-76)

For Johnson himself, the moment is additionally important because it is at this point that he claims to have ‘conceived the thought of this narration’ (Johnson 1775: 87). Fulford acknowledges the significance of this connection and sees it as a statement of Johnson’s aim to overcome the unmanageable, incomprehensible quality of the Scottish landscape through the act of writing, so that ‘the act of intended communication that constitutes authorship here serves to reassert Johnson’s own language, and all human language and society, against the threatening silence of the hills’ (Fulford 1996: 105-106). This is almost certainly a correct reading of Johnson’s *intention*, but, as the foregoing analysis reveals, the success of his endeavour is ambiguous at best. Attempts to (re)assert the primacy of language fail Johnson when he is confronted with an oral culture whose materials he cannot fix or monuments whose history is fragmentary and indecipherable. Meanwhile, at points such as the Ostig in Sky section, the order maintained by authorship and publication is strained. Were these issues not enough to raise doubts about the success of Johnson’s literary endeavour as Fulford defines it, a later episode would do so more explicitly. Travelling between Talisker and Coriatachan, Johnson meditates once more on the provisionality of travellers’ mastery of the landscape:

What must be the solicitude of him who should be wandering, among the crags and hollows, benighted, ignorant, and alone?

The fictions of the Gothick romances were not so remote from credibility as they are now thought [. . .] whatever is imagined in the wildest tale, if giants, dragons and enchantments be excepted, would be felt by him [. . .] wandering in the mountains without a guide. (174)

The adoption of authorship has not preserved the traveller from these anxieties. Instead ‘Romance’ has now become firmly and explicitly ‘Gothick’. Crucially, Johnson’s invocation of this register continues to eschew anything overtly supernatural. The Gothic does not arise here to familiarise Scotland through conventional tropes. Instead it speaks, as before, to a much more fundamental anxiety about the limited and provisional nature of its comprehension.

On a basic level, both this and the earlier episode provide materials for Osbert’s own isolated mountain wanderings. More importantly, they typify the model of “Scottish Gothic” Johnson’s travelogue establishes in advance of the novel that draws upon it. As in Radcliffe, this is a Gothic that is ambivalent about the easy accommodation of real to imaginative geography: the smooth interpretation and recording of Scotland’s history, culture and landscape and their incorporation into a concomitant British unity. Moreover, like Radcliffe’s careful undermining of the Whig history and Picturesque politics put in place by Reeve and Smith, Johnson’s refusal of conventional Gothic props prevents the Gothic itself from being a means of familiarising and incorporating Scotland. Pennant’s earnest confrontation of Scottish alterity and Gilpin’s strained extension of the Picturesque also play their part in establishing this apposite setting for Radcliffe, but it is Johnson’s text that takes their anxieties further, eschews their means of mediating Scotland and provides the clearest precedent for *Athlin and Dunbayne*.

**After Johnson – recognising Gothic Scotland**

Taken together, the three travellers discussed in this chapter demonstrate the frequency and variety of responses to Scotland in travel literature of the 1770s. Different established formats and methodologies of eighteenth-century tourism are applied, ranging from Pennant’s enlightened pseudo-“Grand” tourism, through Gilpin’s scenic survey to Johnson’s amalgamation – and problematisation – of aspects of both Grand and scenic registers. Aspects of the Gothic are repeatedly confronted and addressed as part of these endeavours. For Pennant the fears aroused by inhospitable landscape, violent history and supernatural myth are easily overcome, but must still be diligently confronted if Scotland is to be included within an enlightened British imaginative geography. For Gilpin the Gothic remains re-assuringly fixed within a Picturesque aesthetic, but its exact position there correlates with political anxieties at a time when his suspicion of the conduct and attitudes of contemporary landowners had become more overt. Finally, the Gothic seeps back into Johnson’s *Journey* – which otherwise dismisses the supernatural – as both scholarship and aesthetics fail to compensate for indecipherable and unreconcilable histories, monuments and landscapes. Johnson’s text is not the last to be written about Scotland in this period, but his *Western Isles* is the point at which a broader project to comprehend and include the region logically culminates. This is because Johnson’s earnest failures reveal the complacency of earlier texts that succeed by more trivially encapsulating Scotland within an existing methodology – be it Pennant’s carefully referenced scholarship, or Gilpin’s aesthetic models. The pose of the enlightened traveller, over-mastering the “foreign” landscape is one Johnson’s text cannot sustain and – for all its infamous prejudice – this is a failure the *Western Isles* is remarkably honest about.

In fact, given this honesty, it is ironic that one of the things Johnson’s critics attacked in the *Western Isles* was its supposed insistence upon the powers of technical judgement. One such example is offered by the anonymous author of *A Journey to the Highlands of Scotland. With Occasional Remarks on Doctor Johnson’s Tour: by A Lady* (1777). The ‘Lady’ describes Johnson as ‘a *learned* and elaborate traveller [original italics]’, who ‘in his usual pomp of phraseology’ employs overly scrupulous ‘philosophy’ and ‘philology’ to over-complicate his subject matter whilst – in her view – largely stating the obvious.[[77]](#footnote-77) Accordingly, the Lady joins ‘the chorus of ironical approbation for the edifying remarks of the great D. J—’ whose *Western Isles* is a ‘*volume of vacancy* [original italics]’ (Anon 2010: 18-19). The Lady seems more sensitive to the kind of travelogue Johnson sets out to write than that he eventually produces whilst her own criticisms of Scotland are ‘at least as harsh’ as his and proceed, as Betty Hagglund has argued, from a similarly anglo-centric perspective (Hagglund 2010: 40). Her critique of the *Western Isles* is interesting, however, precisely because it actually inhabits the paradigm Johnson establishes. By discrediting the complacency of ‘learned and elaborate’ travellers, the Lady echoes the implications of Johnson’s text, even though she – perhaps unfairly – uses it as a test case. This is made all the more interesting because of the format the Lady adopts. Written as a series of letters to three anonymous correspondents, the Lady’s travelogue plays interestingly upon its author’s gendered position. The text’s dedication establishes an appropriate ‘timidity’ whilst her preface claims that her travelogue has been ‘very accidentally’ brought to publication, largely due to the advice and guidance of ‘a literary gentleman’ (Anon 2010: 2, 4). The literary terrain she will occupy is thus one doubly defined by ‘literary’ men: the anonymous benefactor who guides her publication and the renowned scholar who has established one of the precedents for her tour and text. Yet, for all this demurring, the Lady is avowedly prepared to challenge and criticise these figures in both overt and covert ways. Not only does she attack Johnson for being an *overly* literary gentleman, she arranges her text so that these criticisms are very carefully situated in letters to her sole male correspondent, ‘The Earl of C—.’[[78]](#footnote-78) By locating her criticism of Johnson in letters to the Earl, the Lady simultaneously flatters and undermines his position as her most expert interlocutor. The overt implication is that the Earl – rather than Lady B or the anonymous Miss – is the most fit to judge Johnson’s failings; the covert implication is that this position of assured masculine expertise is exactly what the Lady is critiquing.

The Lady’s text is short, appeared in only one edition and appears to have attracted little notice from reviewers.[[79]](#footnote-79) It has less to say about Scotland than Pennant, Gilpin or Johnson and it is less likely (though by no means impossible) that Radcliffe would have come across it. Much of what the Lady says about Scotland is primarily interesting as an exemplar of her ability to adopt the different perspectives and vocabularies that had become conventional in this kind of tourism.[[80]](#footnote-80) Nonetheless, her own *Journey* is both a significant (though largely forgotten) stage in the development of women’s travel writing (to be revisited as such later in this study) and a more particular example of the state of travel writing on Scotland after Johnson, as Radcliffe prepared her novel. The Lady’s text is relatively serene and includes no extended engagement with the Gothic as a source of anxiety to be confronted or expressed. The fascinating exception to this is its frontispiece (Fig. 3):

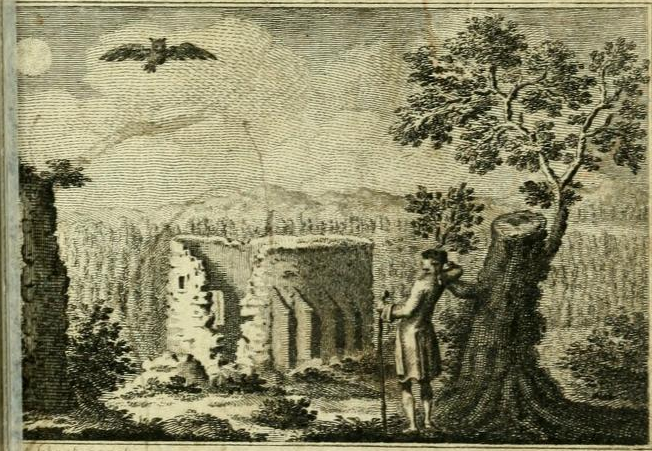


Fig. 3 – ‘Frontispiece’ (1777)

As an illustration of the text’s contents this frontispiece is peculiarly incongruous. The traveller pictured here is clearly masculine and the “episode” illustrated bears no parallel in the Lady’s text; the ruined tower appears generic rather than specific and no nocturnal exploration (indicated here by the owl and moon) is featured in the Lady’s accounts. However, as an illustration of one of the text’s reigning pre-occupations, its frontispiece is entirely apt. Instead of exercising an expert gaze that forms a prospect from *outside* its pictorial representation, this male traveller has tellingly overstepped the frame. He is brought to a halt within it, with no obvious road past the ruin, which stands on the edge of a ridge. Here he is confronted with the landscape’s revival and resistance. He may stand, equipped with coat and walking stick and ready to pronounce his judgement upon it, yet this moment is interrupted as the prospect is not static: it does not passively await judgement. Instead the traveller appears to recoil slightly – leaning back and shading his eye – surprised by the sight (and presumably sound) of the owl flying suddenly over the foreground towards him, illuminated in the glare of the moonlight. Though it illustrates nothing from her actual text, the frontispiece is an appropriate rejoinder to the pretensions of the “expert” male travellers the Lady sets out to challenge. It does this through a developing vocabulary of “Gothic” materials. In addition to their general currency, the ruin, the moonlight and the owl’s protest all reference the opening of Gray’s *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), where they perform a similar function: isolating an anxious onlooker within a landscape slipping out of description. Were Radcliffe to have come across this obscure and anonymous response to the more famous texts she almost certainly *had* read, she may well have appreciated its frontispiece in spite of its slight contents. Here the claims and pretensions of the Scottish traveller are left deadlocked with a landscape that speaks to their limitations through the vocabulary of Gothic atmosphere. Meanwhile, another – equally anonymous – prototype for her ruined abbey sits at the image’s centre: another structure that obstructs, rather than succumbs to, an onlooker who – startled and looking elsewhere – appears unable to address it, to speak of it or evaluate it.

It is this fraught and ambivalent imaginative geography that Radcliffe chooses to set her first Gothic fiction within. In doing so she produces a novel that speaks in its own way to the issues and anxieties that become apparent – and more potent – across a series of travelogues she has almost certainly read. The centrality of Picturesque and aesthetics to the novel takes its precedent not only from its more confident rendition in Smith’s early Picturesque Gothics, but also from travellers who fall back upon, stretch or refuse this register in Scotland. Similarly, the novel’s suspicion of a political network and chronology based on the easy recognition and valuation of merit echoes texts that sought ways to approve – or judge – the settlement and management of Scottish landscapes: ranging from Pennant’s enthusiastic support for Hanoverian landowners to Gilpin and Johnson’s more equivocal commentary. Its troubling of a simplistic Whig chronology – in which Osbert and Alleyn’s merit *should* introduce a paradigm shift after Malcolm’s defeat – also speaks to an ongoing struggle with the ordering of Scottish history, which Gilpin cannot easily reflect in the arrangement of contemporary estates and Johnson’s scholarship cannot clarify. Finally, the abbey upon which Radcliffe’s novel twists finds its ancestry in a long line of similar structures, including Pennant and Gilpin’s views of Dunkeld and culminating, perhaps, in Johnson’s disconcertingly empty monuments and landscapes, which point – through the Gothic – to a similarly silent and silencing quality.

This rich sensitivity to the imaginative geography of contemporary travel is what makes Radcliffe’s intervention in the location and scope of Gothic fiction so important. Short and underdeveloped as it is, *Athlin* *and Dunbayne* represents an important attempt to re-engage the Gothic with this contemporary cultural arena: relocating it at the heart of an ambiguous geography that, during the 1760s and 1770s, had become central to the models of national continuity and political settlement about which the Gothic had come to speak. More broadly, through political debates and through repeated attempts to re-produce it as British travel literature, Scotland had come to focalise anxieties about the ongoing incorporation and participation of the previously or potentially “other” within the familiar. Therefore – as strange as it may seem to a contemporary reader of Radcliffe’s “major” novels – there really was no better place for her relocation of the Gothic at the centre of a modern geographical and cultural landscape to commence. The innovative quality of Radcliffe’s Gothic is amply demonstrated when the work of writers such as Pennant, Gilpin and particularly Johnson is revealed to be at least as important to its development as that of the existing Gothic novelists whose materials and approaches she carefully adapts. This will continue to be the case as her next novels find her shifting the Gothic into the landscapes of continental (Grand) tourism and explicitly staging its re-emergence there.

Chapter Three

Radcliffe at the Peripheries Part Two: The Emergence of the Gothic in *A Sicilian Romance*

During the time of the dark and barbarous ages, this country [. . .] became a wild and barren wilderness [. . .] retaining still, both in the wildness of its fields and ferocity of its inhabitants, more of the Gothic barbarity than is to be met with any where else. Some of these forests are of a vast extent, and absolutely impenetrable; and no doubt conceal in their thickets many valuable monuments of its ancient magnificence.

(Patrick Brydone, *A Tour Through Sicily and Malta,* 1773)

On the northern shore of Sicily are still to be seen the magnificent remains of a castle, which formerly belonged to the noble house of Mazzini. It stands in the centre of a small bay, and upon a gentle acclivity, which, on one side, slopes towards the sea, and on the other rises into an eminence crowned by dark woods.

(Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance*, 1790)

Radcliffe’s next novels differ from *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) in three significant ways. Her setting shifts from a vaguely defined medieval Britain to more chronologically precise European locations; her hero is replaced as primary protagonist and focaliser by a heroine; and her novels begin to assert – and sometimes enact – a direct relationship with the physical and imaginative geographies of continental tourism. This chapter and the following will demonstrate that these shifts are related and that they develop within Radcliffe’s next three novels where the Gothic gradually makes its way into the heartland of contemporary continental tourism as part of a broader revision of its narratives and the imaginative geography they construct. It is a key aim of this study to demonstrate that this process continues and develops across Radcliffe’s career.

*A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) are the texts in which Radcliffe begins to become more chronologically specific, to explicitly involve aspects of contemporary tourism (be they the former novel’s short prologue or the latter’s renovated Picturesque abbey) and to locate a travelling female consciousness at the centre of her texts. These shifts are not merely tangentially related to contemporary tourism and in order for this to be clear they need to be read within the present study’s chronology: as a rethinking of alternative ways of locating the Gothic; as a continuing revision of the Picturesque focus upon Gothic materials; and, more specifically, as a response to the revisionary perspective exercised upon dominant forms of imaginative geography in the work of key travel writers – particularly women.

It is with *Sicilian Romance* that the remainder of this chapter is primarily concerned. As in the previous chapter’s discussion of *Athlin and Dunbayne*, it will be demonstrated that Radcliffe’s second novel inhabits an important intertextual context, constituted by popular travelogues. Of course *Sicilian Romance* is more than a simple redressing of Radcliffe’s debut. Whereas that novel’s “British” setting appears, in retrospect, as an oddity in her fictions, its successor begins to sketch the template that has become definitive of her work. Here is the dominant pattern set for a familiar conception of the eighteenth-century Gothic as *Sicilian Romance* – not *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), or *The Italian* (1797) – introduces a tale of incarceration, flight and pursuit across medieval Europe that, in the hands of Radcliffe and her imitators, would become synonymous with the Gothic of the 1790s and define the form for the first waves of its critical recovery in the late twentieth-century.[[81]](#footnote-81) To see the novel only in the shadow of what followed it, however, is to risk losing sight of just how significant its innovations were. More importantly, it is to miss the degree to which the text itself addresses and explores the changes it makes to a developing tradition of Gothic fiction *and* to a broader engagement with the Gothic in eighteenth-century travel writing and its associated print culture.

**‘A wild and barren wilderness [. . .] retaining more of the Gothic barbarity than is to be met with any where else’: eighteenth-century travellers in Sicily**

As the previous chapter demonstrated, Radcliffe’s first novel was concerned with exploring the Gothic’s situation within eighteenth-century culture and did so by finding an apposite location for it in a Scotland rendered ambiguous by contemporary travel writing. Her second novel continues this concern with locating the Gothic in a context defined by that broader print-culture and refining the way in which it is encountered and approached there. In fact, *Sicilian Romance* makes the culture of eighteenth-century travel, its writing and its imaginative geography central to the experience of the Gothic in a way that no previous novel has. It does this by providing the first of two prologues in Radcliffe’s published fiction.[[82]](#footnote-82) This slight paratext barely exceeds a page and, at first glance, it feels familiar within the tradition of prefaratory materials established by Walpole and employed by writers such as Reeve and Lee. These provide the provenance for the tale that follows, but do so in ways that tend to bracket and delimit it as an object of bibliographical and critical appraisal within a literal or figurative archival space, defining its scope accordingly. *Sicilian Romance* gestures towards this precedent, but carefully revises it. Like Walpole’s original, this Gothic story is borne within a manuscript, but that manuscript is relocated from the library to the landscape. It is not held apart from the regions it describes, but emerges out of them to change the way in which they are currently being experienced. As such it is active. Instead of being drawn out of an archive by an editor prepared to discourse upon its generic qualities, Radcliffe’s manuscript moves of its own volition: introduced by a monk whose presence breaks up the tableaux of a Picturesque prospect and converts the landscape of eighteenth-century tourism into that of Gothic narrative. What this means is that Radcliffe’s movement of the Gothic into the landscapes of continental Europe – the manoeuvre that would define her oeuvre, if not its entire genre – is self-conscious on two levels. The prologue to *A Sicilian Romance* knows how the Gothic has been situated in previous fiction and it knows how potentially Gothic sites such as Picturesque ruins and their histories are dealt with in travel writing. In collapsing the two, Radcliffe makes the emergence of the Gothic an event within the field of travel. To fully understand the significance of this development it is helpful to establish a context for it in the contemporary travel writing that defined Sicily for Radcliffe and her readers.

The first question to ask is why Radcliffe chose to locate her Gothic in Sicily at all. The typical point of culmination for the eighteenth-century Grand Tour was Rome and, whilst many travellers did extend their voyage south to Naples, relatively few crossed over to Sicily. This was due largely to the inconveniences of a further sea-voyage and the island’s ‘semi-civilised’ reputation (Black 2003: 49).[[83]](#footnote-83) Those that did make the journey were attracted by the presence of famous classical sites such as the remains of Segesta and Syracuse and travel to the region gradually increased towards the end of the century.[[84]](#footnote-84) As such the island occupied an ambivalent place in the imaginative geography of the Grand Tour: a region at its periphery, not quite accessible and hospitable to its practices, but containing many of the materials it prized. In a sense Sicily was to the Grand Tour as Scotland was to the developing tradition of domestic tourism: an extreme point ambiguously included in a broader geographical concept and providing a locus for its re-examination. If – as this study argues – Radcliffe’s fiction includes a sustained re-location and re-appraisal of the Gothic within the culturally significant landscapes of contemporary travel, then Sicily would have been a perfect place from which to “enter” the field of the Grand Tour.

Radcliffe would have had two popular Sicilian travelogues available to her as she prepared her novel, both stemming from journeys made in the 1770s. Patrick Brydone’s *A Tour Through Sicily and Malta* (1773) and Henry Swinburne’s *Travels in the Two Sicilies* (1783-5). As with the material on Scotland discussed in the previous chapter, it is highly likely (if not certain) that she was familiar with both of these texts when writing *A Sicilian Romance*.[[85]](#footnote-85) These travellers visit many of the same sites and their responses differ more in scope than in kind. Brydone’s epistolary account is more personable and engaging: content to describe the humorous inconveniences of writing upon a barrel or to offer tangential conjecture on subjects such as the use of women’s millinery in conducting or collecting electrical charges (Brydone 1773: I.101-102; I.224-227). Swinburne devotes more space to supplementary information including overviews of regional history, tabulated prices and distances and specific analysis of politics, trade and military dispositions. He insists on ‘pursuing the dull plain track of truth’ and ensuring that ‘the effusions of imagination are debarred all share’ in a text that also avoids ‘working up a trivial event into a sentimental or laughable adventure’ (Swinburne 1783-85: I.vi).

The travellers’ anticipations also differ slightly. For Brydone Sicily is truly novel: ‘had there been any book in our language on the subject of the following Letters, they should never have seen the light’ (Brydone 1773: I.‘Advertisement’). For Swinburne, publishing ten years later, the ‘Two Sicilies’ have ‘been so often described’ (Swinburne 1783-85: II.iii). In fact Sicily itself was still relatively neglected by modern travellers, excluding Brydone; the ‘Two Sicilies’ of Swinburne’s title also refers to the city and region of Naples (to which the majority of his text is devoted) and his sense of preceding descriptions actually includes the ‘Poetry and History’ that have ‘made us acquainted with those classic regions’ (Swinburne 1783-85: I.iii). In this, as in other respects, Swinburne is a conventional Grand Tour travel writer: foregrounding Sicily’s pre-inscription with the classical tradition that, from ‘earliest education,’ entitles the British traveller to judge and appreciate it.

In fact, both travellers were already invested in the broader tradition of Grand Tourism before making their Sicilian voyages: Brydone had previously journeyed as a bear leader (a figure appointed to guide and instruct a young gentleman traveller) and Swinburne was already established as a European travel writer (the *Two Sicilies* is quick to refer to his 1779 *Travels in Spain*). Their Sicilian travelogues operate within this context and approach Sicily through it. At Segesta, for example, Swinburne spends many pages indulging his ‘eager[ness] for antiquities’ with its ‘well preserved monument[s] of ancient magnificence’. Even where the remains have deteriorated, he is able to offer detailed conjecture as to their original disposition and purpose and spend ‘the best part of [a] day in examining, measuring and drawing’ at the site (Swinburne 1783-85: II.235). Meanwhile, Brydone quickly acknowledges that his ‘little expedition has never been considered as any part of the grand tour’ but frames his journey as an attempt to extend it (Brydone 1773: I.3). Though France and mainland Italy may be rendered ‘thread-bare’ by repeated description, a ‘variety of objects, not less interesting’ may ‘still lie buried in oblivion in that celebrated island’ (Brydone 1773: I.1). Like Swinburne’s more sober account, this ‘celebration’ is also rooted in the work of classic authors. In a manner reminiscent of Addison, Brydone negotiates and prepares for his modern experience of “classic ground” by employing appropriate classical authorities: ‘Virgil’, he cheerfully acknowledges, ‘is one of our travelling companions’ (Brydone 1773: I.35).

This adoption of a familiar form of Grand Tourism in Sicily also leads both travellers to criticise and dismiss the region’s present state, finding the operation of modern religion and associated governance to impede and impose upon an ideal realised in the region’s classical heritage. Thus Swinburne finds the ‘building and decoration of churches’ at Palermo to be ‘barbarous and unpleasant to the eye of a person capable of tasting the genuine beauties of good architecture’. This is in spite of the materials and resources locally available to them; though the buildings are ‘rich in silver, gems and marble’ these are deployed with ‘all the extravagances of monkish [. . .] arts’ and ‘nothing can be more harsh and unharmonious’ than the decorative figures ‘glued’ to their walls (Swinburne 1783-85: II.200). Such critique recalls Addison’s comments on the interiors of Italian churches whose design and decor is figured as superfluous and insubstantial. Swinburne’s allusion to a ‘genuine’ alternative standard in ‘architecture’ is important here as it contrasts these buildings with the classical materials the Grand Tourist is in Sicily to appraise and in which the region’s landscape and materials are invariably better realised.[[86]](#footnote-86) These themselves have also been misused and obscured by the activities of modern inhabitants. The ‘memorials of ancient grandeur, which chance has brought to light, and a revival of good taste happily preserved’ at Palermo have been gathered up in a ‘great college lately directed by the Jesuits’ who subsequently ‘secreted their most valuable moveables, and stripped the gallery’ of its ‘rich collection of medals and cameos’ (Swinburne 1783-85: II.207-208). Modern Catholic practice, with its feuds and subterfuge, thus functions to stifle and pervert a proper appreciation for the region’s classical heritage. This appears as a passing interposition, however: what remains may ‘lay the foundation for a noble cabinet’ (though temporarily restricted to natural history) and the ‘deep erudition’ of the present prince bodes well for the future disposition of the Jesuits’ remaining estate (Swinburne 1783-85: II.208).

A similar opposition between Sicily’s innate potential and its modern dissipation structures many of Brydone’s comments. Approaching Palermo himself Brydone notes that ‘the fertility of many of the plains’ here ‘is truly astonishing’. This quality has lead to the region’s classical renown as ‘the granary of the Roman empire’, capable, according to ancient authors, of producing ‘wheat and other grain spontaneously’ and ‘were it cultivated, it would still be the great granary of Europe’ (Brydone 1773: II.18). However, present governance has rendered ‘poor and wretched, a country that produces, almost spontaneously, every thing that even luxury can desire’ This ‘accursed tyranny’ has left ‘nothing to see’ but ‘deserted fields, barren wildernesses, oppressed peasants, and lazy, lying, lecherous monks’ (Brydone 1773: II.20-21). The modern state of such regions is a perversion of properties described in classical accounts, whose potential would regenerate were present interpositions removed.

A sense of the Gothic exists in the background of these critiques, focussing as they do on an alignment of mismanagement between political tyranny and religious self-interest. In this format it is as easy to dismiss as elsewhere on the Grand Tour: a distortion, of little import to the traveller whose critical immunity easily penetrates through to the objects of his real attention. Elsewhere, however, both travellers are conscious of a more intractable Gothic quality in Sicily that seems harder to dismiss. This is because such presences threaten to collapse the distinction between the activities of the Grand Tourist, weaving his imaginative geography, and the necessity of navigating a real geography in order to do so. It is in this way that Sicily’s peripheral quality begins to challenge both texts’ attempts to co-opt it for the literature and practice of the Grand Tour.

The recognition of this difficulty begins early for Brydone, whose anticipation of Sicily’s undiscovered ‘variety of objects’ is followed by the intelligence (given on the mainland) that it also harbours ‘the most resolute and daring banditti in all of Europe’ (Brydone: 1773: I.2). Here the Tour’s ideal is immediately entangled with its Gothic other. The confident projection of a figurative library awaiting genteel perusal must also acknowledge an accompanying vulnerability to those aspects of the region whose dismissal is beyond the means of educated commentary; the extension of the Grand Tour to Sicily harbours the possibility of a dangerous over-extension. Brydone himself acknowledges this early in his text when he considers that re-appropriating Sicily as an archive for the Grand Tour is far from simple. This is precisely because of the difficulty involved in dismissing its Gothic character:

During the time of the dark and barbarous ages, this country (like many others) from the highest state of culture and civilisations, became a wild and barren wilderness [. . .] retaining still, both in the wildness of its fields and ferocity of its inhabitants, more of the Gothic barbarity than is to be met with any where else. Some of these forests are of a vast extent, and absolutely impenetrable; and no doubt conceal in their thickets many valuable monuments of its ancient magnificence. (Brydone 1773: I.43-44)

The opposition between a classical ideal and a Gothic “screen” that structures the imaginative geography of Grand Tourism is almost reversed here as the latter persists to obscure the former. Significantly, this is not a matter that can be resolved by a learned tourist’s ability to sort through the region’s contents. Whether in the form of ‘impenetrable’ forests or ‘ferocious’ inhabitants, the obstacles to travel in Sicily cannot be simply dismissed and, so long as they persist, the materials they interpose upon remain largely – if not absolutely – inaccessible. On a purely pragmatic level, extending the Grand Tour to Sicily poses practical problems that cannot be overcome by adopting a certain way of seeing and which draw attention to the limitations and vulnerability of the traveller himself. Despite his light-hearted tone, Brydone’s consciousness of this vulnerability persists and frequently renders him uncomfortable.

This is evident when Brydone addresses the ambivalent status of the Sicilian banditti themselves. These, it transpires, are more than the simply “external” threat prophesied before his departure. Instead – and rather disconcertingly – they form part of the infrastructure that enables Brydone’s own tour. In the region of Messina – the ‘Val Demoni’ – Brydone learns that it is ‘altogether impractical to extirpate the banditti, there being numberless caverns and subterraneous passages’ for them to seek shelter in. What disturbs Brydone more than the intractable presence of these groups is the means by which the local government manages it. ‘The prince of Villa Franca’ has ‘become their declared patron and protector’ and employs such Banditti ‘as think proper to leave their mountains and forests’ in his service (Brydone 1773: I.68-69). Radcliffe’s fictional Mazzini is located in this region and, as both Norton and Milbank have observed, there is an obvious correlation between her text and these descriptions of Brydone’s, particularly, as Milbank notes, in the alleged incorporation of local bandits in the service of the Marquis de Mazzini’s ancestors (Norton 1999: 72; Milbank 1993: 206n) or in the employ of the unnamed lord who mistakenly abducts Julia and Madame de Menon as they flee the Marquis and his associates.[[87]](#footnote-87) Of particular notice, however, is the way in which this use of the banditti requires no enhancement by the Gothic novel: it is already a source of anxiety in the travelogue whose descriptions of a *contemporary* Sicily it draws upon. In order to travel safely it is necessary for Brydone to accept the company and protection of these ‘most daring, and most hardened villains’ who are ‘publicly protected, and universally feared and respected’ (Brydone 1773: I.68). Brydone is subsequently informed that ‘two of the most desperate fellows in the whole island [will] accompany us’ and that any who obstruct their journey shall accordingly be ‘put [. . .] to death’ (Brydone 1773: I.70). A description of ‘this part of the police of Sicily’ follows, in which Brydone repeats popular testimony to the honour of such bandits and their fidelity to employers yet maintains ‘a strong idea of their barbarous ferocity, and the horrid mixture of stubborn vice and virtue (if I may call it by that name) that seems to direct their actions’ (Brydone 1773: I.68, 73,). By representing the threats they protect against, these figures serve to keep those in mind for the traveller, despite not offering any violence themselves. This is made explicit in Brydone’s account of his guards’ abundant ‘stories of robberies and murders, some of them with such very minute circumstances, that I am fully persuaded they themselves were the principal actors’ (Brydone 1773: I.92). By having her fictional banditti commit murder whilst in the pay of regional authorities, then, Radcliffe only makes explicit what is already implicit in a travelogue like Brydone’s. What disturbs in his account is not simply the presence of ‘Gothic barbarity’ but the inability to separate it from the normal practice and experience of the traveller. For Brydone, banditti are not merely an external obstacle to Grand Tourism: by standing in for the guides common to more typical travel experiences, they render the infrastructure of the Tour itself ambiguous.

Swinburne’s more sober Grand Tourism meets the Gothic with less obvious anxiety than Brydone, yet its easy dismissal may bely a more covert anxiety. Near Etna, for example, Swinburne and his group spend the night in a farm-house where the native Sicilians are ‘not behind hand in strange tales’ as each endeavours ‘to render his story more frightful and diabolical than the preceding’. Swinburne’s counter to this is interesting. He writes derisively that ‘the whole circle was worked up to such a ridiculous pitch of dismay, that a sudden rap at the door would have frightened them out of their wits’. The educated traveller himself apparently sits apart, commenting upon the narrators’ native disposition to nervous ‘irritability’ instead of dwelling upon his personal response to their tales (Swinburne 1783-85: II.371). Such description works by blurring the line between narrators and audiences so that the reactions of the latter are obscured when the former become the victims of their own story-telling. This is not entirely successful. Though his account engineers a bathetic shift away from the tales as a source of terror, this cannot entirely mask the fact that it is Swinburne himself who originally acknowledges their own ‘frightful’ quality. Nor can this alter a broader context for this act of Gothic story-telling that partially collapses the traveller’s confident distance from its materials. Before arriving at this lodging Swinburne records his being left alone on the wooded mountainside, ‘wandering through’ its ‘awful shades’ in the period before sunset, whilst guides hurry to seek accommodation for the night. Swinburne also notes that one of the participants in these tales is his ‘soldier’ – a figure who may well be one of the hired banditti discussed by Brydone (Swinburne 1783-85: II.371). In this way Swinburne’s aloof dismissal of the region’s Gothic narrative is, at least implicitly, undermined by a broader setting in which other materials offer oblique reminders of his own potential vulnerability.

Elsewhere Swinburne engages in a similarly awkward dismissal of the Gothic. Near Agrigentum he is regaled with more local tales of banditti and their ‘horrid barbarities’. It requires ‘a very fatiguing stretch of the imagination to follow the thread of these narratives’ particularly when given by the women whose ‘coarser’ dialect leaves Swinburne ‘often bewildered’ (Swinburne 1793-85: II.261-262). This occasions a shift in subject to investigations of local linguistics and philology: good ground for the learned traveller. The text cannot entirely hide the affective power of these ‘horrid’ tales, however, or completely convince the reader that it changes subject out of disinterest and not discomfort.[[88]](#footnote-88) Later, between Agrigentum and Syracuse Swinburne is forced into temporary ‘solitude’ within a local manor house by accounts of the ‘atrocious villainy’ of the region’s inhabitants (Swinburne 1783-85: II.295). Episodes such as these are not common features of Swinburne’s text, which remains far less overtly anxious than Brydone’s; nonetheless, they reveal an underlying level at which Gothic presences do trouble the would-be Sicilian Grand Tourist and that this also involves drawing attention to the contingency and vulnerability of his travel.

Sicily’s banditti and the anxieties they inspire serve to remind these early Sicilian Grand Tourists of materials they cannot easily dismiss and which are always ready to become embroiled with the imaginative geography they produce from it. It is this general consciousness of the tensions involved in stretching the Grand Tour’s periphery, as much as the presence of banditti themselves, that makes the Sicily of late-eighteenth century travel an apt location for Radcliffe’s Gothic: emerging as it does, self-consciously, from that cultural context. Two sites in particular serve to focus these anxieties and to frame Sicily’s Gothic in a way that illuminates Radcliffe’s novel. These are the Villa Palagonia and the Capuchin Catacombs, both in the vicinity of Palermo and, therefore, within the broader region taken by Radcliffe as the setting for her tale.[[89]](#footnote-89)

The Villa Palagonia was the property of a reclusive Sicilian prince, who had become notorious for decorating it with statues depicting fantastic human-animal hybrids and other chimeras. The result, as Brydone describes it, would not be out of place in a Gothic novel: an ‘inchanted castle’ in which disturbing encounters proliferate as ‘you cannot turn yourself to any side, where you are not stared in the face by some hideous figure or other’ (Brydone 1773: II.56-57). Meanwhile mirrors conjure phantom reflections at strange angles of the ‘vast arch’d roofs [. . .] so that when three or four people are walking below, there is always the appearance of three or four hundred walking above’ (Brydone 1773: II.57). Other objects are more explicitly unnerving, such as the ‘house clock’ which is ‘cased in the body of a statue’ whose eyes ‘move with the pendulum’ and ‘make a hideous appearance’ or busts which present a ‘handsome profile’ bisected with the representation of a ‘skeleton’ (Brydone 1773: II.59). Elsewhere Brydone describes floors paved with ‘fine marbles’ that ‘look like so many tomb stones’ (Brydone 1773: II.58). An obscure space in which the distinction between real and apparitional presences is distorted and disturbing objects appear unpredictably, the Villa Palgonia clearly invites comparison with the fantastic castles of subsequent Gothic fictions (including Radcliffe’s own). What is particularly interesting about the travelogue accounts of this estate, however, is the way in which it threatens to unsettle the habits of description through which a Grand Tourist typically responds to sites of this kind. In essence, the Villa Palagoni is one of many galleries or archives commonly appraised by travellers on the Grand Tour. What makes its “Gothic” so potent is the manner in which it co-opts and distorts this register of careful examination and judgement. The experience of wandering the Villa’s liminal interior – being uncertain of its spatial properties and unnerved by its contents – stymies the traveller’s patient examination and the site as a whole exceeds his capacity for description: ‘it would require a volume to describe the whole, and a sad volume indeed it would make.’; the abundance of a classical archive appears in a distorted reflection that baffles rather than acculturates. Meanwhile Brydone notes that ‘the old ornaments’ put up ‘in a very good taste’ by the prince’s father have ‘been knock’d to pieces [. . .] to make room for this new creation’: the proper materials for a traveller’s judgement have been replaced by ‘monsters’ in a bizarre act of artistic usurpation (Swinburne 1783-85: II.56).

Brydone is also unnerved by the sense that something about the prince’s activities exceeds the boundaries of the archive (however perverted). Approaching the Villa, Brydone notes that the statues ‘appear at a distance like a little army drawn up for its defence whilst the prince himself appears as a dangerous and reclusive figure: one who has ‘devoted his whole life to the study of monsters’ and who is suspected of desiring his wife – the partner of his activities – to ‘bring forth a monster’ in flesh (Brydone 1773: II.54, 55). In this way the Villa seems to become more than a mere archive, passively awaiting the tourist’s judgement. Instead it becomes the locus of an indistinct, but disturbing activity: where a devotion to the creation of ‘monsters’ simultaneously refashions the Tour’s gallery spaces in a Gothic image *and* exceeds the boundaries of mere contemplation. The prince himself is also an ambiguous figure. Though he apparently ‘troubles nobody’ his activities are still described as a ‘frenzy’ and ‘a strange species of madness’ so that it is ‘truly unaccountable that he has not been shut up many years ago’ (Brydon: 1773: II.55). There is even something suspicious in his reclusiveness: he ‘seems to be afraid of every body he speaks to’” and travels in ‘carriages covered over with great plates of brass’ suspected to be ‘musket proof’ (Brydon: 1773: II.61). It is with this sense of an indistinct agency, exceeding the boundaries of the gallery space, that Brydone’s account ends. He notes that ‘the government have had serious thoughts of demolishing the regiment of monsters [the prince] has placed around his house’ as ‘the seeing of them by women with child is said to have been regularly attended with very unfortunate circumstances; several living monsters having been brought forth in the neighbourhood’. The result is that ‘ladies [. . .] dare no longer take an airing in the Bagaria [. . .] some hideous form always haunts their imagination’ (Brydon: 1773: II.62). This conclusion undercuts the earlier claim that the prince ‘troubles nobody’, whilst offering a troubling echo of his own apparent desire to father a living ‘monster’.

Swinburne’s treatment of the Villa is briefer and more dismissive. Where Brydone is lost for comparisons and disorientated accordingly – ‘the like of [it] certainly never did exist on the face of the earth’ (Brydon: 1773: II.53) – Swinburne immediately contrasts Palagonia with the ‘reasonable principles’ of a neighbouring estate, maintaining the standard of judgement according to which the Grand Tourist operates. Classical intertexts also help steady the traveller’s critique as Palagonia exceeds the standards of inventiveness in Ariosto and offers more ‘unnatural representations’ than Swinburne has ‘patience to note, or memory to record’ (Swinburne 1783-85: II.213-214). However, as elsewhere in Swinburne, there is a sense that such recoil may mask a strategic retreat to ground upon which the tourist is more comfortable. This is certainly evident in the traveller’s departure, where a ‘hurry to leave this world of monsters, which almost made me giddy’ undermines the posture of detached judgement that his preceding account has tried to maintain (Swinburne 1783-85: II.216). For all his sneering, Swinburne ultimately echoes Brydone in situating the Villa Palagonia as a locus in which the familiar objects and activities of the Grand Tour may become distorted by their Gothic others. His hope that Palagonia’s statues will not pass ‘to posterity as a monument of the taste of the eighteenth century’ is revealing in this sense (Swinburne 1783-85: II.214). It undertakes a familiar dismissal of the integrity and resilience of Gothic materials on the Tour, yet embodies an anxiety about what would happen if they *were* to become enmeshed with the acculturation the Tour performs as a feature of the imaginative geography it constructs for itself.

After Palagonia come the capuchin catacombs in Palermo. Brydone’s description of this site serves well to introduce it:

This is a vast subterraneous apartment, divided into large commodious galleries, the walls on each side of which are hollowed into a variety of niches, as if intended for a very great collection of statues; these niches, instead of statues, are all filled with dead bodies, set upright upon their legs. (Brydone 1773: II.66)

Brydone’s description transitions from the expectation of a conventional site of Grand Tourism – the collection of artworks – to its reworking in this mortuary “gallery.” This is made explicit as he re-assures his reader that the bodies ‘are not such objects of horror as you would imagine [. . .] as soon as you have conquered the first feelings excited by these venerable figures, you only consider this as a vast gallery of original portraits’ (Brydone 1773: II.68). Though managed by his measured tones, it is impossible for Brydone to deny the initial shock that this reconceived archive space will engender in those used to more typical galleries. A focus upon the catacomb’s actual and potential function as a *memento mori* also undermines this sense of its providing a passive locus for historical and aesthetic critique. ‘Sometimes, by way of a voluntary penance’ the Palermans ‘accustom themselves to stand for hours in these niches’ and Brydone conjectures that these treatments might be usefully extended: ‘whenever a fellow begin to strut, like Mr. B. or to affect the haughty supercilious air, he should immediately be sent to converse with his friends in the gallery’ (Brydone 1773: II.68-69). In this way Brydone implies that the pretensions and attitudes of the young aristocratic tourist are themselves capable of being brought to heel by the Gothic gallery they presume to examine. Radcliffe may well have recalled Brydone’s discussion of these life-like bodies when conceiving the object behind *Udolpho*’s black veil, but his treatment of the capuchin catacombs also contributes to the broader process by which Sicily becomes an appropriate locus for the Gothic, in the context of a Grand Tourism it both attracted and disrupted.

Like Scotland, then, Sicily offers itself through travel writing as a favourable site for Radcliffe’s insertion of the Gothic into the imaginative geographies of eighteenth-century tourism. Despite their desire to incorporate Sicily into the broader construct of the Grand Tour and its associated travel performances, neither Brydone nor Swinburne can overlook the island’s peculiarly peripheral status, or dismiss its Gothic potential. The result, for both travellers (though particularly obvious in Brydone) is a region in which the Gothic is always potentially present, not only as a mere obstacle to be dismissed by the traveller, but as a component of the materials he is there to see and the infrastructure that allows him to do so. The distancing, organisation and reflection that maintains the traveller’s perspective is always in doubt when banditti serve as guides and sites such as the Villa Palagonia or Capuchin Catacombs offer up distorted and disconcerting versions of more conventional galleries and archives.

**‘Still to be seen’: The emergence of the Gothic in *A Sicilian Romance***

*A Sicilian Romance* draws on all the details explored in Brydone and Swinburne: featuring a liminal castle space, caverns and their occupants that blur the boundaries between categories of life and death and, of course, the ever-present threat of banditti and associated incorporation of ‘criminal’ violence into political systems.[[90]](#footnote-90) In an oblique sense, Radcliffe’s novel is organised around these elements of the Gothic found in its travelled region. What is more significant, however, is the way in which her text mimics the threatened breakdown of the confident ways of seeing employed by Grand Tourism that occurs in these Sicilian travelogues, so that the Gothic becomes a robust and undeniable component of the imaginative geographies they produce and depict. This commences in the novel’s prologue which, as in *The Italian*, not only introduces the Gothic within the field of the Grand Tour but frames its narration as a result of the inadequacies or limitations of that register.

Here an unidentified traveller describes their encounter with a Gothic site located within a Grand Tourism extended, like Brydone and Swinburne’s, to Sicily.[[91]](#footnote-91) What follows involves a series of references to the conventions of existing Gothic frames and the ways of seeing expected within continental and Picturesque tourism. All of these registers, however, are individually and collectively problematized.

The Gothic ruin – ‘the magnificent remains of a castle’ – is situated ‘“on the northern shore of Sicily’ where it is described as being ‘still to be seen’ (Radcliffe 1993: 1). To the reader acquainted – like Radcliffe and her audience – with the conventions of eighteenth-century travel and eighteenth-century Sicilian travel in particular, this first sentence offers some significant information. As the Castle of Mazzini is on the island’s ‘northern shore’, in view of ‘the straits of Messina’ and ‘the opposite shores of Calabria’ (Radcliffe 1993:6), it is likely that Radcliffe’s tourist has only recently crossed over to Sicily from the mainland. Like Brydone and Swinburne then, they very quickly encounter the “Gothic” in Sicily. This is important because, as in the travellers’ accounts, it is this Gothic content that promptly asserts itself as a robust presence within the field of Grand Tourism there. After all, the ultimate result of the travel encounter in Radcliffe’s prologue will be to *replace* the experience and imaginative geography of Grand Tourism with that of the Gothic. In the meantime it is interesting that the Gothic ruin is already associated with a property of resilience within that arena. Unlike the content dismissed by confident Grand Tourists, this ruin remains ‘still to be seen’ where it arrests the traveller’s attention with ‘awe and curiosity’ (Radcliffe 1993: 1). The phrase ‘still to be seen’ occurs fairly often in travel writing of the eighteenth-century Grand Tour, but is predominantly used to describe classical remains in a manner that calls attention to their lasting significance and acculturating plenitude. Addison, for example, describes the great wealth of antiquities which are ‘still to be seen’ at Rome (Addison 1705: 273). Tobias Smollett also uses the phrase on multiple occasions: describing the ‘antient walls’ and other remains that are ‘still to be seen’ at Nismes; the ‘Via Aurelia’, recorded in classical sources and ‘still to be seen in Provence’ despite the attempts by local nobility to maintain poverty and subjection through poor infrastructure; and the ‘vast’ remains ‘still to be seen’ at Rome itself and requiring ‘a whole month’ to describe properly (Smollett 1766: I.160; II.4; II.134). In such accounts this accolade affirms the value of the Grand Tourist’s ideal objects, persisting with inherent value, often in spite of other, more recent, materials that interpose upon them. By re-applying it to the Gothic ruin, Radcliffe begins to resituate that content as a robust and potent feature of the travelled region. This process continues with her prologue.

The reader learns next that the ruin:

Stands in the centre of a small bay, and upon a gentle acclivity, which, on the one side, slopes towards the sea, and on the other rises into an eminence crowned by dark woods. (Radcliffe: 1993: 1)

Now the compositional strategies of Picturesque tourism are also called in to help fix the Gothic presence as an occasion for detached judgement. The ruin’s ‘gentle’ elevation frames it to the rear and is sufficient to centre it within the foreground, but prevents it from improperly dominating the prospect within which it is now an object of aesthetic contemplation, not a marker of political presence. ‘Dark woods’ provide a suitably rough side-screen, suggesting the chiaroscuro framing of one of Gilpin’s aquatints. ‘The situation’, is accordingly judged to be ‘admirably beautiful and picturesque’. Radcliffe then emphasises the ruin’s ‘ancient grandeur [. . .] contrasted with [its] present solitude’; as in the properly Picturesque prospect, history is only inertly present as an aesthetic property of the static scene (Radcliffe: 1993: 1). However, just as it does in *Athlin and Dunbayne*, the stability of Picturesque framing in *Sicilian Romance* quickly becomes problematic. First the traveller is drawn into the scene itself by an affective power befitting its status as a robust object, ‘still to be seen’.[[92]](#footnote-92) This immediately complicates the distance necessary to Picturesque contemplation and framing and this is visible in a shift in aesthetic register. As the traveller is now set in motion, walking ‘over the loose fragments of stone’, the previously ‘beautiful and picturesque’ prospect becomes invested with ‘sublimity’. Up close, in physical contact with the ruin – almost inhabiting it – the traveller can no longer command it comprehensively in the manner indicated by the initial act of scene-painting. This shift in the traveller’s relationship to their object becomes explicit as they move from considering the ruin within the prospect to considering themselves within the ruin: realising that ‘the present generation’ – including the traveller themselves – ‘shall alike pass away and be forgotten’ (Radcliffe: 1993: 1). Like real travellers in Sicily – whether confronting the *memento mori* of a sepulchral cavern, or forced to recognise the limitations in their command of a sometimes inhospitable landscape – Radcliffe’s narrator is driven to recognise their own vulnerability and contingency.

This gesture of melancholic meditation has a wider currency within eighteenth-century travel and associated affective reflection upon ruins, where it also inhabits a periphery in Picturesque discourse.[[93]](#footnote-93) What distinguishes the response of Radcliffe’s narrator is the amount of control they exert over the ruin’s imaginative potential. Whereas the narrator of a poem like George Keate’s *The Ruins of Netley Abbey* (1764) summons visions of the ruin’s history that obediently appear before ‘fading like a dream’ (Keate 1764: 61) with the ebb and flow of the poet’s fancy, Radcliffe’s narrator exerts far less obvious control over their own Picturesque ruin as it is first imaginatively and then literally re-peopled. Instead of being a planned response to the ruin, abetted by an obedient ‘Fancy’, their reflection is part of the break-down in framing that has occurred with the pull inward, away from the external vantage point that operates the Picturesque. Nor can the traveller close-off this affective power by proceeding back out of the frame and continuing their journey. It is precisely as they attempt to do so – to cease imaginatively re-peopling the scene and leave it inert – that the ruin comes to a real, rather than merely imaginative, life. As the traveller ‘turn[s] from the scene with a sigh’ their eyes are ‘fixed’ unexpectedly upon ‘a friar, whose venerable figure, gently bending towards the earth, formed no uninteresting object in the picture’. The prospect is once more a ‘picture’ (or on its way to becoming one) yet this return to the Picturesque cannot be completed. In a manner that foreshadows the prologue to *The Italian*, the friar arrests the traveller’s gaze so that it is ‘fixed’ upon him before he himself meets their ‘eye’. As in Saglia’s reading of the later novel, this figure within the Grand Tourist’s prospect serves to challenge their visual control over the landscape and re-assert the place of the Gothic within it.[[94]](#footnote-94) First their arresting motion confirms the breakdown of the Picturesque as the ruin is no longer static, no longer ‘still’ enough to merely ‘be seen’. In keeping with this the friar next denies the traveller’s existing interpretation of the scene. As if aware of the narrator’s earlier meditation on the halls as ‘scenes of hospitality and magnificence’, the friar first shakes his head before announcing that the castle was in fact ‘the seat of luxury and vice’ (Radcliffe 1993: 1). Finally the friar introduces the manuscript history that overwrites the field of tourism and completes the prologue’s steady and deliberate movement into that of the Gothic.

Short as it is, this prologue effects a fundamental change in the way the Gothic is approached by fundamentally revising the framing of its objects and their narratives. Radcliffe takes the found manuscript conceit – familiar in Walpole, Reeve and Lee – and embeds it in the landscape of Grand Tourism. The distancing function of the manuscript is collapsed as its “reader” inhabits the very landscape about which it speaks: a landscape that will now re-appear as that of the Gothic tale. The prologue exists to narrate this process – to recognise it as a contest between the ways of seeing adopted within contemporary tourism and the Gothic materials they would rather not see, or see in carefully bracketed ways. This is encapsulated in the way the registers of the Picturesque and the manuscript history – separate methods of circumscribing the Gothic tale and the Gothic ruin – cannot work in juxtaposition with each other. The ruin marks the manuscript history with presence in the contemporary landscape, whilst that history prevents the ruin from being merely aesthetic and ahistorical. As in the contemporary Sicilian travelogues that inform Radcliffe’s tale, the Gothic persists beyond attempts to dismiss or delimit. It is ‘still to be seen’. In this way the arena of travel established in the *A Sicilian Romance* prologue becomes a hybrid space. The landscape ‘on the northern shore of Sicily’ is now both that of the Grand Tour and the Gothic narrative. This is what Radcliffe’s prologue serves to establish.

The novel itself sustains and explores this property. A peculiar, though easily overlooked, feature of *Sicilian Romance* is the fact that – contrary to the traveller’s expectations – the Picturesque ruin of its prologue is *not* “restored” in the historical narrative that follows. The Castle of Mazzini is a centrepiece of both text and paratext, yet these two instances mirror each other. Like its incarnation in the prologue, the historical castle is also largely ruined as the reader promptly learns that: ‘the present family inhabited only a small part of it; and even this part appeared forlorn and almost desolate’ (Radcliffe 1993: 5).[[95]](#footnote-95) So, far from offering a contrast, the “historical” castle continues to be described in terms that echo the views and reflections of the contemporary traveller. The significance of this operates on multiple levels. By resembling its eighteenth-century incarnation, the Gothic castle reiterates the blurring of the fields of contemporary travel and Gothic narrative that its description in the prologue has served to evoke. Meanwhile, both instances of the Castle of Mazzini – marked even in the past by ‘singular’ and ‘wild desolation’ (Radcliffe 1993: 10, 40) – present an apparently abandoned space in which a Gothic history persists in spite of attempts to bracket and repress it. In this way the doubled ruin serves not only to remind the reader of the overlay of Gothic and travel narrative that has occurred in the preface: it also repeats the (re)emergence of an obscured and denied Gothic presence that has occasioned that state of affairs. Far from announcing the transition into a distinct and separate category of narrative, the “historical” Castle of Mazzini serves as a reflection and thematic re-enactment of its counterpart. It reminds the reader that the worlds of Radcliffe’s text and paratext are the same.

Radcliffe’s narrative thus draws upon her prologue’s reworking and problematisation of the Picturesque as a means of framing and delimiting the Gothic. As shall become clear, a critique of the Picturesque occurs elsewhere in the novel where it raises similar questions to those of *Athlin and Dunbayne* with respect to the credentials and functionality of benevolent land-ownership and the Picturesque prospect-view. First though it is important to observe that Radcliffe’s revision of existing frames and categories for the Gothic is more widespread and strategic within *Sicilian Romance*. This is because she also inserts a version of the Gothic manuscript history into the main narrative. This occurs when the Marquis de Mazzini tells his son, Ferdinand, of an ancestral crime committed at the castle and giving rise to the haunting that now appears to take place there. An ancestor of the Mazzinis is said to have imprisoned and murdered a rival, ‘Henry della Campo’, and thereby usurped that family’s ‘power and consequence in Sicily’ (Radcliffe 1993: 53). Though it does not take the form of a manuscript history, this Gothic tale is effectively that of Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Nor is Radcliffe simply lifting stock material from existing novels in her nascent genre. Instead, as with *Athlin and Dunbayne*’s reworking of Reeve, Radcliffe’s genre-consciousness is far more astute and revisionary. *Otranto* is a perfect foil for the Marquis, who, like Walpole’s Manfred, has abandoned his wife and, in his attempt to poison her, comes close to accidentally murdering his daughter. The point of the Marquis’s tale, however, is not to draw attention to this feature of his character, but to *obscure* it. By having her villain deploy this stock Gothic narrative as a screen, Radcliffe highlights the way in which this existing form of Gothic history is about abstracting and bracketing the Gothic so that it does *not* possess any troubling “contemporary” location. As counter-intuitive as it may appear, the Marquis tells his son the story of *Otranto* in order to halt inquiry into the real circumstances of the southern wing. This most Gothic feature of *Sicilian Romance* is itself a means of controlling and curtailing the perception of the Gothic by its characters: transposed into the past it becomes – or is intended to become – inert in the present.[[96]](#footnote-96) *Sicilian Romance* is famous for originating the Radcliffean device of the “explained supernatural”, but it is all too easy to overlook the fact that *two* explanations for the “supernatural” are offered in the novel, one of which is effected through the Gothic itself. The shift to the more famous explanation – the presence of the buried mother – is something of a sleight of hand, through which Radcliffe re-establishes where the Gothic and its anxieties are located. It is not the reality of the imprisoned mother that diminishes or negates the Gothic presence in the southern wing: quite the opposite. As critics such as Rictor Norton have already observed, ‘this natural explanation surpasses in horror the supernatural terrors it has given rise to’ (Norton 1999: 59). Instead it is the Gothic stock narrative imported into *Sicilian Romance* that attempts – and fails – to contain the novel’s anxieties. Crucially, this narrative, like the Picturesque ruin, echoes the prologue where another Walpolean (manuscript) history is introduced, but cannot frame and contain a Gothic that is also present in a contemporary landscape to a degree that *Otranto* (as discussed in Chapter One) never is. Again, the function of this strategy for containing the Gothic within the novel reflects and perpetuates the implications of its prologue so that the landscapes of travel and Gothic continue to be commingled and to share a concern with the Gothic’s resilient presence. Neither the manuscript history of Mazzini nor the tale told by the Marquis can prevent the Gothic from being ‘still to be seen’ in the shared landscape of Radcliffe’s text and paratext: the landscape of contemporary travel.

Having established this hybrid landscape as the setting for her narrative, Radcliffe goes on to import other practices and assumptions from the field of contemporary travel. This builds, to a degree, on the precedent set by *Athlin and Dunbayne*, which explored the connection between Picturesque aesthetics and authority in Osbert’s mountain wanderings and ultimately confronted the heroine (and reader) with a Gothic site that eluded the various strategies of Picturesque possession and reconciliation. Befitting its more explicit and developed linkage with contemporary tourism, the exploration of travel and its discourses within *Sicilian Romance* is more elaborate. This second novel is the first in which Radcliffe engages in fully extended presentations *of* travel within her narrative, drawing upon the popular travel writing that forms part of the literary context (and marketplace) for her work. Yet, as critics such as Alison Milbank have observed, Radcliffe’s use of this broader context does not mean her novel simply becomes a ‘precise employment’ of pragmatically chosen details; her ‘concerns’ are richer and more complicated, concerning issues such as ‘the interrelation of the aesthetic and the political’ (Milbank 1993: x). Meanwhile, as Ben Brabon rightly argues, Radcliffe’s use of European settings does not mean that her novels cease to engage with issues invested in the literal and imaginative arrangement of landscapes at home: ‘beneath Radcliffe’s descriptions of France or Italy lies an enduring image of an English landscape’ (Brabon 2006: 2). This means that *Sicilian Romance* and the novels that follow it do not depart from the issues explored in earlier novels as they engage with the arena of the continental Grand Tour. Instead, the work of a writer like Smith in considering the Gothic through a Picturesque nexus of estate management and landscape appreciation in Britain remains important to Radcliffe.

This is evident early on in *Sicilian Romance*, as the opening scenario in Radcliffe’s second novel strongly echoes that of Smith’s first. Like the eponymous heroine of *Emmeline*, Radcliffe’s Emilia and Julia exist in relative harmony within a castle which, like Smith’s Mowbray, is well able to satisfy their fondness for Picturesque prospect views; from ‘an eminence in the woods belonging to the castle’ they can see a panoramic view of Calabria, Messina, Etna and even Palermo, all arranged within ‘the wild and picturesque scenery of Sicily’ (Radcliffe 1993: 6). Meanwhile, like Emmeline, Julia has chosen a favourite chamber affording views of suitably Picturesque landscapes in the vicinity, ranging from ‘the dark and rocky coast of Calabria’ to the castle’s own ‘neighbouring woods’ (Radcliffe 1993: 5). As in Smith’s novel this status quo is challenged by the arrival of the Marquis, who, like the Montrevilles, has hitherto been an absentee landowner, enjoying ‘the gaieties and splendour of Naples’ whilst his property falls into disrepair (Radcliffe 1993: 3). Also like the Montrevilles who intend Mowbray as a seat for Delamare, the Marquis chooses to remain at Mazzini in order to establish his own successor: holding a ‘festive magnificence’ to celebrate ‘the majority of young Ferdinand’ (Radcliffe 1993: 14).

Radcliffe makes key modifications to Smith’s formula, however. As discussed in Chapter One, the Gothic potential or agency of Smith’s early castles is dependent upon the attitudes adopted towards them by different characters. Though disrupted by aesthetically insensitive and (therefore) politically ineligible villains, sites like Mowbray are otherwise configured as Picturesque refuges by heroines such as Emmeline, whose attitudes to their landscapes and occupants indicate their suitability to govern them before this has been revealed by the plot. Mazzini, however, is never an unproblematic Picturesque refuge of this kind. Instead it is already a form of prison space. The description of the Picturesque eminence view is promptly followed by the revelation that the Marquis and Marchioness ‘detain them’ here ‘in retirement’ so that they have ‘never passed the boundaries of their father’s domains’ (Radcliffe 1993: 6). This is important. By juxtaposing her heroines’ enjoyment of Picturesque landscape with this information, Radcliffe promptly indicates that the ‘boundaries’ of the prospect view also contain them. As the viewpoint pulls out to reveal that the characters are within, rather than without, the scene they enjoy, it becomes clear that this Picturesque estate is not (and never will be) theirs. These are their ‘father’s domains’ and they, like the eminence upon which they sit, ‘belong’ to them. The conventional role of the Picturesque estate as a refuge and positive political model is thus subtly, but significantly, undermined early in Radcliffe’s second novel. This resonates across the plot as the conjunction of aesthetics and authority in Mazzini’s prospect views foreshadows the way in which the castle’s Gothic properties, unlike Mowbray’s, are far from merely imagined. Whereas Emmeline’s experience of the Gothic castle anticipates her happy possession of it, Julia and Emilia’s anticipates the discovery of the castle’s real identity as a prison.

Accordingly, the hidden presence of the heroines’ mother repeatedly manifests as a disturbance in their enjoyment of the castle’s Picturesque views. The first ‘appearance of a light’ from the deserted part of the castle occurs as Julia and Emilia, together with their guardian, Madame de Menon, return from scenic contemplation upon the eminence in the castle’s grounds. Its effects are first felt in this context, preventing the group from ‘spending an evening’ in their ‘favourite spot’ (Radcliffe 1993: 8-9). Next, Julia’s contemplation of the views from her chamber window – the ‘fine effect of moonlight upon the dark woods’ – is disturbed, both emotionally and aesthetically, by the appearance of another light source in the near distance. This ‘flash’ is succeeded by ‘a figure bearing a lamp’ emerging and disappearing from ‘the uninhabited part of the castle’ (Radcliffe 1993: 9). As in the previous incident, scenic contemplation is undermined and forcibly abandoned, but this time the deeper implications of the incident for the castle’s status as a secure Picturesque vantage are clearer. Julia’s gaze has not only been interrupted, but also pulled back from the prospect to the site that projects it. As the plot will confirm, it is here at the centre that something is fundamentally out of joint. Whereas Mowbray’s Gothic anxieties are imported into it by the arrival of the Montrevilles, Mazzini is inherently problematic. A version of the Picturesque itself seems to be critiqued here. By repeatedly pointing towards the authority of the Marquis over the estate and the *disempowerment* (both literally and aesthetically) of female characters within it, Picturesque management and appreciation of the castle in Radcliffe’s novel is far less congenial than in Smith’s. It is not simply that it fails to mask Mazzini’s Gothic: instead it also seems complicit with it.

This critique of conventional viewing strategies associated with travel aesthetics is explored further as the novel moves from the castle and its estate to descriptions of extended travel within the broader Sicilian landscape. Here the implicit opposition between masculine and feminine viewpoints and positions at Mazzini becomes explicit as Radcliffe contrasts different attitudes and approaches to experiment with a revised travel perspective. At the centre of *Sicilian Romance* are successive representations of Sicilian travel by male and female characters as the experiences of the pursuing Duke de Luovo are followed by those of the fleeing or wandering Madame de Menon and Julia. At first glance the sequence seems contrived, almost pantomime, as the two sets of characters chase each other on and off the same “stage,” decorated with the same scenic backdrops and secondary characters. Read more closely however – and with the context provided by eighteenth-century travel in mind – the detail within these descriptions and the contrast between them is much more strategic: operating to interpolate a version of conventional, masculine, travel and its attitudes to landscape, before constructing an alternative experience and viewpoint.

Radcliffe first presents the Duke de Luovo and his party as they explore the landscapes around Mazzini in pursuit of the fleeing heroine. In many ways this sequence resembles a conventional scenic tour of Sicily, such as Brydone’s or Swinburne’s. Like the modern traveller, the Duke is an authoritative figure whose rank and wealth ostensibly allow him a vicarious ‘ownership’ of the regions he traverses in search of his projected objects. He travels with a party of guards and assistants, takes shelter and subsistence from local occupants and frequently pauses to indulge a taste for the Picturesque: it is the Duke’s perspective that observes ‘vallies, luxuriant in shade [. . .] embellished by the windings of a lucid stream, and diversified by clusters of half-seen cottages’ whilst more ‘savage wilds’ provide ‘a bold and picturesque background to the scene’ (Radcliffe 1993: 83). These are the aesthetics of estate-ownership, appropriate to the Duke’s class, for whom the Picturesque organises a fertile, worked, productive landscape into an attractive prospect view. The Duke is happiest when gazing down into such scenes in a way that simulates his ownership over them and this scenario is repeatedly restaged in his journey. However, such episodes also form part of a more anxious pattern of experience that presents a broader critique of these attitudes, whose focus upon inscape and control allies them with the sinister implicit presence of the Marquis’s authority in the early scenes at Mazzini.

At one point, for example, the Duke is described as having ‘rested, to view the picturesque imagery of the scene below’ in which the ‘clear bosom’ of a lake reflects ‘the impending cliffs and beautiful luxuriance of the overhanging shades’. These are ‘the beauties of inanimate nature’: neatly framed, inert and passive within the perspective and vicarious ownership of the masculine traveller (Radcliffe 1993: 93). Yet the very possessive quality of this kind of vision serves to undermine its authority and control. Gazing upon ‘inanimate’ beauties, the Duke notices the apparent objects of his search within the prospect and immediately seeks to pursue them into it. Milbank expresses the significance of the passage very well: the Duke ‘immediately destroys his own effect, as aesthetic appreciation is quickly abandoned for pursuit and he launches himself into the landscape [where he] clatters over the rocks to break into a furious assault’ (Milbank 1993: xvi). The Duke’s movement literalises the possessive and aggressive authority encoded in the prospect view, yet undermines it at the very same moment, as the framed landscape itself is broken up. The figures within turn out not to be Julia and her lover; they are a parallel, but completely unrelated fleeing couple. The over-reaching of the Duke’s authority is made explicit here as the ‘cavalier’ he challenges bests and wounds him. Thus, as is often the case in accounts of Sicily by eighteenth-century travellers, the landscape offers a version of the traveller’s expectations only to baffle them in ways that question his authority and control. This is the culmination of the Duke’s ineffective journey, yet it replays a sequence of vantage, pursuit and bafflement that typifies his travels as a whole. These develop a parallel with contemporary Sicilian travelogues as, divested of the controlling prospect view, the Duke is forced to negotiate landscapes divested of the materials required by the Picturesque, but *invested* with those of the Gothic.

When his pursuit takes him down from the commanding vantage the Duke experiences landscape in a way that speaks to his accompanying disempowerment. Following his first downward pursuit of the fleeing couple, the Duke and his party find themselves within ‘a narrow defile’ (Radcliffe 1993: 83). Here they view a new ‘prospect’: ‘gloomy and vast’ where no ‘human habitation [meets] their eyes’. They listen ‘in vain’ and with ‘anxious attention’ for ‘some sound that might discover to them the haunts of men’ but ‘the stillness of night’ is ‘undisturbed but by the wind’ which breaks ‘in low and hollow murmours from among the mountains’ (Radcliffe 1993: 84). There are strong echoes here of Osbert’s mountain wanderings in *Athlin and Dunbayne* as Radcliffe depicts a traveller’s anxiety within a landscape that cannot be negotiated and possessed visually. Once more the aesthetic comprehension upon which the Picturesque depends is replaced by the inarticulate ‘voices’ of the landscape itself. This experience succeeds the aforementioned prospect view in which the Duke’s eye notes ‘luxuriant valleys’ and the ‘half-seen’ cottages of their farmers, yet the absence of such human markers of the managed Picturesque landscape now speaks to the quite literal bewilderment of the traveller who participates, literally or vicariously, in its ownership. The Duke is effectively adrift in the ‘impenetrable’ Sicilian interior anxiously imagined by Brydone (Brydone 1773: I.43-44). Accordingly, it is here that he both imagines and encounters banditti as Radcliffe’s fiction plays out the fears and experiences of real travellers.

Glimpsing a light from the ‘mouth of a cavern’, the Duke comes across a party of banditti, who briefly detain and threaten him. This incident draws upon the anxieties expressed by eighteenth-century travellers. It transpires that the group is led by the Duke’s own renegade son, Riccardo, who has exchanged ‘the galling severity of his father’ for the freedom of a bandit life. Riccardo’s relationship to the ‘civilised’ culture of the region’s legitimate aristocracy does not serve to simply redeem and romanticise him, however. Instead the Riccardo character draws upon Brydone’s anxious realisation of a similar association between Sicily’s violent criminals and its rulers. He has no doubt that, upon eventually resuming his rank, he ‘might justify his present conduct as a frolic’ and that ‘his power would then place him beyond the reach of censure, in a country where the people are accustomed to implicit subordination, and seldom dare to scrutinize the actions of the nobility’ (Radcliffe 1993: 86). Though these banditti are not in the direct employ of the Duke, they are fully complicit in the model of authority that he represents. In this way, the encounter between the Duke and his son provides a Gothic incident that speaks, once more, to the ambiguous position of the Duke as a masculine authority figure and “traveller”. As with the apparition of Julia’s double, the landscape presents materials that appear to affirm the Duke’s power – the objects of his desire; the local authority of his own family – only to distort and undermine it. Tellingly, it is the act of asserting power by drawing his sword that betrays the Duke in both instances: leading first to his visibility and capture by Riccardo and later to his wounding by the cavalier. The Riccardo encounter is one, quite brief, stop upon the Duke’s “Gothic tour”, yet it serves to import contemporary travellers’ anxieties about the proximity between the Sicilian banditti and the “legitimate” authority of the genteel traveller and incorporate these into the broader exposé of that position in the person and experiences of the Duke. As the Duke’s journey continues, another incident presents a more acute confrontation of Radcliffe’s masculine “traveller” and the Gothic contents of her Sicilian landscape.

Having pursued the fleeing couple once in vain, been detained by Riccardo and sheltered briefly in a monastery (another checkpoint on the “Gothic tour”) the Duke and his party find themselves bewildered once again in a landscape that refuses visual organisation. Confronted, in the midst of a storm, with a ‘wild and dreary heath’, and a ‘view [. . .] terminated on all sides by the same desolate scene’, it is the Duke’s ‘prospects’ that are explicitly ‘confused’ until there appears, ‘on the skirts of the waste a large mansion’ (Radcliffe 1993: 91). The physical shelter and security promised by this building also operates on an aesthetic level. In journeying towards this ‘mansion’, the Duke seeks the relationship with landscape that is proper to his class: an opportunity to organise the ‘desolate scene’ into a coherent prospect view; to cease to be adrift within the landscape and to become the gaze that composes it. But, as so often on the Duke’s journey, this promise of control is held out only to be snatched away on a closer view. Only the most provisional shelter is offered as the ‘large and ancient mansion’ is ‘falling to decay’ and seems to ‘shake’ in response to the continuing storm. Instead of offering a vantage from which to consider the landscape the castle ‘ill accord[s] with the surrounding scenery’ which still presents ‘only views of rude and desolated nature’ so that the Duke ‘justified the owner in forsaking’ it (Radcliffe 1993: 92). The promise of the ‘mansion’” – with its own superior ‘prospects’ – turns out to be a mirage, behind which lies the Gothic ruin.

Far from restoring and affirming the “traveller’s” control of the landscape, this site rapidly goes about undermining it further. Unable to renegotiate the landscape from the vantage of the ruin, the Duke becomes instead ‘a prisoner in his present habitation for the night’. The attempt to survey and make sense of the structure confirms his disempowerment as its ‘irregular and vast’ interior leaves him ‘perplexed’ and isolated from his dependents. The incoherence of these spaces corresponds with their refusal to provide an exterior prospect view. Within ‘a large place which he scarcely knew whether to think a cloister, a chapel or a hall’ the Duke is presented with a ‘long perspective, in arches, and terminated in a large iron gate, through which appeared the open country’. No detail is visible in this outer landscape, however, which is obscured by ‘lightning flash[ing] thick and blue all around’. Here the Duke is ‘awed’ and affected by ‘the melancholy aspect of the place’, calling ‘involuntarily’ for his dependents. He is ‘answered only by the deep echoes which ran in murmurs through the place’ as Radcliffe once again uses sound to evoke the alien character of landscapes and spaces that refuse to enter into the “language” of visual control (affirmed as the Duke is left ‘in total darkness’) (Radcliffe 1993: 92).[[97]](#footnote-97) Though the Duke is shortly reunited with his party and passes a night in the ruin ‘without any disturbance’, the ruined “mansion’ has already served to portray his bewilderment in the face of a Gothic site that refuses to sustain or succumb to the Picturesque (Radcliffe 1993: 93). This passage looks both backwards and forwards to a repeated meditation on the Picturesque as a frame for the Gothic in Radcliffe’s works. As an object that cannot be reconciled within a barren landscape with no means of aesthetic purchase, the Sicilian castle recalls the other anonymous ruin towards the conclusion of *Athlin and Dunbayne*, which presented a similar instance of Picturesque failure. As an abandoned site that a traveller attempts to (briefly) take control of, the ruin looks forward to a complex exploration of the Picturesque as a means of exerting authority during La Motte’s “proprietorship” of the partially ruined abbey in *Forest*. Within *Sicilian Romance* the episode is another example of a Sicilian Gothic that will not accede to the attitudes embodied by the Duke as a representative masculine “traveller”. In this way it represents one more instance in which the novel reflects its prologue, as the Duke’s anxious explorations recall those of the contemporary tourist who is moved into a similar reflection upon their own vulnerability within the remains of Mazzini.

With her extended account of the Duke’s journeyings, Radcliffe represents a kind of ineffective and vulnerable model of travel, which, as in the contemporary materials she would have read, is particularly prone to stumbling when confronted with the Gothic. Anxieties such as those arising from the proximity to banditti or the bewildering incoherence and unsettling affect of Gothic interiors like the Villa Palagonia are drawn upon here, within a wider critique of the perspectives and assumptions driving a masculine travel predicated on the literal or deemed ownership and authority over landscape and their contents. With his desire for the prospect view (and anxiety at being a subordinate and exposed object *within* landscape) the Duke embodies the aesthetics and their politics that silently underpin Mazzini at the novel’s opening. In following her account of the Duke’s journey with the travels of Madame de Menon and Julia, Radcliffe presents the experiences of characters fleeing this kind of authority, but, in doing so, she also sketches an alternative attitude to the same landscapes and objects.

It is worth recalling that, contrary to the Marquis’s own track-record and the stereotypical association between the Gothic and female incarceration that it helps engender, Julia is not initially met with imprisonment and oppression when she defies her father’s wishes. Instead she is menaced with being forced to ‘quit his castle and wander where you will’ (Radcliffe 1993: 56). Though the Marquis – and the Duke – will contradict this initial threat, it functions as an important signpost. Exposure and wandering are exactly what Julia – and Madame – will be forced to undergo. Lacking the vicarious ownership and controlling prospect view of their masculine counterparts, Radcliffe’s heroines undertake a different kind of travel across the same landscapes. Their successful negotiation of this experience – in which masculine assistance from the novel’s heroes, Ferdinand and Hippolitus, is infrequent and largely ineffective – is vital in bringing about the novel’s conclusion. Julia’s discovery of her mother beneath Mazzini may appear contrived, yet it makes sense within the larger context of her journeyings. These commence (for the reader) with a similar reconciliation with Madame and are characterised throughout with a ready recognition of the landscape as it is and a receptiveness to its actual organisation. Though frequently anxious, this responsiveness to the windings and contingencies expressed by the landscape is ultimately far more successful than the Duke’s forlorn attempt to sustain the mastery of a prospect view.

Whereas the Duke travels with a pre-conceived idea of the landscape and its contents, affirmed in the vantages he exercises, Madame’s initial sense of the landscape around Mazzini finds it ‘a wild and gloomy desert, where no heart welcomed her with kindness’ (Radcliffe 1993: 103). For Madame, the landscape gains value not from what is projected into or onto it – not from the traveller’s ability to effect a suitable ordering of it – but from its own ability to affectively connect with the traveller. Crucially, this involves a desire to experience travel as companionship, as an experience of dialogue with and within a landscape that is not simply an occasion for the traveller’s own authoritative utterances.

This desire – and its satisfaction – is evident in the first description of Madame’s travels, which are very different to the Duke’s. Where the Duke seeks out the vantage-points from which landscape can be aesthetically encompassed, Madame is responsive to the landscape as it is. She does not stand and judge ‘the beauty of the surrounding scenery’ but goes where it has ‘invited her to walk [following] the windings of a stream’ down into the kinds of enclosed space that are productive of anxiety for the masculine traveller. Here she is responsive to the ‘dark foliage’ and the ‘pensive gloom’ it spreads so that her ‘thoughts’ are ‘affected by the surrounding objects’ and she is ‘insensibly led on [following] the course of the stream’ (Radcliffe 1993: 104). Madame accepts her surroundings as affective environment, rather than attempting to repurpose them into an aesthetic vision inscribed with her desires. This receptive wandering opens into “a view so various and sublime” that it introduces a very different kind of scene-painting to that associated with the Duke’s consciousness. A suggestion of Picturesque framing is offered by ‘a group of wild and grotesque rocks [rising] in semi-circular form’. Yet no aesthetic closure is possible in a scene that is animated, both physically and psychologically:

Fancy caught the thrilling sensation, and at her touch the towering steeps became shaded with unreal glooms; the caves more darkly frowned – the projecting cliffs assumed a more terrific aspect, and the wild overhanging shrubs waved to the gale in deeper murmours. (Radcliffe 1993: 104)

Here is a Sublime prospect that cannot be reconciled to the Picturesque frame, but Madame does not require it to be. Milbank is correct to see a clear and intentional contrast with the Duke’s attitudes here: ‘unlike the Duke, who keeps control of his gaze and his intentions [Madame] enters along the lines offered by the geometry of the picture rather than breaking the frame’ (Milbank 1993: xvii-xviii). What is important to note, however, is that Madame does not require or desire a ‘picture’ or project a ‘frame’ in the way the Duke needs to. Milbank observes that ‘the picture evoked’ here is the ‘irregular sublime’ of Salvator Rosa in contrast to the ‘balanced landscapes’ of the Duke’s ‘Claudesque scenes’(Milbank 1993: xvi-xvii). This is a useful distinction from the point of view of the reader, but it must be borne in mind that the Duke has also traversed ‘scenes’ like this: Madame’s grotto is precisely the kind of ‘shadowy sequestered dell’ he descends into when frustrated in his prospect views and which fills him with a bewildering anxiety (Radcliffe 1993: 93). The key distinction is not in the kinds of ‘pictures’ these travellers respond to, but in their respective desire to encounter landscape in stable, pictorial, picture-esque, form. Whereas the Duke seeks landscape composed and controlled as a picture – the ‘beauties of *inanimate* nature’ Radcliffe 1993: 93 – emphasis added) – Madame does not. Though it may function to recall Rosa in the mind of the eighteenth-century reader, her rocky grotto is, in many ways, anti-pictorial. In resisting stasis it also animates the mind of its beholder, once more functioning as an affective environment rather than a static view to be contemplated. It is also aural. For the Duke (and for *Athlin and Dunbayne*’s Osbert) the sounds produced by non-Picturesque landscapes confirm the alienating inability to aesthetically comprehend and translate landscapes. For Madame they constitute an affective dialogue as she listens, receptively, to the sounds of the wind and the water. In response these inarticulate sounds begin to take form as ‘their distant murmur’ is accompanied by ‘a voice of liquid and melodious sweetness’ before Julia herself is revealed: ‘at some distance’, but apparently already apparent to one who pays due attention to her surroundings (Radcliffe 1993: 104-105). Unlike the Duke then, Madame soon finds what she most desires on her travels, but she does so by being responsive rather than prescriptive: by following the landscape and – quite literally – letting it speak to her rather than pronouncing and projecting her expectations of it. This process bears out Milbank’s observation of the way in which ‘the tyrannical characters of the novel’ (such as the Duke) ‘are bent on the visual’ and on ‘keeping those in their power immobile’, the ‘virtuous characters’ are ‘particularly influenced by sound’ (Milbank 2014: 94). However, it is important to also recognise the way in which Radcliffe is not simply exploring contrasting aesthetic and affective responses, but is also playing out different versions of travel within which they might be deployed, by contemporary tourists as for her characters who mimic them. As such the novel bears out the implications of its prologue by exploring how – and to what extent – travellers might negotiate and make sense of the Gothic.

Following their reconciliation, Madame and Julia traverse the same landscapes as the Duke and this involves encountering many of the same (or, at least, very similar) Gothic features. Enjoyment of an ‘enchanted’ valley, early in their travels, is promptly halted by the sight of ‘a party of horsemen winding down the side of a hill’ towards them, as the two women experience the other side of the Duke’s montage of prospect view and pursuit. They are mistakenly caught by these banditti (employed to seek the other lady and cavalier) and taken to a ruin, much like that which provides an uneasy refuge for the Duke. Though seen first through ‘the long perspective of the trees that lead up to it’ there is no opportunity to aesthetically redeem this site, which is obscured by ‘the gloom of the surrounding shades’ and only ‘gradually disclosed’ until it appears, up close, as ‘fit only for the purposes of violence and destruction’ with Madame and Julia accordingly feeling ‘the full force of its horrors’ (Radcliffe 1993: 111). Though the heroines are released following the discovery of their mistaken identity, Gothic sites like these remain within the landscapes of Radcliffe’s novel, unreconciled by either masculine or feminine modes of travel. What they indicate, however, is the different success of these two attitudes. For male landowners and travellers such as the Marquis and the Duke, partially ruined and “Gothic” sites inscribe a tyrannical masculine authority (as silently underpins Mazzini) but also mark its limits. Such figures attempt to over-master and employ the Gothic, be it the fabricated *Otranto*-lite tale fabricated by the Marquis, or the Duke’s (and his unnamed double’s) attempt to control landscape from ruins that refuse to offer vantage or accord with prospect views. They fail because, as is the case for the contemporary masculine traveller in Sicily, the Gothic exceeds their attempts to frame it; the Marquis’s tale cannot change where the Gothic really *is* at Mazzini, whilst figures such as the Duke find Gothic violence rebounding upon them in landscapes which subject them to distorted versions of their own authority. In contrast, the novel’s heroines do not attempt to exert this kind of control. Mazzini is not redeemed as a locus for Picturesque politics as it would be in an early novel by Smith; following the rescue of Maria de Vellorno and the death of the Marquis and Louisa di Bernini, the remaining characters retreat to Naples. Like their eighteenth-century contemporaries, they leave Sicily itself at the Gothic periphery.

*A Sicilian Romance* sits at an important point in the history of Radcliffe’s engagement with the culture and imaginative geography of eighteenth-century travel writing. Like *Athlin and Dunbayne* it takes up a peripheral region of contemporary tourism, identified by the ambivalences it witnesses within and interpolates from contemporary travel writing. At the same time, it also anticipates *Forest* in investing more clearly in travel as a mode of encounter for the Gothic and in questioning the kinds of frames – both fictional and aesthetic – that are provided for its materials. Key to this process is that central contrast between the attitudes and practices of masculine and feminine “travellers”. By developing this, Radcliffe has not only recognised anxieties and difficulties within conventional travel performances: she has begun to explore an alternative, in which a female consciousness – denied access to the authoritative position of its masculine counterpart – begins to develop an alternative experience that negotiates the landscape as it is and recognises – implicitly or explicitly – the limitation of more prescriptive approaches. This exploration of the consciousness of travelling heroines has become synonymous with Radcliffe’s work, and with Moers’s association of it with ‘travelling heroinism’. But, as this chapter and the previous have shown, it makes the most sense within a broader context supplied by Radcliffe’s awareness of contemporary travel writing. So far this context has largely lacked in female authors, leaving Radcliffe’s work to adapt and reflect upon the assumptions of male tourists and travel writers such as Pennant, Gilpin, Johnson, Brydone and Swinburne. Now, however, as Radcliffe begins to focus upon travelling heroines, it is possible to observe another important context for this manoeuvre: the emergence of popular – and revisionary – travel writing by women.

Chapter Four

Travelling Heroinism: Female Travellers and the Re-Writing of Continental Tourism

How dreadful are the thoughts which such a scene suggests! How very horrible the certainty [that] we, who today are spectators, may become spectacles to travellers of a succeeding century, who mistaking our bones [. . .] may carry some of them to their native country back again perhaps.

(Hester Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections on a Journey through France, Italy and Germany*, 1789)

“I shall become like the mortals on whose reliques I now gaze, and, like them too, I may be the subject of meditation to a succeeding generation, which shall totter but a little while over the object they contemplate, ere they also sink into dust.”

(Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, 1791)

A link between the real and fictional experiences of female travellers in a Gothic context has been implied since Moers’s definition of a ‘Female Gothic’ based upon the freedom of ‘travelling heroinism’ (Moers 1978: 90-110), discussed in the Introduction. However, the actual relationship between explorations of ‘travelling heroinism’ in Gothic fiction and accounts of travel by women travel writers has never been substantially explored. In Moers’s own description of the Female Gothic, it is effectively denied. Here gender plays a key role in the use of travel writing that defines Radcliffe’s Female Gothic, but its function is largely negative. Because her gender prevents her from undertaking the Grand Tour or, presumably, relating fully to its many male-authored accounts, Radcliffe’s writing is found to lack a relationship with ‘the laws of gravity, time, perspective’ that condition ‘real travel’. Instead her characters ‘fly’ across ‘marvellous’ landscapes and ‘scurry’ up ‘pasteboard’ mountains, all drawn from ‘paintings, theatre backdrops and travel books’ (Moers 1978: 126-8). It should already be clear from the foregoing discussions of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) and *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), that this description gives a limited and inaccurate sense of Radcliffe’s engagement with travel writing and its imaginative geographies.[[98]](#footnote-98) Nonetheless, Moers does point to the way in which gender can be thought of as a more productive part of this relationship. She observes that one of the ‘most important’ to Radcliffe ‘was the unconventional, distinctly female travel book’ produced by Hester Piozzi in 1789 (Moers 1978: 128). Moers herself does not explain *why* these qualities should be associated with Piozzi’s text, but her claims are important. As Radcliffe’s career continues in the 1790s, she adopts exclusively continental settings, moving out of the more peripheral regions of tourism that have contextualised *Athlin and Dunbayne* and *Sicilian Romance* and into the heartlands of the Grand Tour. She also focalises these novels almost entirely through ‘travelling heroines’. As such, the female-authored Grand Tour travel writing of Piozzi’s popular *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy and Germany* (1789) is an important intertext for Radcliffe’s continued development of the relationship between Gothic and travel writing.[[99]](#footnote-99)

**Constraint and critique - eighteenth-century women’s travelogues**

Part of what was ‘unconventional’ about Piozzi’s work was its refusal to take a conventionally feminine form; it is this refusal that enables a ‘distinctly female’ perspective to operate within a genre traditionally dominated by men. As her critical biographer William McCarthy observes, Piozzi was one of the first women to publish a travelogue, appearing ‘to have had but two female predecessors’: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s *Letters from Turkey* (1763) and Anna Miller’s *Letters from Italy* (1776) (McCarthy 1985: 148). To this short list must be added *A Journey to the Highlands of Scotland. With Occasional Remarks on Dr Johnson’s Tour: By a Lady* (1777). These earlier women travellers had tended to carefully excuse their authorship through formal strategies and paratextual apologies. The Lady’s *Journey to the Highlands,* for example, takes the form of personal letters whose publication supposedly occurs ‘accidentally’ under the careful supervision of a ‘literary gentleman’ (Anon 2010: 2,4).[[100]](#footnote-100) Such letters, it is implied, are not authoritative statements, but private epistles awaiting the perusal and acceptance of their addressees and requiring expert (masculine) validation and guidance before they can be assembled into a published – and public – text.

Kristi Siegel aptly summarises such paratexts as apologies ‘for writing in the first person, for engaging in such inappropriate activity, for bothering the reader with their trivial endeavours’ affirming ‘their status as ladies and [reassuring] readers that they would not be competing with men’ (Siegel 2004: 2-3). What this means is that, unlike male writers self-confidently participating in the familiar social constructs of imaginative geography – whether that of Addison’s classical Grand Tour or Gilpin’s Picturesque ‘observations’ upon different ‘parts of Great Britain’ – women travellers’ authorial subjectivity is exposed to a peculiar self-contradiction: writing in such a way as to excuse the fact of their writing at all. As Siegel observes:

Early women travel writers skirted a delicate course. To get an audience a woman needed to provide material that was reasonably exciting; to keep an audience, she needed to remain a lady [therefore] women often employed a narrative stance that could be described as the decorum of indecorum. (Siegel 2004: 2)

Remaining a ‘Lady’ is clearly part of the strategy employed by the author of *Journey to the Highlands*. Nonetheless, the prefaratory materials that carefully establish this identity are – somewhat paradoxically – occasioned by its shortcomings. Apologies such as the Lady’s sit outside the text they apologise for, framing it, but not altering it; as paratexts they are forced to recognise the conventions that ring-fence the field of travel writing just before the text proper proceeds to cross them. As such there is an implicit divide between the Lady who sits demurely within her paratext and the Lady within the text itself, she who nonetheless writes. Maintaining Siegel’s ‘decorum of indecorum’ means occupying a subjective-position that is always slightly ambivalent and perhaps subject to slippage. The Lady’s text seems aware of this when, for example, she presumes to discuss politics with her sole male correspondent: ‘but a truce with politics, they ill become a woman’s pen; and I know not a more ridiculous character than a petticoat pedant, or politician. Nevertheless, being on the spot [. . .]’ (Anon 2010: 22). Such equivocal deference may be typical of the Lady’s ‘simultaneously self-confident and self-deprecating’ style (Wenner 2010: xiii), but this particular example also illustrates an interesting ambiguity in the gendering of her position. Indecorum is precisely the metaphor at work here, as a woman’s offering political opinion seems to entail a kind of sartorial exposure that quickly re-asserts the limitations of her gender. Yet the Lady gives her opinion anyway, appealing to the fact that she is ‘on the spot’. This belies her feminine deference by implicitly laying claim to the primary credential for published travel writing of this nature: a capacity for worthwhile and communicable personal experience and observation.

Such examples suggest that early women travel writers were capable of outmanoeuvring the limitations that could be (self)-imposed upon their texts.[[101]](#footnote-101) Their careful management of the ‘decorum of indecorum’ allowed them to be ambiguously positioned between public and private writing, authority and deference. This is the position Piozzi’s inherits as a travel writer and it is her management of it that makes her text so important. Though she refuses the more overt limitations associated with female authorship, she is able to explore and exploit its ambiguities in a text that, as its title indicates, is both an observation of and reflection upon the practice of Grand Tourism.[[102]](#footnote-102)

**Entangled embodiment: Hester Piozzi’s ‘sepulchral tour’**

Piozzi’s careful management of her gendered authorship is visible from the outset of her text as she too provides a paratextual apology, but one that operates very differently to its predecessors. Piozzi does not excuse her writing on account of gender (no explicit reference is made to this) yet her awareness of the conventions expected of her as a woman writer and of the strategies employed by her predecessors is made clear in her refusal of them:

I have not thrown my thoughts into the form of private letters; because a work of which truth is the best recommendation, should not above all others begin with a lie. My old acquaintance rather chose to amuse themselves with conjectures, than to flatter me with tender enquiries during my absence: our correspondence then would not have been any amusement to the Public. (Piozzi 1789: I.vi-vii)

Piozzi’s careful framing of her reasons for rejecting the literary convention of the “private” text are as important as her doing so. In making ‘truth’ the fulcrum of her decision she establishes her own capacity to offer an accurate account whilst asserting that this is enabled, rather than hindered, by her standing outside the conventions that structure her genre. Her travelogue is not a series of personal letters, it is a direct address to ‘the Public’.[[103]](#footnote-103) Yet this assertion of an authority that transcends the gendered conventions of women’s travel writing is itself derived from Piozzi’s own ambiguous position as a woman traveller – something her preface makes overt reference to.

Piozzi travelled to Italy following her controversial second marriage to the Italian painting instructor, Gabriel Piozzi. The journey was both a honeymoon and – in some sense – a period of exile from a social circle (including Samuel Johnson) who scorned her decision. This is what Piozzi refers to as the ‘conjectures’ of her ‘old acquaintance’ and which is part of the reason, she claims, for her being unfit to present an epistolary correspondence. Paradoxically then, Piozzi addresses the ‘Public’ as an authoritative travel writer with a ‘truth’-ful account of the Grand Tour, because she is a woman who has scandalised and become isolated from society and its reading public. It is this property – established at the outset as a frame for Piozzi’s text – that makes the *Observations and Reflections* an important intervention in the writing of continental travel, the work of an author who refuses to defer and downplay her authority as a travel writer, but who is nonetheless a potentially ambiguous participant in the Tour.

One of the correspondences Piozzi did exchange during her tour describes the rumour that she herself had been subjected to the treatment of a classic Gothic heroine, a story that ‘Mr. Piozzi has shut me up in a convent’ (qtd in McCarthy 1985: 39). This was, of course, untrue, but the *Observations* is nonetheless peculiarly conscious of a vulnerable embodiment that is not typical of the literary tour.[[104]](#footnote-104) It is through this consciousness that a sense of the Gothic becomes apparent in the text and begins to accumulate as a modification of the imaginative geography it describes. This happens, in part, because Piozzi – as an unconventional participant in the Grand Tour – maintains a critical consciousness of the conventions that structure it and which would normally mediate more problematic aspects of a traveller’s experience, including encounters with the “Gothic”.

Scholarship on the *Observations* has often observed aspects of its revisionary strength; Piozzi’s was a text shaped by a consciousness of other texts and prepared for publication through a process informed by research into existing travelogues, the reading and re-reading of which was key to Piozzi’s own situation of herself as a travel writer (McCarthy 1985: 156, 149; D’Ezio 2010: 70).[[105]](#footnote-105) For McCarthy, this highly reflexive approach means that “*Observations* is about the postures that one may adopt towards one's experiences [. . .] specifically it is about the postures that have been adopted by Piozzi's predecessors” (150). Marianna D’Ezio makes a similar statement when she describes the *Observations and Reflections* as being both an ‘entrance into, and challenge to, the travel literature canon’ (D’Ezio 2010: 6). This is visible early in her first volume as Piozzi offers an irreverent allusion to the travel performances of conventional Grand Tour accounts, remarking that: ‘counting churches, pictures, palaces, may be done by those who run from town to town, with no impression made but upon their bones’ (Piozzi 1789: I.66). The regular progress across acculturating objects described in accounts such as Addison’s produces no real effect on the traveller who dutifully enumerates the contents of town after town. In this way Piozzi promptly announces her ‘emancipation from the classical male traveller’ (D’Ezio 2010: 68).

Instead of re-treading such conventional descriptive and enumerative routes then, Piozzi’s is a text in which ‘observations’ are invariably accompanied by their corresponding ‘reflections’; in which the act of making judgements is itself a subject of reflective scrutiny. Indeed, as Dussinger writes, ‘it is usually the subjective state of perceiving or recollecting rather than the objects themselves that is uppermost in the narrative’ of Piozzi’s tour (Dussinger 1992: 46).[[106]](#footnote-106) Piozzi also draws repeated attention to the *difficulty* of accurate observation and description. It is not simply that Piozzi adopts an alternative to more conventional forms of Grand Tourism; her text is also a more critical scrutiny of the claims to accuracy, coherence and objectivity that underpin the Tour’s imaginative geography: a travelogue in which the “act of sight-seeing” that forms the basis of the tourist’s travel performance repeatedly “thwarts the effort at totalizing the reflections on the experience” (Dussinger 1992: 52). Numerous examples of this are visible within the text, which continually reflects on the difficulty not only of making accurate observations, but of assembling them intothe kind of confident aggregate record of meaningful and acculturating experience that defines the travel performances of Grand Tourism in the tradition of Addison and others.

Recording a disappointed expectation, Piozzi muses that ‘a search after truth requires such patience, such penetration, and such learning, that it is no wonder she is so seldom got a glimpse of’. This comment on the difficulty of correct observation might simply affirm the elite status of the Tour and the superiority of travellers of sufficient cultural calibre, were it not immediately followed by a more general reflection. Even the best traveller:

Is so confounded by different explanations of the same thing recurring at every turn, so sickened with silly credulity on the one hand, and so offended with pertness and phyrronism on the other, that it is fairly rendered impossible for one to keep clear of prejudices, while the steady resolution to do so becomes itself a prejudice. (Piozzi 1789: II.115)

There are echoes of Johnson’s frustration with Scottish history and oral testimony here as Piozzi struggles to sort information into an authoritative judgement. A conventional Grand Tourist like Addison (or even a Picturesque tourist like Gilpin) can mediate such conflict by keeping in sight a projected ideal and dismissing alternative (and incapable) testimony. For Piozzi, the dismissal of intervening ‘prejudices’ in attention to a truth posited by the traveller, is itself a source of ‘prejudice’.

Such comments exemplify the disjunction between observation and reflection that Dussinger astutely observes as a hallmark of Piozzi’s text (Dussinger 1992: 52). They also go further than this in identifying a failing within conventional travel performances that do not reflect on such issues. This is a problem concerned with the act of travel writing itself:

Descriptions are so fallacious [. . .] either well-chosen words do not present themselves, or being well-chosen they detain the reader, and fix his mind on them, instead of the things described. (Piozzi 1789: I.25)

Not only is the traveller’s selection of appropriate material a kind of ‘prejudice’, the reification of that material in the form of the travelogue and the imaginative geography it constructs is a further level of interposition or distortion.

This critique of the conventional postures and performances of the Grand Tour complements Piozzi’s position as a female Grand Tourist who, in any case, is ambiguously situated in relation to them. At times, the two aspects are fused, as Piozzi’s finds opportunities of critique from outside the positions she cannot quite occupy. Just as her preface firmly places her narration beyond the pseudo-private shelter of an epistolary construct, so too do episodes in the narrative itself explore the critical opportunities afforded to a writer who, on account of her gender, is ambivalently situated in relation to the postures and perspectives of Grand Tourism. This is exemplified when Piozzi describes her attempt to view a renowned Venetian painting and participate, thereby, in the conventional travel performance of the Grand Tourist, taking stock of the acculturating materials that define regions within the Tour’s imaginative geography. The picture is ‘kept in a refectory’ to which ‘no woman could be admitted’ and Piozzi must therefore remain outside under the supervision of a monk by whom her ‘entreaties for admission’ are ‘completely disregarded’ whilst ‘the gentlemen [visit] the convent without molestation’. The episode is interesting because it begins to involve aspects of the Gothic in Piozzi’s critical appraisal of the Tour. As demonstrated in Chapter One, Catholic sites such as this are incorporated within more conventional eighteenth-century tour accounts but, as the analysis of Addison demonstrates, they are easily mediated there. Addison’s account of a site such as Piozzi’s refectory would dismiss the intervening screen of Catholic superstition and penetrate through to the artwork whose appraisal affirms the superiority of the English traveller. Piozzi cannot do this and her account represents this failure in a manner that re-invigorates the Gothic potential of such a site; this is a space controlled by monks, deaf to ‘entreaties’, in which the female traveller cannot operate ‘without molestation’.

Piozzi’s description develops the episode further. If she is content to ‘put on men’s clothes’ the female traveller may be allowed access to the artwork ‘though all of them would know me’. This is disdained in terms that echo the prefaratory refusal to adopt an analogous epistolary disguise for her text:

If such slight gratifications [. . .] can be purchased no cheaper than by violating truth in one’s own person [. . .] it were better surely to die without having procured to one’s self such frivolous enjoyments. (Piozzi 1789: I.172)

The value-system of the Grand Tour is overturned here as its acculturating objects become less interesting to the traveller’s gaze than the conventions that mediate access to them. It is made apparent that the confident organisation and appraisal of sites (or sights) such as this – and the negation of any Gothic unease they might anticipate or provoke – is contingent upon a particular subject-position. This subject-position is as exclusionary as the demands of the Catholic system it ignores, precisely because it can ignore them: it is designed for and dependent upon a particular kind of traveller. Piozzi makes it clear that this *is* but one possible perspective whose defining objects, far from being central, are ‘slight’ and ‘frivolous’. Her refusal to approach the object from the supposed safety of a sham-masculinity develops this further. To cross-dress would affirm her disempowerment: staging the female spectator as a spectacle herself, with undertones of ‘violation’. As such Piozzi’s authority as a (female) observer would suffer more from her cross-dressing than from being denied a sight of the artwork itself. This sense of anxious embodiment in a gallery space will provide an important context for Radcliffe, whose Emily also finds herself positioned as a vulnerable spectacle within Venice and in the eponymous Castle Udolpho that lies not so far beyond it. Meanwhile, as the description of her Venetian experience indicates, the Gothic is increasingly visible as a part of Piozzi’s own travelling consciousness, re-entering the text at those points where more confident (or less reflective) accounts of the tour would dismiss it.

This use of a Gothic imagination is often quite explicit – investing the Grand Tour with tropes derived from contemporary fiction. Like Johnson in his *Western Isles*, Piozzi wrote at a time when the Gothic was already becoming visible as a discourse and imaginative nexus within eighteenth-century culture and she herself was to be an appreciative reader of popular Gothic fictions in the 1790s and early-nineteenth century.[[107]](#footnote-107) When Piozzi published her travelogue in 1789 many of the most famous of these works had yet to be written, yet her *Observations* already demonstrates an awareness of the Gothic mode. Just as her friend and correspondent Johnson refers to ‘the fictions of the Gothick romances’ in his 1775 tour, so too can Piozzi describe a particularly unprepossessing inn in 1789 as a ‘haunted hall where Sir Bertrand or Sir Rowland might feel proud of their courage’ (Johnson 1775: 174; Piozzi 1789: I.177). In and of itself this illustrates the extent to which the Gothic imagination developed in other texts – such as travelogues – in parallel with the fictional tradition that, via Radcliffe, subsequently drew upon them. It is a central claim of this study that travel writing is a particularly important site for this, precisely because of its central concern with locating and managing material such as the Gothic within the imaginative geography constructed by and for eighteenth-century culture and its writing. So, just as Smith’s early fiction is able to call upon a vocabulary for addressing the Gothic within the Picturesque, Radcliffe’s is able to draw upon a consciousness of the Gothic within European landscapes, developed in writing such as Brydone’s, Swinburne’s and Piozzi’s. What makes Piozzi’s consciousness of the Gothic so significant is its incorporation into her text’s revisionary and critical attitude to its genre and the travel performances it records.

For a traveller such as Addison, the imaginative geography of the Grand Tour is constructed in a layered manner. The correctly prepared and culturally equipped traveller penetrates through the intervening screen of the terrain’s modernity in search of an acculturating ideal only he is correctly equipped to access and appraise. The materials commonly associated with the Gothic imagination are located – if recognised at all – within this intervening layer; the distinction is always clear and effectively hierarchical. Piozzi neither occupies this position nor has faith in its operation. As the Venetian convent indicates, hers is not the personae of the conventional traveller exploring Italy as archive. Meanwhile, she refuses to imitate or even entirely endorse the processes of appraisal employed by such travel writing and recorded in the texts it produces. For Piozzi ‘description tangles, not communicates, the sensations imbibed upon the spot’ (Piozzi 1789: I.58). Entanglement is a recurrent concern in her tour, where the robust ordering of other travellers is not possible. It is this motif that shapes her consciousness of the Gothic and its relationship with the traveller.

So, when Piozzi comes to consider the relationship between the Tour’s neo-classical focus and the Gothic materials that must also be encountered she does so explicitly, through an architectural metaphor:

Gothic and Grecian architecture resembles Gothic and Grecian manners [. . .] tyranny and gloomy suspicion are the characteristics of the one, openness and sociability strongly mark the other [. . .] to the gay portico succeeded the sullen drawbridge, and to the lively corridor, a secret passage and a winding staircase. (Piozzi 1789: I.126)

The materials of the Gothic and its spaces are easily imagined within this landscape and its present spaces. What is more they have succeeded the classical materials that should be the descriptive focus of the tour. They are very much in the way and, in this account, they appear to remain so. Instead of desubstantiating or dismissing the Gothic as an Addisonian traveller might, Piozzi is drawn into a meditation upon its unsettling scope and survivability:

It is difficult, if not impossible [. . .] to withhold one’s respect from those barbarians who could thus change the face of art, almost of nature; who [. . .] left behind them too a settled system of feudatorial life and aristocratic power, still undestroyed in Europe. (Piozzi 1789: I.126)

In place of the insubstantial blemish presented in Addison’s strategic responses, Piozzi identifies the Gothic with resilience and an integral incorporation in the travelled terrain which its presence fundamentally, rather than transiently, reconfigures; viewing the landscape as a classical archive cannot be done without acknowledging the Gothic property that is resiliently entangled with it.

This consciousness of an active and robustly irrefutable Gothic content on the Tour manifests in more disconcerting ways when its ‘entanglement’ with the landscape and its objects threatens the perspective and even the person of the traveller. This is present to a degree in Piozzi’s account of the Venetian convent, but is made more explicit at other times. Like other travellers, Piozzi describes the presence of poverty in European cities. In other texts these may be briefly noted as indicators of relative British superiority, yet Piozzi’s description seems fixated upon the animated presence of an embodied poverty the traveller is unable to look past and which, far from receding from view, threatens to upset the person of the travelling spectator.[[108]](#footnote-108) In Paris, near the commencement of her narrative, Piozzi first describes the horrific presence of beggars in terms that echo her sense of the prejudice and futility of an edited and idealised perspective:

Among the objects one would certainly avoid seeing if it were possible, is the deformity of the poor. – Such various modes of warping the human figure [. . .] meet me in this country incessantly. – I have seen them in the galleries and outer- courts even of the palace itself. (Piozzi 1789: I.18)

The point is that it is not possible to avoid these presences and Piozzi’s is a text that records this. Vestiges of an anglocentric critique of European customs are visible here as the beggars are a property of ‘this country’ yet the tourist still cannot wrest her attention from them as each dash returns to expand on a presence rendered suggestively monstrous. Piozzi almost counters this presence by redirecting her and her reader’s gaze towards more affirmative objects - being ‘glad to turn my eyes for relief on the Duke of Orleans’s pictures; a glorious collection!’– yet even here the disturbing presence of ‘warped’ human figures remains entangled with the tourist’s focus: visible in ‘galleries and outer-courts’ (Piozzi 1789: I.18). Subsequent encounters abandon even such equivocal attempts at mediation. In Genoa Piozzi is ‘so beset with beggars’ that it is necessary to be carried in a chair ‘if you are likely to feel shocked at having your knees clasped by a figure hardly human’ (Piozzi 1789: I.60). Fixed as the object of a ‘hardly human’ attention and raised out of the crowd, the traveller herself becomes spectacular just as her gaze is invariably diverted onto the presences that seek a bodily entanglement with her: holding and obstructing her person along with her gaze. Once again the text’s focus is upon Piozzi’s own precarious embodiment and the position of detached and empowered judgement from which other travellers subordinate discordant elements is accordingly annihilated. Elsewhere, at Venice, Piozzi observes that whilst:

Surveying the beauties of the place [. . .] no enjoyment can one obtain for the beggars; numerous beyond credibility [. . .] exhibiting such [. . .] horrible deformities [. . .] that I can hardly believe my eyes’ (Piozzi I.191).

The traveller’s power as an appraiser and organiser is annihilated here by presences that not only screen sights, but undermine vision itself. Later beggars make this even clearer as they ‘torment’ passengers with ‘unextinguishable clamour’ and ‘surround them with sights of horror unfit to be surveyed’ (Piozzi: I.229).

The traveller in Piozzi’s tour is always under-pressure from these Gothically imagined presences, who baffle and disorientate the gaze that organises the Tour’s geography and cannot, therefore, be dismissed by it. The sense of threat to the traveller’s person also surfaces in another of Piozzi’s pre-occupations: the vulnerability – and potential post-mortem mis-treatment – of the traveller’s own body. Florence, for example, is an epitome of the Grand Tour’s acculturating ideal: ‘seat of the arts and literature [. . .] where not a step can be taken without a new or a received idea being added to our store’. At the same time:

This is no good town to take one’s last leave of life in [. . .] the body [. . .] would in twenty- four hours be hoisted up upon a common cart, with those of all the people who died the same day, and [. . .] towards the dusk of evening, would be shot into a hole dug away from the city. (Piozzi 1789: I.329)

The terrain in which the traveller’s privileged subjectivity is affirmed and expanded is also that in which it can be utterly effaced amidst a mass burial in darkness and anonymity. The empowered spectatorship previously affirmed by the town’s aesthetic exhibits is horrifically reversed here as the traveller’s corpse becomes an ignominious spectacle itself, exhibited atop ‘a common cart’ in an open procession. This is then rendered an active, rather than passive, threat as Piozzi ponders ‘the possibility of being buried alive by the excessive haste with which people are catched up and hurried away’ (Piozzi 1789: 330). Again, the traveller cannot maintain herself as a distanced and discerning gaze, but is vulnerably embodied within a landscape that might undertake an assault upon that body. As Piozzi proceeds on through Italy this peculiar sensitivity heightens with the Tour’s idealised landscapes being increasingly registered as mortuary repositories: ambivalent terrains in which the traveller’s search for acculturating material is bountifully provided for at the same time as their own position within and progress through the landscape is made vulnerable, threatened with being dragged out of its proper trajectory into a premature end.

At Rome, for example, Piozzi is confronted with the site that travellers such as Addison placed at the Grand Tour’s acculturating epicentre. As discussed in Chapter One, Addison’s approach to the city quickly clears away intervening layers to lay bare its classical archive for the traveller’s discussion. Yet, whereas Addison’s is a resilient classical Rome approached through its own ancient authors, Piozzi’s ‘first view of Rome’ incorporates lines from Robert Merry’s recent ‘Ode on a Distant Prospect of Rome.’ She quotes this elegiac work to describe the city’s ‘wrecks of ancient times! / Proud monuments of ages past / Now mould’ring in decay’ (qtd. in Piozzi 1789: I.379).[[109]](#footnote-109) By using his contemporary poetry as a lens through which to view Rome, Piozzi presents it not as the Grand Tourist’s classical ideal, but as it actually appeared – at least in sentimentalised terms – to travellers such as herself. Viewed through Merry’s lines, Rome’s classical heritage is not present as a resplendent and resilient model, but is decayed – ‘mould’ring” like another ambiguous body. What travellers in the tradition of Addison see as a standard resource for modern achievement is suggestively reconfigured as an emblem – and source – of sickness. These connotations of Merry’s verse are made explicit in Piozzi’s own descriptions of the city and surrounding region. First Rome’s physical fabric appears to be unsettlingly imbued with the ambiguously placed bodies that continue to possess Piozzi’s tour:

Every step one treads is upon the bones of martyrs; and who dares say that the surrounding campagna, so often drenched in innocent blood, may not have been cursed with pestilence and sterility to all succeeding ages? (Piozzi 1789: I.381)

The landscape here is not a vital archive, but a mortuary repository that records and perpetuates the presence and possibility of death: projecting it into the present and threatening the health of travellers. This is epitomised as Piozzi turns her attention to the statues whose forms fascinated Addison with their potential for lasting inspiration as objects of contemplation and models for imitation. In Piozzi’s description, this inexhaustibility is replayed, but becomes disconcerting as ‘every hour and day digs up dead worthies’ whilst ‘the unwholesome weather must surely send many of the living ones to their ancestors’ (Piozzi 1789: I.413). Rome, the Grand Tour’s archival centre is re-imagined as a mass-grave and the recovery of the city’s cultural resources becomes a horrific re-animation of dead bodies whose place may be taken by the very travellers who seek to regard them; the parallels between this experience and that of a Radcliffean heroine are already highly suggestive. However, Piozzi’s description not only offers another instance of the traveller’s precarious relationship with a landscape configured as a repository of bodies such as her own; it also presents a meditation upon the travel performances associated with Grand Tourism itself. The tour’s essential function as a privileged means of accessing and culturally leveraging a vital idealisation of the landscape and its past is re-presented as a meditation upon death by a traveller who is never safely abstracted from the objects of her observation but is instead always vulnerably embodied amongst them.

The apogee of this preoccupation within Piozzi’s tour – and its function as a vehicle of critique – comes when she visits the ruins of Pompeii, which had been made available to travellers following their discovery in 1748. Earlier eighteenth-century tourists such as Addison would presumably have embraced this opportunity to examine the ancient city’s remarkably well preserved remains yet later travellers in Italy were more ambivalent in their responses to Pompeii. As Sophie Thomas has observed, this site seemed to upset the kinds of chronological clarity and organisation upon which earlier travel performances and accounts (such as Addison’s) depended. The ‘sense of walking back into the past’ is accompanied for these visitors by “the overwhelming presence of death’. The result is an opportunity that cannot help but unnerve the traveller at the same time as it is offered to them: ‘time is, on the one hand suspended [. . .] while on the other, the very transience of time is captured’ (Thomas 2008: 50). The experience Thomas describes as being typical of later tourists’ responses to sites like Pompeii is already characteristic of Piozzi, for whom the objects of interest to a travelling subject are so often entangled with a sense of that subjectivity’s vulnerability and the threat of its collapse into the terrain itself.[[110]](#footnote-110) Accordingly, Piozzi’s response to Pompeii fully articulates its disconcerting potential in a manner that typifies her text:

How dreadful are the thoughts which such a scene suggests! How very horrible the certainty, that such a scene may be all acted over again tomorrow; and that we, who today are spectators, may become spectacles to travellers of a succeeding century, who mistaking our bones for those of the Neopolitans, may carry some of them to their native country back again perhaps; as it came into my head a French gentleman was doing [. . .] I hoped he had got the jaw of a Gaulish officer, instead of a Roman soldier, for future reflections to energise upon. (Piozzi 1789: II.35-36)

The example makes the precarious link between the traveller and their objects explicit as the positions of empowered spectator and appropriated or manipulated spectacle are caught up here in a perpetual slippage. Crucially, this is presented as a revisionist critique of the tradition Piozzi moves within and the genre that reifies it; Piozzi’s sense of the traveller’s own vulnerable embodiment is displayed along with her contempt for those whose typical and unreflective travel performances are unable to achieve such self-consciousness. Though Pompeii is unique amongst the sites Piozzi visits, it functions as an emblem for her revision of the Grand Tour’s imaginative geography and for the prevailing consciousness of potential slippages from privileged subject to vulnerable embodied object therein. Sites such as Florence, Rome or Pompeii are all simultaneously archives of acculturating plenitude and aporias into which the traveller herself may collapse and be annihilated amongst the bodies that also constitute them. Approaching the end of her text Piozzi informs her reader that ‘my sepulchral tour is nearly finished’ (Piozzi 1789: II.357). This refers, dryly, to the many tombs and funeral monuments Piozzi has visited as a dutiful Grand Tourist, yet it also serves to admit those broader pre-occupations that have indeed characterised her tour as ‘sepulchral’: conscious of an ambivalent geography, with Gothic undertones, in which the materials of acculturation are invariably entangled with something more unnerving.

It is this prevailing consciousness that makes Piozzi’s travelogue significant as an intertext for writers such as Radcliffe. *Observations* is a text that recognises explicit and implicit features of the Gothic entangled with the more familiar imaginative geography of eighteenth-century Grand and continental Tourism. As such it is a text that presents these landscapes and their objects as an apposite arena for the play of a Gothic imagination. More than this though, and for all its success as another popular tour-book, Piozzi’s *Observations* already presents a version of a Gothic experience that is recognisable to readers of Radcliffe and her contemporaries. On a basic level, its landscapes anticipate Radcliffe’s for the simple reasons that they are filled with and made up of ambivalent bodies, whether real or imaginary and that they function as arenas in which a travelling “protagonist” is always sensitive to her own bodily vulnerability. The presence or suspicion of ambiguous and alarming bodies in the travelled landscape and its interior sites is a hallmark of Radcliffean Gothic, but so too is the experience of precarious *embodiment* key to its presentation of ‘travelling heroinism.’ In *A Sicilian Romance*, Julia may appreciate the aesthetic appeal and affective power of the landscapes she traverses, but she is always aware of her actual or potential status as a vulnerable body within those same landscapes – particularly when they are viewed from the vantage of her pursuers. Piozzi’s sense of the Gothic as inextricably enmeshed with the field of contemporary travel, may also have already informed Radcliffe’s second novel on a broader level, with its own strategic dismantling of the divide between these two fields and interpolated critique of authoritative “masculine” travel. Only a year separates Piozzi’s *Observations* from Radcliffe’s second novel. She may well have drawn upon Piozzi along with specifically Sicilian travelogues when focussing on the resolutely ‘still to be seen’ character of the region’s Gothic and the contrast between the attitudes and experiences of male and female travellers that, as Chapter Three demonstrated, underpins her first fictional rendition of European travel.

Radcliffe next moves from the peripheries of touring travel to its heartland in continental Europe. Here she explores a Piozzian awareness of vulnerable embodiment across regions that, like her Sicily, invest the imaginative geographies of contemporary tourism with a resilient Gothic presence. Just as the preceding chapters have seen Radcliffe commence her career in a Scotland and Sicily made potentially Gothic by travel writing of the 1770s and early 1780s, revisionary texts like Piozzi’s help open up continental Europe to a similar re-imagination as Radcliffe establishes the Gothic within the heartland of continental tourism and its accompanying print culture.

Within Radcliffe’s next two novels, travel predominates more extensively than in either of her early works and does so in a manner that is recognisably that of the practice and print-culture associated with later eighteenth-century tourism. In *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), characters plan and conduct extensive voyages that are explicitly undertaken for recognisable purposes of leisure or recuperation and follow familiar trajectories, heading south through France towards Switzerland, Italy and the Mediterranean. These are novels that incorporate both the practice and geography of contemporary continental tourism. But they are also, of course, novels within which those elements brush up against the Gothic. This is the big change in Radcliffe’s style – and in the Gothic novel more generally – that commences with *Forest*. No longer do stories begin in the partially ruined castles around whose histories and secrets their narratives will closely revolve. Henceforward the Gothic must be more actively discovered through a process of journeying, undertaken by characters who are travellers in a recognisably contemporary sense. These texts do not construct historical microcosms approached through the library’s carefully de-scribed manuscripts, but nor do they quickly circumscribe the Gothic ruin within the Picturesque, as do the early novels of Smith. Instead theirs are larger worlds within which the Gothic exists “out there,” to be considered, confronted and responded to within the landscape, just as it increasingly did for contemporary travellers. As such they draw upon the experiences and anxieties recorded by travel writers such as those discussed in previous chapters: figures such as Johnson, Brydone and particularly Piozzi, for whom the Gothic is ultimately recognised as an intractable and unavoidable facet of contemporary travel.

The remainder of this chapter will address both *Forest* and *Udolpho* in turn, focussing on the way each locates the Gothic within a version of travel that draws upon the kinds of experience presented in contemporary texts such as Piozzi’s. It will find the Gothic in these novels to be embedded within the experience of travel – and addressed through familiar discourses such as Picturesque aesthetics or the “cultured” tourist’s drive to dismiss Gothic materials as an invalid form of content – but also entangled there in spite of attempts to frame or demarcate it. Instead, such attempts to fix the travelled terrain and exert control over it in spite of this property will appear increasingly ambiguous when undertaken by adversaries, who, like the Marquis de Mazzini in Radcliffe’s second novel, appear to manipulate and misuse the Gothic in their appropriation of power and property. In this way Radcliffe’s fusion of travel experience and Gothic materials in a European context also comes to embody an oblique frame of political reference; the security and certainty of these landscapes becoming less and less certain in a revolutionary context, within which the politics that underpin travel (the stable national oppositions and stereotypes of the Grand Tourist or the paternalistic land-management of the Picturesque estate) are also in flux. At the same time, both *Forest* and *Udolpho* build upon *Sicilian Romance* by incorporating a greater focus upon the experience of travelling heroines who, like contemporary women travellers such as Piozzi, are ambivalently situated in relation to the practice and implicit politics of contemporary tourism and the politics that underpin it.

**‘Upon a Gothic plan’ – anxious travel in *The Romance of the Forest***

Though it has often been upstaged by the commercial success and critical popularity of *Udolpho*, critics have begun to recognise the importance of *Forest* as a defining point in Radcliffe’s oeuvre, ‘the work in which [she] truly arrives as a novelist’ and to associate this with the way in which it ‘assimilates’ the ‘discourse’ (Dekker 2004: 103) of contemporary travel. For Diane Long Hoeveler, indeed, the novel is ‘Radcliffe’s attempt to rewrite the Picturesque and travel genres’ (Hoeveler 2014: 101). Hoeveler’s own analysis is more concerned with the way in which the novel’s famous abbey intersects with an anti-catholic current in ‘popular Romantic textuality’, but her comment speaks well to the extent of Radcliffe’s incorporation of materials from the practice and print culture of contemporary travel – and the extent to which this is a considered and strategic process.

Unlike *Sicilian Romance*, *Forest* does not use a framing prologue to associate its story with the imaginative geographies of contemporary tourism. This is because it does not need to. From the outset, Radcliffe’s third novel is concerned with continental travel, beginning with the journey taken south from Paris by the La Mottes and Adeline. Though this first voyage is of an anxious and fugitive nature – commencing at midnight, in fear of both pursuers and banditti – its wider context is commensurate with that of a more familiar Grand Tourism. The period, established by Radcliffe’s reference to Guyot de Piteval’s *Causes Celebres* (1734), is not the vague medieval time of the first two novels, but that of the mid-seventeenth-century: contemporary with the institution of Grand Tourism itself, as recorded in early travelogues such as Addison’s 1705 *Remarks*. Chloe Chard has also observed the degree to which the novel includes other episodes and characters that are explicitly modelled on eighteenth-century leisure travel, including Adeline’s journeys to Nice with the La Lucs and her encounters with characters such as M. Armand and M. Verneuil, both ‘making their own versions of the Grand Tour’ (Chard 1986: xx). Taken as a whole, in fact, the series of journeys recounted in *Forest* correspond more or less exactly with a slightly truncated Grand Tour trajectory: beginning in northern and central France, before proceeding south through parts of Switzerland and Savoy into northern Italy and the edge of the Mediterranean. The novel’s Gothic materials and centrepieces are also arranged in a manner that makes sense within this travel context. Its most famous site is, of course, the partially ruined Abbey of Fontainville, a structure that speaks to the Gothic ruins beloved of the scenic tour, yet the Marquis de Montalt’s Chateau also blends the Gothic with the trappings of contemporary travel. Its proprietor is both the primary Gothic villain and a ‘prototypical Man of Taste’ (Bohls 1995: 89) whose collections of classical sculpture, Ovidian frescoes and Etruscan vases all associate him with the acculturation of contemporary Mediterranean tourism; a process of spectacular appropriation that threatens to encompass the heroine herself. That the modern, neo-classical, chateau, furnished with the trappings of the Grand Tour, can thus become, in experiential terms, the most disturbingly “Gothic” space in the novel – the only site at which the heroine’s person is directly threatened or from which she is forced into panicked flight – speaks to a central concern in *Forest* with the Gothic’s framing and definition, now that it is part of the landscapes and culture of “contemporary” travel. This question is first raised with the arrival of the La Motte party at the ruined abbey.

Here Radcliffe immediately establishes a tension between the conventions of scenic tourism and the subjective experience of La Motte himself, the “traveller” who glimpses the ruin in the distance and who proceeds to appraise it. At first the accoutrements of a Picturesque aesthetic seem present, in the ‘spreading trees’ by which the building is ‘overshadowed’ in the manner of a side-screen, or the way it is ‘thickly enwreathed with ivy’ that breaks up and varies its outline. Yet, rather than being aesthetically becalmed by this evidence of its temporal subjection, the ruin is actually ‘more awful in decay’. Radcliffe’s description of the structure’s ‘lofty battlements’ and ‘huge fragments’ invests it with a weight and consequence that consigns La Motte himself to the role, not of a framing appraiser, but a small figure in the foreground: hesitantly approaching the ‘Gothic gate’. The historical stasis, native to the Picturesque, is further disturbed as La Motte observes the ‘pride of Monkish devotion’ in the ‘fragments of stained glass’ above him before ‘thinking it possible’ that the abbey ‘might yet shelter some human being’ and knocking accordingly on the intact gate (Radcliffe 1986: 15). The conventional dismissal of historical Catholicism is thus undercut by the uneasy implication that the structure might yet be occupied, as if Gilpin’s dismissive correlation of Tintern’s beggars with the indolence of former times were to be turned on its head by the real presence of such inhabitants.[[111]](#footnote-111)

As La Motte ventures into the abbey proper, the tension between its status as a Picturesque ruin or a more disturbing locus of Gothic affect becomes more pronounced. La Motte’s composure and control as an onlooker seems briefly restored as a ‘window, more perfect than the rest’ opens ‘upon a long vista of the forest’ revealing ‘the rich colour of evening’ decorating a prospect neatly framed by the dark hills which ‘closed the perspective’ (Radcliffe 1986: 16). This pleasing act of scenic framing is a revealing insight into what a “traveller” like La Motte seeks at such a site: a platform from which to order and possess landscape – speaking to the vicarious appropriation of property that underpins the Picturesque.[[112]](#footnote-112) It cannot be sustained however, as Radcliffe refuses to allow her protagonist to identify with an empowered gaze, outside the frame he finds or erects. Instead the view through the abbey window is itself framed by La Motte’s own anxious embodiment. The ‘sound of his steps’ brings to mind ‘the mysterious accents of the dead’ whose ‘reproving’ of his ‘sacrilegious’ presence sustains the uneasy proximity of the abbey’s history, even as it proves actually deserted. Following the brief pause at the window, La Motte’s self-consciousness as a particularised, vulnerable presence *within* the ruin returns. The ‘comparison between himself’ and his decayed surroundings is ‘too obvious and affecting’ and the silence and stasis of the ruin is accordingly broken by La Motte’s own admission that:

“I shall become like the mortals on whose reliques I now gaze, and, like them too, I may be the subject of meditation to a succeeding generation, which shall totter but a little while over the object they contemplate, ere they also sink into dust”. (Radcliffe 1986: 16)

Such a response to the ruin is anathema to the temporal confidence and affective restraint of the Picturesque, collapsing the progress of history and the superiority of enlightened futurity onto a temporal plane in which all ages alike are indistinguishable, functioning for each other only as identical *memento mori*. It looks back to the meditations of the traveller in Radcliffe’s *Sicilian Romance* prologue, who is dislodged from a framing perspective by the consciousness that they and their generation shall ‘alike pass away and be forgotten’ (Radcliffe 1993: 1). This parallel between Radcliffe’s literal and implicit travellers further indicates the degree to which La Motte also occupies the position and employs the discourse of a “contemporary” traveller rendered anxious by Gothic sites and materials that undermine characteristic postures of detached judgement and critique. The most obvious analogue for such responses is Piozzi, whose travelogue is freighted with the consciousness of its author’s ambiguous embodiment – and encounters with ambiguous bodies – and (as the epigraphs for this chapter indicate) whose response to the remains at Pompeii is strikingly similar in tone and implication to La Motte’s statement within the ruins of Fontainville. Like La Motte, Piozzi draws specific attention not merely to the passing of generations, but to the inevitable and successive movement of travellers from observer to object: ‘the certainty [. . .] that we, who today are spectators, may become spectacles to travellers of a succeeding century’ (Piozzi 1789: II.35-36). For both “travellers” the encounter with the Gothic (and its real or imagined bodies) upsets the historical confidence of contemporary Grand or Picturesque tourists, both of whose characteristic perspectives are underpinned by a chronology of distinct and successive cultural and political epochs. The close parallel between La Motte and Piozzi’s responses increases the likelihood that Radcliffe had read the *Observations and Reflections* before composing her first novel with a continental setting and that what she found there enhanced the more limited sense of anxious embodiment inspired by the Gothic ruin in the prologue to *A Sicilian Romance*.

A key feature of the *Forest* episode is its emphasis on La Motte’s subjective and embodied anxiety, struggling to retain the more dispassionate judgement that should define the traveller’s relationship with their world. What the introduction to Fontainville makes clear, however, is the difficulty of encompassing that Gothic within the framing strategies employed by contemporary travellers; La Motte’s drive to view and possess his objects is simultaneously revealed and undermined. This is a world, like that of Piozzi’s travelogue, in which the Gothic is a robust and entangled presence, exerting a decentring affect in spite of attempts to frame and delimit it. The episodes at the abbey go on to form an extended meditation upon this difficulty, internalising and extending the encounter with the Gothic ruin in the prologue to *A Sicilian Romance*. In doing so they maintain a focus upon the subjective experience of characters – La Motte in particular – and the strategies they themselves employ to decipher and delimit the Gothic within the world of travel.

It soon becomes apparent that there is more to the abbey than the ruined hall in which La Motte experiences the affective anxiety described above. As the travellers move into the structure they find improved and added sections ‘of a much later date’. These appear to have been built ‘in modern times upon a Gothic plan’, though, as La Motte himself remarks, their style is incongruous and their decoration ‘not strictly Gothic’ (Radcliffe 1986: 20). This surprising turn of events further embeds the world of *Forest* in that of a contemporary period in which, as Dale Townshend has shown, the improvement and alteration of Gothic architecture was a crucial and contested nexus of the developing Gothic imagination (see Townshend 2011). Such issues were particularly visible in the arena of late eighteenth-century travel and the Picturesque which was deeply ambivalent about the architectural alteration of ruins and their incorporation into modern, landscaped estates. As discussed in Chapter One, this spoke to a covert anxiety in the Picturesque concerning the political re-animation of sites that needed to be distanced and emblematic and an over-familiarity that threatened to overflow and perhaps indict the scenic tourist’s own carefully managed appropriation of the Gothic ruin. By revealing her ruined abbey’s partly altered and improved state then, Radcliffe is able to advance beyond the simpler exploration of the anti-Picturesque ruin in *A Sicilian Romance.* La Motte’s arrival at the abbey makes it clear that, here too, is a Gothic site that will not be easily reconciled to the Picturesque, but this becomes much more nuanced in the sequences that follow. Here Radcliffe constructs a more three-dimensional exploration of the way Gothic sites were situated and debated in the world of contemporary travel that informs her novel. The remains of Fontainville offer a physical metaphor for the work of the Picturesque frame upon the Gothic, but also gesture towards the anxieties that inhabit it; functioning as an architectural palimpsest in which a “layer” of modern, aesthetic or political manipulation has been superimposed upon the “real” history of the original structure beneath.

La Motte and his family choose to occupy the newer apartments. In doing so, they invest in and perpetuate this co-option and manipulation of the Gothic as the aesthetic property of the landowner and the traveller who imitates him. This is very literally the case, in fact, as La Motte – the fugitive “traveller” – has now come to occupy the Gothic property that, as the narrative will reveal, has been thus improved in order to serve as a hunting lodge for the Marquis de Montalt. La Motte has already demonstrated his credentials as an aficionado of the Picturesque frame and his comments on the accuracy and taste of the abbey’s alterations echo the judgements of a tourist like Gilpin. During the party’s residence at Fontainville he will therefore act out the dreams of vicarious ownership that underpin the practice of late eighteenth-century scenic tourism. The La Mottes’ first night in their new apartments find them enjoying the ‘*leisure* to laugh at their late terrors’ (Radcliffe 1986: 21 [emphasis added]) and this conversion of the Gothic into a space of recreation and enjoyment persists as their stay continues. Though La Motte is ostensibly using the Abbey as shelter out of necessity, his attitude to it soon incorporates a more elaborate discourse of proprietorship and landed leisure, commensurate with the Abbey’s improved purpose as a recreational seat and thoroughly removed from its affective capacity as a Gothic space. In fact, the Abbey’s scenic prospects are appraised almost as quickly as its ability to provide shelter and subsistence. La Motte is first put off by ‘the desolation of the spot’, but this reservation, which speaks to aesthetic disappointment as much as practical problems, is soon removed as more thorough exploration reveals the site’s “capabilities” (Radcliffe 1986: 23). ‘Desolation’ itself then becomes aestheticised as the Abbey begins to appear as a self-contained and well provisioned estate, whose ‘luxuriant woods’ seem to ‘sequester’ it ‘from the rest of the world’. La Motte’s vision composes these “grounds” into a series of ‘vistas’ and views, bounded by hills and comprising lawns, a winding stream and a ‘broad expanse’ of water with deer grazing in the distance. These are the hallmarks of property, not fugitive refuge and their appeal to La Motte’s sensibilities is quickly indicated in his observing ‘every where a profusion of game’ that will ‘afford him amusement’ as well as food (Radcliffe 1986: 23-25). Such pursuits come to define La Motte’s time at the abbey where, as Dekker observes, he behaves ‘as if on a country holiday’ and ‘spends his mornings fishing and hunting’ (Dekker 2004: 105). Radcliffe also makes it clear that this leisure activity is associated with the broader appropriation of the Abbey’s surrounds as scenic property, as is confirmed when Madame La Motte selects a ‘sitting room’ – a space of feminine leisure corresponding to her husband’s activities – in one of the improved apartments. Here a window admits ‘a prospect of the lawn, and the picturesque scenery of the surrounding woods’ (Radcliffe 1986: 32). With the arrival of La Motte’s son, Louis, this process of proprietorship appears completed as the Abbey, which might have been a ‘mansion of despair’, becomes a ‘palace of pleasure’ and La Motte himself expresses a determination to ‘consider this place my castle’ (Radcliffe 1986: 66, 70).

Radcliffe thus offers the reader a very different version of the usurpation that typically characterises the Gothic site. The La Mottes’ appropriation of the Abbey as the centre of a Picturesque estate plays out a version of the actual uptake of Gothic materials by contemporary landowners and scenic travellers. Radcliffe does more than merely mimic this process, however: she also constructs the Abbey and the La Mottes’ experience of it in a way that challenges such easy appropriation of the Gothic within the landscape of travel. For Townshend, the La Motte party’s decision to ‘limit their architectural endeavours at the Abbey strictly to the renovation and repair of the already improved modern apartments’ itself speaks to the limitations and reservations inherent in such improvements of the Gothic, established, in a manner familiar to contemporary readers, as ‘the stuff of incongruity, inauthenticity and stylistic affection’ (Townshend 2011: 717). Thus, though La Motte invests in the recreational appropriation of the Gothic Abbey, from the outset this process is a compromise and, for all its conversion into a scenic retreat, the Abbey remains a palimpsest in which the different versions of the Gothic push up against each other. Just as La Motte’s refashioning of himself from fugitive to traveller to supposed landed proprietor is always vulnerable to discovery and exposure, so too do the improved sections of the Abbey give way all too easily to the ruined chambers that lie beneath, housing a very different version of the Gothic.

That parallel is important, because it keeps in view the way in which – as for contemporary travellers such as Piozzi – the potency of Gothic materials and experiences is connected with an instability in the detached and authoritative subjectivity adopted by travellers. Crucially, it is when La Motte’s own status as the Abbey’s proprietor is called into question that he encounters its most disturbingly Gothic content: the skeletal remains of Adeline’s father. La Motte makes this discovery whilst searching for a hiding place from officers of the law who are believed to have discovered his refuge. It is into the subterranean apartments that the family then retreats: leaving the improved part of the Abbey ‘as desolate as [they] had found it’ (Radcliffe 1986: 55). The transition is a perfect vehicle for Radcliffe’s questioning of the Picturesque Gothic, revealing it as a provisional manipulation, grounded in the maintenance of a particular subject-position that is itself defined by appropriation and co-option of the Gothic site as a base for its own local authority.

Accordingly, this part of Radcliffe’s novel has been taken up by some of those critics who have addressed the connection between Picturesque aesthetics and Gothic structures. It is discussed in relation to concerns over architectural recovery and improvement by Townshend, as above, and forms the model reading for Michael Charlesworth’s earlier exploration of political uncertainties submerged within the Picturesque appropriation of ecclesiastical ruins. For Charlesworth a lingering guilt accompanies the ‘Protestant Whig hatred of Roman Catholicism’ (and its association with anti-Hanoverian sympathies) and is encoded in the Picturesque response to its remains; which mirrors the political usurpation of the body politic. This finds an outlet in the La Mottes’ encounter with the ancient chambers that ‘drag them back from the comforts of their modern anti-superstional’ attitudes towards ‘the screaming spirits of terror’ (Charlesworth 1994: 75). Charlesworth’s reading helps link *Forest* with the kinds of anxiety that might run beneath the surface of Picturesque discourse, but there is more to Radcliffe’s ruin than an incidental outlet for refracted political catharsis. This is because Radcliffe constructs the Abbey in a way that relates its Picturesque treatment to a much broader question about the Gothic’s framing and positioning within contemporary print culture.

Taking up the ruin as a base for the scenic estate does not mean ignoring and overlooking the Gothic components and affect that it first presents. In fact, as in the practice of contemporary travellers, Fontainville’s Gothic history and potential are subject to a process of careful manipulation that occurs in tandem with the Abbey’s conversion into a Picturesque retreat. Again, La Motte himself is at the centre of this process and what is most fascinatingly about his comments and activities in relation to the site’s Gothic history is the way in which they gesture towards contemporary Gothic fiction and its framing strategies *and* link these to the practice of contemporary travellers.

The first example of this practice occurs during the retreat to the Abbey’s ruined recesses. Before doing so, La Motte marks a chamber in the following manner:

“Oh ye! Whom misfortune may lead to this spot,

Learn that there are others as miserable as yourselves”

P- L- M- a wretched exile, sought within these walls a refuge from persecution, on the 27th of April 1658, and quitted them on the 12th of July in the same year, in search of a more convenient asylum. (Radcliffe 1986: 56)

This inscription is overdetermined with reference to contemporary Gothic *and* travel writing. The exclamatory couplet, before a short history of ‘wretched exile’ and ‘persecution’ within the abandoned ruin, presents a miniature Gothic narrative – one that even possesses an “epigraph” of the sort Radcliffe was herself introducing to the form. Meanwhile, the act of marking sites and objects was itself a familiar practice for contemporary travellers including those on the Grand Tour or the many whose names and dates are still visible upon the ruins of British abbeys and castles today. Radcliffe reinforces this latter association as, within a few pages of La Motte making this inscription at Fontainville, she has his son, Louis, detail the steps that lead him to the Abbey, including the discovery of ‘some scribbling on the glass’ of an Inn. The hand is recognisably La Motte’s, as are the ‘lines’ he has inscribed and which Louis has often heard his father repeat (Radcliffe 1986: 66). La Motte, it seems, is a traveller in the habit of leaving such poetic markers behind him and his inscription at the Abbey seems designed to be associated with this: referencing the practice of contemporary travellers at the same time as it mimics the style of contemporary Gothic narrative. In both respects it is an act of manipulation and control. The inscription is, of course, a fiction – La Motte has not left (and nor, in fact, has his stay at the abbey been particularly ‘wretched’) – but it is also a *Gothic* fiction; mastering the Abbey space means co-opting its Gothic properties for the “traveller’s” own purposes. This is immediately reinforced as La Motte instructs Louis to spread a tale that the Abbey is haunted by ‘some dreadful apparition’: a further act of Gothic fictionalisation that allows La Motte to ‘consider this place my castle’ (Radcliffe 1986: 70). The anxious experience of La Motte’s first encounter with the ruin (in which its supernatural history *does* manifest, imaginatively) is thus replaced with these carefully framed and deployed Gothic narratives so that, like the Picturesque reworking of the Abbey site, the manipulation of its capacity for Gothic affect is an act of control.

But, just as the Abbey’s physical structure presents an uneasy architectural palimpsest, so too is its capacity for Gothic narrative a layered property, in which La Motte’s Gothic forgeries and fictions are vulnerable to the eruption of those genuine histories they unwittingly mirror. After all, the Abbey *has* been the site of real ‘misfortune’ which, in a direct echo of La Motte’s legend, has occurred ‘on this spot’ (Radcliffe 1986: 128). It has also, at least in Adeline’s dreams, begun to be the arena of an apparently supernatural manifestation associated with that history. This submerged Gothic content soon begins to show itself.

Shortly after the family have re-established themselves in the new apartments that La Motte has affirmed as his ‘castle’, Adeline wanders into the older part of the Abbey and discovers the most famous relic of its Gothic history: the manuscript of her father’s imprisonment there. This text is constructed in a way that clearly references the framing strategies employed in contemporary fictions: a re-discovered manuscript history in the manner of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)*¸ The Old English Baron* (1778) or *The Recess* (1783-85) – even going so far as to include the fragmentary elisions and ellipses employed to break up the action in Reeve’s novel. As befits a world constructed of the print culture of contemporary travel, Radcliffe presents its Gothic history in a manner familiar to contemporary readers, internalising the format of the eighteenth-century Gothic tale within her novel. Like the Gothic ruin that houses it, this Gothic text must be encountered and assessed by travellers who are also readers. In this way, *Forest*’s manuscript is – like the ruin – an evolution on the framing of Gothic materials through travel that occurs in *Sicilian Romance*. Just as the Gothic ruin is now subject to a more extensive exploration, so too is its history converted from an occasion for the tale into an object: a text within the text itself. As above, this real Gothic history seems designed to mirror the Gothic fictions put about by La Motte; those obvious parallels once more unsettle the Picturesque version of the Abbey, with its carefully bracketed Gothic affect, that La Motte is attempting to construct and maintain. La Motte’s solution is in keeping with his attitude to the Abbey. Receiving the manuscript from Adeline he dismisses it as ‘a strange romantic story’ and subjects her fears to ‘ridicule’ (Radcliffe 1986: 144). The manuscript history at the centre of Radcliffe’s Gothic *Romance* is thus dismissed as itself a Gothic ‘romance’, catering to a suitably over-excitable female reader. In this way Radcliffe not only has the characters in her Gothic novel produce Gothic fictions, but also has them discuss the fictionality of the Gothic itself. Few better examples could be found to support Robert Miles’s claim that Radcliffe ‘wrote texts that complicated matters by being about themselves, which explored the recesses of the genre she helped create’ (Miles 1994: 141).

Again, there is some precedent for this feature in *A Sicilian Romance* and the Marquis di Mazzini’s invention of an *Otranto-*esque murder and haunting that helps conceal his real crimes. La Motte’s fictionalisation of the Gothic is more developed, however, because it gestures so clearly towards the Gothic’s treatment in a contemporary cultural context. Like his own Gothic fictions, the attempt to identify the manuscript as a ‘romance’ is designed to curtail and dismiss the Abbey’s genuine Gothic history and perpetuate its increasingly tenuous re-appropriation as a scenic retreat. Just as it might be for a contemporary Picturesque tourist like Gilpin, the Abbey’s actual history is to be dismissed as over-indulgence in romantic affect. Of course, as with the attempt to inhabit the aestheticized Gothic chambers in spite of the genuine and more ambiguous structure beneath and beyond them, this manipulation of the Gothic is destined to fail. The arrival of Montalt reconnects the Abbey’s present with its past at the same time as it removes La Motte from his adopted proprietorship to that of a mere ‘tenant’ (Radcliffe 1986: 90). In this way, the Picturesque repurposing of the Gothic ruin is mirrored in the careful manipulation of Gothic narrative. Both are designed to control the Gothic and curtail its affect and both are exposed as such, with La Motte becoming more and more removed from his family in his capacity as a self-interested, self-deceiving and ultimately self-defeating “usurper.”

As well as bringing attention to an active and ambivalent Gothic presence within the topography of the Grand Tour, this manoeuvre also rejects its political and affective framing within the Picturesque. Much in the Fontainville episodes echoes the early fiction of Smith, particularly *Ethelinde* with its own contemporary journey to recover a ruined abbey and estate. Yet, whereas Smith locates a site such as Grasmere Abbey within the parallel orders of aesthetic and political appreciation and management represented by a Sir Edward Newenden, the Picturesque organisation of Radcliffe’s Abbey is a flimsy screen, constructed out of self-interest. As a figure for the contemporary traveller and vicarious landowner, managing the Gothic in the imaginative world of eighteenth-century travel, La Motte is therefore discredited. He becomes a diminished figure, replaced by the Marquis de Montalt whose own original appropriation and manipulation of the Gothic ruin (as an improved hunting lodge, where Picturesque surface attempts to mask Gothic history) his actions have unwittingly mirrored.

Radcliffe’s Abbey is a *piece de resistance* in reflecting and critiquing the Gothic’s management by eighteenth-century writers and readers in a world structured according to the pattern of contemporary travel. She does not stop here, however. If the Abbey episodes systematically expose the impossibility of framing the Gothic within the world of travel, what follows is designed to develop the implications of this. The Gothic is no longer easily restricted to (and within) the Picturesque ruin, with its careful management of narrative and affect, and so Radcliffe follows it out of that site and even further into the world of contemporary travel, as experienced by a very particular kind of contemporary traveller.

Having discredited and rejected the discourse of masculine travel – grounded in the drive towards property ownership and its attendant aesthetics – Radcliffe transfers the narrative to a new perspective: that of the heroine who experiences the same world from a very different point of relationship to it, one informed by the experience of female travel being presented in contemporary writings such as Piozzi’s. [[113]](#footnote-113) The contrast between Adeline and La Motte’s experiences and perspectives is foreshadowed during the Abbey sequences. Tellingly, her first impressions of the surrounding scenery are very different to those of La Motte. He sees a prospect view made up of components – ‘lawn’, ‘stream’ and ‘game’ – fixed within bounded ‘vistas’ centred on the Abbey. She replaces the fixed arrangement of objects with a series of transient effects: the ‘trembling lustre’ (Radcliffe 1986: 23), ‘ruddy glow’ and ‘quickly expanding’ light of the rising sun, ‘vivifying every colour of the landscape’. Instead of ‘profusions’ of game, visible only as stock, Adeline is aware of birds who, though not seen, are present as a ‘chorus’ whose sound breaks ‘the silence’ of the landscape, bringing it into aural as well as visual motion (Radcliffe 1986: 22). By juxtaposing these two contrasting impressions of the Abbey’s surrounds Radcliffe further emphasises the drive to order and appropriate that underpins La Motte’s aesthetic encompassing of the “estate”. She also makes it clear that this is not a strategy Adeline is invested in. The heroine’s gaze does not convert the landscape into a temporally transcendent picture, but appreciates it as it is, in the particular moment; a process that is less about ordering the scene than entering into an affective dialogue with it so that Adeline’s own heart ‘swells’ in tandem with the birdsong she hears. There are strong echoes here of Madame and Julia’s experience in *A Sicilian Romance*, where female responses to landscape are also aural and receptive, in place of the visual and prescriptive attitudes adopted by male travellers. Increasingly, this seems to be the position Radcliffe is marking out for her ‘travelling heroines’. It is a position informed by Piozzi, who also refuses to invest in the fixed description and ordering expected of her genre and similarly emphasises subjective experience over objective authority.

Like Piozzi, Adeline already recognises the Gothic to be an entangled and intractable feature of the world of continental travel constructing the novel. This is clear from her experiences at the Abbey, where Radcliffe begins to introduce her perspective as a foil to La Motte’s (much like Piozzi’s own practice of critiquing conventional, masculine attitudes before reflecting on her contrary experience). Whereas La Motte regards the Gothic as something to be framed and manipulated – refusing to learn the lesson of his arrival at the ruin – and maintains the aesthetic and architectural fiction of the Picturesque estate (and the Gothic fictions that sustain it), Adeline is always aware of the genuine Gothic affect that underpins the Abbey. The vehicle through which Radcliffe sustains this is the succession of dreams experienced by the heroine, who remains thus sensible (albeit ambiguously) of what lies beneath the travellers’ leisured security. Far from dismissing this consciousness, in the manner of La Motte (who has found and ignored the material objects – the skeleton in the chest – with which Adeline’s dreams correlate) Adeline is prompted by them to explore the Abbey’s ruined hinterland. ‘Unwilling to go to bed’ she notices a hidden doorway and enters thereby into ‘an interior part of the original building’. Whereas La Motte largely ignores such older sections (only entering them pragmatically when forced to take refuge) Adeline takes it upon herself to acknowledge and confront the ‘mystery’ which seems to ‘hang over these chambers’ (Radcliffe 1986: 115). Here she finds the manuscript and, through it, begins to investigate the real history that has otherwise been ignored at the Abbey.

Adeline refuses to invest in the fiction of the Picturesque Abbey and instead confronts the Gothic content that fiction tries to obscure. She becomes and remains aware of what La Motte has tried to forget and ignore: that the Abbey, like so many regions of Piozzi’s *Observations*, is a site of anxious embodiment and ambiguous bodies whose fate may presage that of present travellers, herself included. It is this “Piozzean” experience of the Gothic, entangled rather than subordinated within the world and materials of travel, upon which the novel comes to centre. Paradoxically, but significantly, this involves moving the narrative and its new focal protagonist beyond the most obviously “Gothic” site – the ruined Abbey, with its hidden bodies and nocturnal disturbances – and into a space that, ostensibly, has nothing to do with the Gothic at all: the Chateau of the Marquis de Montalt.

Lying a few hours ride from the improved ruin, the Chateau is an unabashedly, anachronistically, modern structure: ‘fitted up with an airy and elegant taste’ and featuring a garden that resembles a contemporary ‘English pleasure ground’ (Radcliffe 1986: 156, 164).[[114]](#footnote-114) Like the “Picturesque” Abbey, it inhabits the imaginative world of contemporary travel. To travel outward from the aesthetically re-appropriated ruin is to encounter the modern home of its owner, as if following Gilpin between the spaces of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal. As such it is, at least in theory, to move out from the Gothic into the wider world of travel. Yet Radcliffe disturbs this process in a way that, yet again, gestures towards submerged anxieties in contemporary travel writing. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, in Gilpin, the connection between Picturesque ruins and modern landscaped estates is a subject of anxiety, as the modern landowner “usurps” and reanimates a site that should be left as a static emblem of historical progress. In Radcliffe this anxiety is literalised when it transpires that Montalt, the “improver” of Fontainville, is also responsible for the crimes that are its Gothic history and which prevent its proper absorption into the Picturesque. It is also, of course, a site to which Adeline has been brought by force, in the role of the Gothic heroine. As such the Chateau extends the debate about the management of the Gothic within travel that is central to the Abbey episodes.

As a site that melds the trappings of Gothic and travel, the Chateau is a step beyond the Abbey, not merely an improved ruin, but, as above, a wholly modern structure. It has no Gothic history, but is constructed of the antiquarian and neoclassical materials that resonate with the culture of Grand Tourism: Ovidian frescos, busts of classical authors, Etruscan lamps, landscape paintings (perhaps in the style of Lorraine or Rosa, imported to Britain by Mediterranean travellers) and a ‘chimney piece, of Parian marble [. . .] ornamented with several reposing figures from the antique’ (Radcliffe 1986: 156). Montalt, it seems, has been a Grand Tourist himself and / or has taken up the Addisonian imperative to find in classical remains an inexhaustible resource for modern reproduction. This ostensible transition out of the Gothic is made explicit when Radcliffe has Montalt state to Adeline that ‘I have removed you from a solitary and desolate ruin to a gay and splendid villa’ (Radcliffe 1986: 160). Yet, as a space of kidnap and imprisonment, this is as functionally “Gothic” a site as any other in the developing genre. What distinguishes it (and distinguishes what Radcliffe is doing through it) is that its Gothic function is expressed *through* the materials and discourses of contemporary travel.

The Chateau is a product of acculturation and aggrandisement that operates through appropriation and display; a space that, from its decorated interior to its landscaped exterior, exists to simultaneously please the gaze of its owner and to emblematise the power underpinning that gaze. It is this that Adeline has been brought to be subjected to: part of the collection she is left amongst, awaiting the arrival of Montalt who meets her objections with the desire to ‘at least have the pleasure of beholding you’ (Radcliffe 1986: 159). Imprisonment – the hallmark of the Gothic heroine’s experience – is thus couched in the spectacular appropriation that determines the modern villa and its neoclassical furnishings. This disturbing fusion reaches its apex in Adeline’s escape from the Chateau, through the landscaped garden.

It is telling that the heroine bestows ‘a transient look’ upon Montalt’s painted landscapes before proceeding to ‘examine the windows’ that frame the real space of the Chateau’s gardens and provide an exit (Radcliffe 1986: 164). What she finds out there is not a natural alternative to the paintings’ framed and appropriated nature, but an extension of this process. At first the gardens seem to offer Picturesque prospects, as Adeline encounters ‘a lake overhung with lofty trees’ and observes ‘the tranquil beauty’ of light and reflective effects upon its waters (Radcliffe 1986: 165). The landscape seems to make visual sense as an aesthetic space the heroine can comprehend in her restoration from objectified spectacle to free spectator. Yet it soon becomes apparent that Adeline is here caught within, rather than without, the pictorial frame and, moreover, that she cannot locate and cross that boundary. Neither the ‘garden wall’ nor ‘any thing like a boundary to the grounds’ can she find. Instead the landscape repeats itself, so that, after ‘wandering [. . .] through alleys and over lawns’ Adeline finds herself back at the lake. Refusing to coalesce into a landscape she can make sense of, the materials of the Picturesque estate inspire confusion and ‘despair’ (Radcliffe 1986: 165). The heroine may comprehend the aesthetic that underpins the garden – able to remark its features – but she is not the spectator for whom it is designed to operate. That is the property, quite literally, of Montalt, whose ‘countenance’ accordingly appears when Adeline stumbles on a bower in which he reclines. The Picturesque garden has become a labyrinth and Montalt’s eye is at its figurative centre. This is the only new and distinct feature revealed by the heroine’s frantic searching. It functions as an emblem for the garden as a whole: a space organised to express the gaze of its owner. As Adeline appears, the Marquis looks up, but she does not stop ‘to learn whether he had observed her’. It is not necessary that Montalt actually see the heroine in her escape; he is already identified with a far more general and disturbing property of looking whilst she feels the ‘terror’ of being looked upon (Radcliffe 1986: 165).

As an experience of flight, disorientation, and suspected pursuit, couched in the psychology of ‘despair’ and ‘terror’, this sequence is, in effect, *Forest*’s Gothic centrepiece. The mazy corridors and ambiguous interior windings that have been a hallmark of Gothic spaces since the subterranean flight of Isabella in *Otranto* are perfectly transposed onto an exterior landscape that, as Radcliffe makes clear, is analogous to that of the contemporary English landscaped garden.[[115]](#footnote-115) No clearer example could be given for the innovation in Radcliffe’s location of the Gothic, embedding its most characteristic experience – the flight of the heroine – in the world of contemporary travel. As with the Abbey, the extension of the Gothic into that world is also associated with a critical re-examination of the discourses and practices that organise it (and which ostensibly bracket the Gothic within it).

Adeline’s flight is a masterful deconstruction of the Picturesque aesthetic from a perspective caught within, rather than without, the frame: ‘Radcliffe gives us landscape theorists’ idyll of containment and achieved serenity from the anything but serene perspective of a feminine object who does not consent to be contained’ (Bohls 1995: 89). What is revealed here is the conditional nature of an aesthetic based on power over and appropriation of landscape. A female “traveller” such as Adeline may have theoretical access to the Picturesque aesthetic (an access Gilpin would be glad to grant her as a reader, as discussed in Chapter One) but, in its purest form, that discourse and practice is predicated on (and is a celebration of) the actual or vicarious ownership of property, a position women ultimately have only a provisional access to. It is this realisation that the Chateau garden delivers, presenting the Marquis’s spectating gaze as the truth of a landscape within which Adeline herself cannot escape the status of a spectacle. This exposure completes *Forest*’s translation of the Gothic experience out of the framed ruin or history and into the contemporary landscape, part of what Elizabeth Bohls aptly describes as the ‘aesthetic nightmare of boundless power’ (Bohls 1995: 89).

The Chateau is the logical progression of the Abbey’s critique of the principles that organise the world of contemporary travel. In La Motte and Montalt the practices of Picturesque estate management are discredited and the reader is left instead with the Piozzean experience of a female traveller, aware of the “fictions” through which the appropriation and management of the landscape and its objects operates, but herself caught uneasily between the positions of spectator and spectacle.

The final part of the novel takes Adeline – and the reader – beyond the Abbey and Chateau, with their disconcerting fusions of Gothic and travel experience, yet there is little sense in which the novel recovers or retracts what these earlier sequences imply. The episodes in Savoy do introduce a superior patriarch in the form of La Luc: a sensitive and locally responsible landowner to contrast with La Motte and Montalt’s respective opportunism and absenteeism. However, these places and the passages that describe them are defined by retreat from the world the novel has already explored and which it has constructed in a way that marks it as contemporary and culturally immediate. Indeed, in a strange turnaround, it is the lute-playing young ladies and cheerful rustics of Savoy that seem more abstract than the Gothic ruins that have preceded them. The former appear like the figurative decorations of an idealised landscape painting, whilst the latter are couched so thoroughly in the direct experience of contemporary travel and tourism. Even the positive travel Adeline undertakes with the La Lucs is couched in an experience that would be familiar to the reader of Piozzi. Approaching Nice she sees it placed within an attractive distant landscape composed – aesthetically and sedately – of ‘gently swelling hills’, arboreal mountains and ‘meandering’ rivers, framed by ‘the sweep of lofty mountains’. Yet a nearer view discovers that the city is made up of ‘narrow streets and shabby houses’ that ‘ill answered the expectation’ of a ‘distant view’. Such prospects are themselves of little value to the local peasants whose ‘countenances’ are ‘meagre and discontented’ and Adeline is left ‘lamenting’ the effects of local government that leaves the landscape so impoverished in spite of its aesthetic beauty (Radcliffe 1986: 280-281). Like Piozzi, Adeline cannot avoid noticing (and regretting) this, even if it means being unable to invest in the Mediterranean tour as a pleasant sequence of prospects and observations. The episode appears relatively minor, yet it plays an important role in sustaining the point Radcliffe has made about the world of travel. Away from the retreat of La Luc’s estate, the Picturesque remains a screen, failing to obscure more discordant realities. Even in its most positive and companionate form, leisure travel in Radcliffe’s novel cannot sustain the serene ideals of contemporary tourism and travel writing.

The novel’s conclusion cannot resolve this either and does not try. Instead, Adeline and her hero settle in their own idyllic Savoyard chateau, near to La Luc’s. There is to be no recovery of the novel’s focal sites, despite the fact that the Abbey and Montalt’s Chateau are now Adeline’s family property. Like the castle Mazzini in Radcliffe’s previous novel, their histories cannot be redeemed and transmuted into the Picturesque. Instead the heroine and hero are provided with a new property that is scenic and serene: ‘almost encircled by woods’ featuring ‘wild and romantic walks’ and opening in front onto a lawn meeting the lake that reflects ‘an ever moving picture’, the whole contained, of course within ‘a grand ampitheatre’ bordered by the distant alps. That such a perfect, pre-fabricated, Picturesque estate can be summoned *ex-nihilo* by the needs of Radcliffe’s conclusion, only emphasises its lack of history or wider resonance within the novel as a whole. As if aware of the artificiality of such a manoeuvre, Radcliffe’s description gestures towards the way in which ‘the hand of art’ plays its role in forming and maintaining this garden (Radcliffe 1986: 362). The comment seems to offer an acknowledgement that such an aesthetically placid site is more a manufactured than a naturally occurring feature of the world revealed by Radcliffe’s narrative. Moreover, as Dekker observes, it also forces an echo of that other Chateau and its garden, Montalt’s ‘sinister bower of bliss’ (Dekker 2004: 124) and the landscape, also formed by ‘art’, in which Adeline once wandered in terror. Beyond this carefully prepared retreat, such sites and spaces are still Gothic.

*The Romance of the Forest* represents a seminal stage in the relationship this study has identified between Gothic and travel writing during the latter part of the eighteenth-century. For the first time a Gothic novel is thoroughly embedded in the imaginative geography constructed by the adjacent print culture of contemporary travel. Radcliffe adopts the setting and trajectory of a familiar mode of continental tourism and has her characters behave, either implicitly or explicitly, as leisure travellers in this context, employing the popular discourse of Picturesque aesthetics and scenic tourism: from the appraisal of landscapes to the political and economic aspirations of consequence and property ownership that practice encoded. Gothic sites and spaces are no longer the point of origin for this narrative and nor do they enclose it. Instead characters encounter the Gothic through a wider experience of travel and respond accordingly. The function of *Forest’s* Gothic spaces and their affect is to frustrate such responses, whether in the form of the ruined Abbey that systematically undermines the pretensions and self-delusions of its Picturesque refashioning or the modern Chateau that exposes the logic of power and appropriation underpinning the world of travel more generally and ultimately appears more Gothic than the Gothic ruin.

There is precedent for this development in Radcliffe’s first two novels, which have each taken up peripheral regions of contemporary domestic and continental tourism and begun to establish a robust presence for the Gothic imagination within them. *Forest* builds upon this: expanding the more vestigial travel experiences that are glimpsed in the earlier novels and internalising the problematic Picturesque ruin of the *Sicilian Romance* prologue (itself an evolution of the anonymous abbey that appears at the close of *Athlin and Dunbayne*) into an extended critique of the Gothic’s framing. It goes much further than these novels, however, both in moving from the peripheries to the heartland of contemporary travel and in investing the Gothic so much more fully in that context. The first two novels found Scotland and Sicily to be apposite sites for the operation of a Gothic imagination and gestured towards the contemporary travel literature that made them so; *Forest* presents the experience of continental tourism itself as an experience *of travel* and locates the Gothic, robustly and intractably, within that experience. If *Athlin and Dunbayne* and *Sicilian Romance* found spaces for their Gothic that were adjacent to the practice and print-culture of contemporary travel, *Forest* crosses over into that space and occupies it: a text that is about travel and the Gothic.

Like Piozzi’s *Observations and Reflections*, *Forest* generalises the Gothic throughout the landscape of travel. It is no longer the subject of limited and recoverable Picturesque mis-apprehensions, as in the early fictions of Smith, or of peripheral regions as in Radcliffe’s own first two novels. Instead an experience of the Gothic – of ambiguous bodies and anxious embodiment, of despotic authority as self-serving usurpation – is spread far more widely throughout the world of this third novel. For these reasons *Forest* deserves to have been the subject of some of the most extensive close-reading in this study and to serve, in effect, as a point of culmination for the issue it has most centrally explored: the steady convergence of the adjacent literatures of Gothic and travel and the establishment of a place for the former in the imaginative geography of the latter. It would be remiss, however, to omit any discussion of the work that followed *Forest* to become the most famous of Radcliffe’s novels (and, arguably, of the Gothic as a literary genre).

**‘Silent, lonely and sublime’** **– the twin journeys of *The Mysteries of Udolpho***

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* the innovations that Radcliffe makes with *The Romance of the Forest* are writ large. Once more the world is that of contemporary continental tourism, proceeding south from France into Italy. Though the historical setting is more distanced, the relationship to eighteenth-century travel is much clearer as substantial sections of the novel – particularly the descriptions of Venice – draw directly on contemporary travelogues, including Piozzi’s. Such descriptions include anachronistic details – such as the drinking of coffee in sixteenth-century Italy – but, like the English landscape garden at La Motte’s seventeenth-century French Chateau, these details allow Radcliffe to engage more closely with the experience and print culture of contemporary travel. Accordingly, the shorter examples of explicit leisure travel that occur in *Forest* are expanded in *Udolpho*, which includes numerous sequences of characters travelling Europe in the manner of tourists and responding accordingly. As before, it is through such journeyings, drawing as they do upon the practices and experiences of contemporary travellers, that the novel’s Gothic sites are encountered and approached. What makes *Udolpho* distinctive however – besides its sheer scale – is the way in which it develops the system of successive, contrasting journeys that has been a feature of all of Radcliffe’s work so far. This device reaches its culmination in *Udolpho* because that novel – almost uniquely among Radcliffe’s works – operates through the contrasting experiences of a female protagonist.[[116]](#footnote-116) The successive journeys that make up *Udolpho* are far more extensive than anything in *Castles*, *Romance* or *Forest* and, what is more, they are delivered almost entirely from the perspective of the heroine, Emily. This allows Radcliffe to evolve what was previously a contrast between conventional – masculine – and more ambiguous – feminine – travel experiences into a more sophisticated exploration of that alternative female perspective and the spaces available for it to occupy. As such, *Udolpho* would be the most Piozzean of Radcliffe’s novels, even if it were not the text in which she draws so directly upon the *Observations* itself.[[117]](#footnote-117) It is also the text in which she most fully presents a revised version of contemporary travel, coloured by the Gothic.

At its core, the narrative of *Udolpho* is made up of two contrasting journeys. In the first, Emily together with her father (and later Valancourt), undertakes a recuperative leisure tour beginning in her native Gascony and heading south into the Pyrenees, Switzerland and the Mediterranean before the heroine returns to her home at La Vallée. In the second, Emily is taken further south under the command of Montoni, travelling into Italy and residing briefly at Venice before being taken to the Alps and the castle of *Udolpho* itself. Her return journey gradually leads her back to Gascony and the novel’s conclusion. As with *Forest* then, the characteristic trajectory of *Udolpho* proceeds from north to south, through France into the Mediterranean, in a pattern familiar to the eighteenth-century continental tour. Unlike *Forest*, Radcliffe has her heroine perform this journey twice, in very different circumstances and it is through the transition and contrast between these two journeys that the novel examines and revises the experience of contemporary travel and the place of the Gothic imagination within it.

Emily’s first journey is, in many ways, a model Picturesque tour. It is not simply that the journey in and around the Pyrenees mountains is marked by striking prospects and views, but that they are experienced through leisurely appraisal and discussion. This is the practice of Picturesque tourism. At its core, Gilpin’s “theory” concerns the dissemination of an aesthetic vocabulary along with instructions and exemplars for its practical application to landscape. It is, as Ann Bermingham observes, a profoundly discursive endeavour: as much ‘a lingo’ as a ‘way of seeing’ (Bermingham 1994: 83-85). As such, the Picturesque is also a sociable activity: encouraging the conversational exchange of immediate observations about landscape as well as the creation of records that might be subsequently exchanged, in the form of sketches or journals (such as those that formed the basis for Gilpin’s own texts).[[118]](#footnote-118) This is the experience that defines *Udolpho*’s first journey, and Radcliffe’s presentation of it is part of what makes her use of contemporary travel so much more sophisticated than a mere second-hand serving of loco-descriptive materials. The reader *does* receive these scene-paintings, but they are also consistently supplied with descriptions of the characters’ own responses to the landscapes that they encounter and, thus, of their behaviour as travellers.

Valancourt, for example, frequently stops to speak with his fellow ‘travellers’ and ‘with social feeling to point out to them the peculiar objects of his admiration’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 38). Here the reader is not actually given a specific landscape description, but is asked to notice the leisurely, discursive manner in which landscape is being appreciated by the novel’s characters. Nor is this conversation clearly restricted by gender, or wealth. Both parties are travelling upon limited resources, with a single carriage and muleteer. Meanwhile, Valancourt and Emily talk together ‘of the character of the scenes’ they pass and exchange observations on the components and effects they individually notice. It is also Emily whose ‘pencil enabled her to preserve some of those combinations of forms’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 28) that the group witnesses: creating the record of their experience in a manner familiar to contemporary travellers and readers. As Gilpin himself would have it then, this is a companionable scenic tourism accessible to all who possess the appropriate ‘Picturesque genius, whether gentlemen or ladies’ (qtd in Barbier 1968: 79).

Radcliffe’s debt to Gilpin in this section of the novel is actually quite explicit and further reinforces the sense that what she is here presenting is a version of contemporary Picturesque tourism. Despite the disparity in setting, the travelogue Radcliffe appears to have had to hand whilst composing *Udolpho*’s Pyrenean episodes is Gilpin’s *Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland* (1786). In Gilpin’s detailed descriptions of the mountains and valleys of the Lake District, Radcliffe would have found ample material for the successive vistas that delight her travellers as they cross the Alps into Roussillon. At Roussillon itself she all but acknowledges this debt with a direct – though unattributed – quotation from Gilpin. Here ‘the landscape with the surrounding alps’ presents ‘a perfect picture of the lovely and the sublime, of “beauty sleeping in the lap of horror”’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 55). The phrase is from Gilpin’s *Mountains and Lakes* where the author praises the prospect of the Derwentwater by repeating the response of a Mr Avison: ‘here is beauty indeed – beauty lying in the lap of horror!’ (Gilpin 1786: I.183). Radcliffe’s framing of the quote demonstrates her understanding of its value to Gilpin’s aesthetic, as a marriage of the Sublime and the Beautiful that produces and defines the Picturesque’s framing and arrangement of striking materials: ‘a perfect *picture* of the lovely and the sublime’. Like Gilpin and his disciples, Radcliffe’s characters also journey across a potentially Sublime landscape, framed and managed by the conventions of sociable Picturesque tourism.

Gilpin’s Lake District may seem a strange source for Radcliffe’s Mediterranean Alps, particularly given her wide range of reading in continental travel literature. Her use of this domestic tour serves important purposes, however. As above, it emphasises the equivalence between the St Auberts’ tour and the practices of contemporary scenic travellers who, following ten years of Gilpin’s successful publications, might very well be Radcliffe’s readers. From the outset then, Radcliffe’s novel belies the historical and geographical abstraction so often associated with its genre, and draws parallels with the knowledge and experience of contemporary readers and the popular print culture it shares with them.

Modelling *Udolpho*’s first journey on a domestic tour also suits its place in the novel as a whole. Though it takes them beyond their native Gascony, the St Auberts’ short tour is largely confined to France and its peripheries and, as such, is broadly “domestic” in nature – certainly when compared to the anxious alterity of Emily’s experiences in Italy.[[119]](#footnote-119) Like the travels of contemporary scenic tourists in Britain, it is also underpinned by a general confidence in the ownership and management of the landscapes that provide the material for aesthetic appreciation. This is because the journey is anchored by La Vallée, the idyllic St Aubert family estate arranged and governed in a manner that not only echoes the politics of the Picturesque, but is explicitly distinguished from a contrasting attitude to landscape. In fact, the opening of *Udolpho* recalls nothing so much as the early fiction of Charlotte Smith, where, as discussed in Chapter One, novels typically open with an idealised site combining the aesthetics and politics of the Picturesque and keeping the Gothic in appropriate check thereby. Like Mowbray Castle or Grasmere Abbey, La Vallée is designed as a site from which the surrounding landscape can be appreciated – with a variety of landscapes – all visible ‘from its windows’ – *and* a Picturesque object itself, shaded by ‘old larches’ that vary its outline and lighting accordingly (Radcliffe 1998a: 1, 4). St Aubert will not remove these old trees, despite the fact that they obscure part of his view and this affirms La Vallée’s function as a constituent and connected part of the scenic landscape, rather than a separate and exclusive vantage, embodying the kind of visual power desired by Radcliffean villains such as *Forest*’s Montalt. The age of the larches associates this local sensitivity with the St Aubert family’s established provenance as owners and managers of this land: preserving the details that are part of the history of their estate and eschewing rapid improvements and alterations. Accordingly, St Aubert’s additions to the house at La Vallée – originally a summer cottage before his removal there – do not ‘suffer a stone of it to be removed’ so that ‘the new building’ is ‘adapted to the style of the old one’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 2). Here is not the incongruous improvement that appropriates Fontainville Abbey for the Picturesque by attempting (unsuccessfully) to “overwrite” and obscure the original structure; instead St Aubert’s additions are an extension of the building in continuum with its history. In keeping with St Aubert’s credentials as a responsible, traditional landowner, he is also happy to include the persons, livestock and activity of his tenants and dependents within his estate’s views. These are part of the opening description of the estate’s views, which take in the ‘flocks, and herds, and simple cottages’ upon which the eye ‘delighted to repose’ along with other more striking scenery (Radcliffe 1998a: 1). The peasants themselves, meanwhile, are often part of the scenes visible from the ‘particularly pleasant’ windows of Emily’s own room.[[120]](#footnote-120) Aesthetics thus embody politics, in the manner of contemporary attitudes to the Picturesque estate.

Unlike Smith’s estates, which usually enclose the Gothic within such politico-aesthetic constructs, La Vallée is not itself a Gothic structure. Instead, it is Epourville, ‘a heavy Gothic mansion’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 14) that is the St Auberts’ traditional family seat, but which has been exchanged for rural retirement at La Vallée. Epourville’s current owner is St Aubert’s brother-in-law, M. Quesnel. In direct contrast with St Aubert’s paternalistic and sensitive management, Quesnel is an absentee metropolitan socialite and an insensitive improver. He seeks to demolish and rebuild parts of the historic chateau and to clear the surrounding grounds he finds ‘encumbered by trees’ which ‘interrupt’ his ‘prospects’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 12-13). Radcliffe thus arranges her characters around the coordinates established by the contemporary debates on landscape politics and aesthetics discussed in Chapter One. La Vallée exists in a Picturesque contrast to Epourville – a ‘Gothic mansion’ with a suitably despotic and self-absorbed owner / usurper – and it is the Picturesque estate at La Vallée that underpins the Picturesque tourism of *Udolpho*’s first journey, intended, as it is, to depart from and return there. Indeed, a contemporary reader nearing the end of the first volume might think they were holding an early Smith novel in miniature: in which an idyllic Picturesque sanctuary sustains an alternative politics and aesthetics to the benighted metropolitan world beyond it and provides a suitable platform for some scenic tourism, keeping the Gothic at an appropriate distance. However, a reader paying careful attention to the development of Radcliffe’s fiction may identify an interesting and prophetic connection between this novel and her own previous work. This is because *Udolpho* effectively begins where *Forest* ends. Gascony, like Savoy, offers a Picturesque retreat from the wider world just as St Aubert, like La Luc, lives there in retirement, presiding paternalistically over a small sphere of local benevolence.

In this final respect, it is even more appropriate that the model for La Vallée and the Pyrenean tour is Gilpin’s domestic tourism; whereas the world of *Forest* contracts into the security of its concluding retreat, *Udolpho* tends in the other direction. Following her comparatively short “domestic” journey, Radcliffe’s heroine travels further afield, for longer, as she embarks on the much longer series of movements that defines the novel’s Gothic plot. Here she is without the structures of companionate, discursive, travel that have defined her more homely wanderings with St Aubert and Valancourt. Instead Emily is left isolated amongst more discordant company in an uncertain political climate: as if a Picturesque tourist in the 1790s were, in fact, to be plucked from the Lake District and set down upon the turbulent continent. This kind of transition will be explored further in the next chapter, where Radcliffe’s own travelogue will be seen to perform a similar manoeuvre (albeit in reverse): with the ambiguities of “revolutionary” travel in Europe returning upon the placid landscapes and histories of the Picturesque Lake District. At present it is worth exploring the way in which Radcliffe manages the juxtaposition of her novel’s journeys and the implications it has for the world of “domestic” travel with which *Udolpho* begins.

As Terry Castle has demonstrated in an influential reading of the novel, this second period is one in which Emily is haunted by absences and the memories they provoke, so that the defining characteristic of *Udolpho*’s world becomes a kind of uncanny spectrality (Castle 1995: 120-139). A key aspect of this property is the way in which Emily is haunted by the memory of that earlier experience of travel and the associated realisation that the world of idyllic Picturesque retreat that underpinned it may be illusory. It is not simply that – as Castle has pointed out – the memory of La Vallée is troubled by the ambiguous recollection of St Aubert’s private papers and the recollection of his commands; it is also that the constant act of remembering that world – and being reminded of it – questions the distance and security that is established as its definitive characteristic in the first volume.

As Emily embarks on her second journey Radcliffe makes its contrast with her first very clear. St Aubert and Valancourt are now absent and this means that the experience of travel Emily shared with them is no longer possible. Having drawn so much attention to the discursive and sociable nature of the domestic tour, Radcliffe places equal emphasis on the isolation and introversion that now defines the experience of her ‘travelling heroine’. Leaving La Vallée with Madame Cheron, Emily sees ‘the towering precipices of the Pyrenees’, the scene of ‘her late journey’ and subject of ‘a thousand interesting recollections’ but now inspiring ‘only sorrow and regret’. Radcliffe makes it very clear that what Emily misses is not simply the topography of that earlier journey, but its experience. The distant view inspires ‘*interesting* recollections’: communicable ideas and impressions that can no longer be communicated. Instead the ‘conversation’ of Madame Cheron is merely ‘trivial’, unrelated to the actual experience of travel, and the party soon collapses into ‘profound silence’ (Radcliffe 1998a:116). It is this ‘silence’ that will repeatedly define Emily’s experience of travel from now on, just as conversation and exchange defined it before.

A similar example is presented as Emily begins to cross the Alps into Italy. She has just read Valancourt’s letter, requesting her to think of him at sunset, but this instruction merely reinforces the degree to which landscape is now invested with a sense of absence, inspiring a retreat from communicable observation into introverted reflection. Faced with ‘scenes of sublimity’ that ‘no colours of language must dare to paint’, Emily’s ‘mind’ is appropriately inspired and ‘engaged’. Yet it *is* language that is longed for here: the ability to communicate impressions with absent travelling companions. The Sublime prospect ‘sometimes banished the idea of Valancourt’ but ‘more frequently revived it’. Overwhelmed by Sublime presence, Emily nonetheless experiences absence. Though her mind is ostensibly ‘engaged’ by the immediacy of the Alps, it quickly invites a ‘recollection of the prospects among the Pyrenees’ that she had ‘admired together’ with her previous companions. It is this shared experience that is specifically absent: Emily wishes to ‘express to him’ (Valancourt) the impressions the landscape inspires and is left endeavouring ‘to anticipate his remarks’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 163). The experience of one of the most impressive travel passages in Emily’s journey is haunted by a conversation about it that cannot occur; the effect of the Sublime landscape is to reflect the absence of its appreciation through Picturesque travel.

It is into this experience of travel haunted by the absence of the Picturesque and its discursive experience that the Castle Udolpho itself eventually emerges. Leaving Venice, Emily soon finds herself ascending the Apennines. Scenes ‘of particular beauty’ continue to summon Valancourt to her thoughts, but, again, this emphasises the absence of companions from whom Emily can ‘never hope to hear’ and without whose company and conversation she is left in ‘solitude’. It is ‘solitary silence’ that then defines the remainder of the journey, up until the arrival at Udolpho itself (Radcliffe 1998a: 224). Here, ‘speaking for the first time in several hours’ (and representing the first instance of speech in several pages) Montoni announces the arrival at the eponymous castle (Radcliffe 1998a: 226). What follows is an object demonstration of the failure of a Picturesque gaze to make sense of this most famous Gothic site.

The description tracks Emily’s gaze as it picks out the constituent components of a scene that, at first, seems to have the potential to fix the Gothic “ruin” within the kind of Picturesque arrangement familiar to contemporary readers of Gilpin. The castle spreads ‘along the brow of a precipice’ that crowns wooded mountains ringing a deep ‘valley below’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 226). The constituent elements of the Picturesque are here as the valley and mountains provide area and screens, varied with vegetation, whilst the castle offers a characteristic centrepiece. However, Radcliffe’s description refuses to allow Udolpho to become a mere component in such a prospect. It does this by emphasising the way in which the dying light gradually obscures all other elements of the scene, taking away the attendant components and features through which the Picturesque imagination works and leaving the castle alone ‘lighted up by the setting sun’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 226). Once more the description follows the progress of the heroine’s gaze as first the valley, then the mountainside, slip into obscurity. Finally the castle itself recedes into shade as the light ‘dies away on its walls’ leaving only ‘its clustering towers’ rising above the woods through which the party proceeds towards it. It is then that Udolpho befits its famous description:

Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity. (Radcliffe 1998a: 227)

Udolpho utterly resists appropriation by the visual strategies of the Picturesque: cloaking itself in an obscurity that removes attendant components – the aesthetic qualifiers that would embed it within a frame – and stands as the sole object of a gaze it rebounds upon the traveller themselves. Just as significantly, Radcliffe makes it clear that Udolpho also resists appropriation by the discursive practices of the Picturesque. She understands that Gilpin’s aesthetic provides a collective vocabulary for the uptake and accommodation of the Gothic and her castle’s silence and solitude jointly refute this process. In a novel so heavily indebted to Gilpin, Radcliffe constructs a Gothic centrepiece that resists his discourse in every possible way.

This is the manner in which the Gothic is introduced and situated in *Udolpho*: occupying the space left by the absence of the Picturesque. As this study has shown, such an arrangement is far from unprecedented in Radcliffe. In fact, the famous description of Udolpho is really the culmination of a series of sites in her earlier novels. These develop an ongoing challenge to the ability of a Picturesque discourse to fix the Gothic as it attempted to do elsewhere in the print culture of eighteenth-century travel. This critique of the Picturesque Gothic commences with *Athlin and Dunbayne*’s anonymous ruined abbey: a proto-Udolpho that, as in Chapter Two, is also the ‘solitary inhabitant’ of its un-Picturesque ‘waste’ where it not only frustrates vision, but also appears to ‘command silence’ (Radcliffe 1995: 102). *Sicilian Romance* also challenges the discursive function of the Picturesque at the same time as it frustrates its visual strategies; the narrative supplied in Radcliffe’s prologue is, after all, a corrective to the benign and placid history incorrectly surmised by the complacent modern traveller. Then, as discussed earlier in this chapter, *Forest* finds La Motte first confronted with Fontainville’s resistance to the Picturesque before undertaking repeated forlorn attempts to control the way the Gothic site is arranged and “spoken of”. Throughout her career Radcliffe demonstrates an understanding that the Picturesque is as much a way of speaking about the Gothic as it is a way of seeing it and her most memorable sites all serve to question and critique this discursive management and appropriation.

Where *Udolpho* innovates is in contextualising this failure of the Picturesque through the successive journeys its heroine undertakes. Whereas earlier sites such as Fontainville are Gothic spaces that pre-emptively resist the Picturesque, with histories and affective agency it cannot cover over, the Castle Udolpho arrives much later in its narrative: in the wake of a mode of Picturesque travel that has receded from it. It is part of a landscape and experience of travel that has expanded beyond the “domestic” compass of a familiar scenic tourism and the stability – social and political – that underpins it. Crucially, Udolpho is not endowed with exceptional status within this world. It is all too easy to read the eponymous castle as a Gothic extreme point, geographically and symbolically isolated from the rest of the novel. This is not the way Radcliffe constructs it, however. Instead she repeatedly emphasises the contiguities between Udolpho and the wider world of metropolitan “Grand” tourism her heroine has been carried into in the period after her original “domestic” journey. It is in this world, represented by the city of Venice, that Emily first begins to experience the isolation and uncertainty that will typify Udolpho.

In fact, before Emily has even learned of her impending journey to Udolpho, Radcliffe makes it clear that the difference between the Gothic castle and the city of Venice – a popular destination on the Grand Tour – is surprisingly slight.[[121]](#footnote-121) Worrying that the castle might be used to imprison her and force compliance with Montoni’s wishes, Emily is brought to the realisation that she is ‘as much in his power at Venice as she could be elsewhere’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 215). This is a truth Montoni himself asserts when he reminds the heroine that she is already ‘a stranger, in a foreign country’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 217). Udolpho is thus positioned as a contiguous part of this ‘foreign’ world, beyond the “domestic”, not as an extreme exception to it. This connection is maintained at Udolpho itself, where Radcliffe inserts a number of details that continually refer the reader back to Venice. Indeed, the first object that Emily notices in her castle chamber is a ‘Venetian mirror’ that ‘duskily’ reflects ‘the tall figure of Montoni’ on the battlements beyond: the experience of Udolpho, it seems, is merely the mirror image of that of Venice. This implication is borne out as characters associated with Venice – Montoni’s associates and their courtesans – successively arrive at the castle. Meanwhile, Emily’s own conversations with Annette refer back to stories of ‘signor Montoni’ that were ‘heard before at Venice’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 237): it is through recollections of metropolitan Italy that the history of the Gothic castle emerges. Even the most famous feature of Udolpho – the object ‘concealed by a veil of black silk’ refers back to this world as Annette recognises ‘the picture they told me of at Venice’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 233). Amongst other things Udolpho is a gallery space, ‘hung with pictures’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 232), like the many such visited by eighteenth-century travellers in Venice and other Italian cities. This connection serves not to familiarise the castle, but to de-familiarise the wider world it echoes (or mirrors). The object behind the veil serves as a focal point for the anxieties Emily experiences at Udolpho: the threat of permanent embodiment as a spectacular object. This possibility channels the concerns and experiences of female travellers throughout Radcliffe’s works, but resonates particularly strongly with the experiences of Emily’s immediate predecessor. Like Adeline at Montalt’s Chateau, Emily’s confrontation with the veiled object concerns the possibility of slippage from spectator to spectacle, from the legitimate viewer of a version of the Grand Tour gallery space to a disempowered object of vision within Montoni’s castle (or Montalt’s Chateau). In both novels this anxiety is not merely constituted of a Gothic fear of physical violence, but is couched in the terms of contemporary travel and the ambiguous status of the female traveller, the basis for Radcliffe’s travelling heroines. Once more, an important intertext for this is offered by Piozzi.

Critics have noted the importance of Piozzi’s *Observations and Reflections* as a source for *Udolpho* and, in particular, the Venetian sequence, where Radcliffe seems to incorporate material directly from Piozzi’s description of the city.[[122]](#footnote-122) Radcliffe found more in the *Observations and Reflections* than scene-painting, however – and more in the Venetian section in particular. As historians such as Rosemary Sweet have explained, Venice held an ambivalent place in the Grand Tour. It promised a unique opportunity to view a stable and unchanging political and cultural ‘singularity’ – supposedly stretching back to a Roman heritage – yet was also associated with masquerade, secrecy and libertinism; the ‘cita galante’ of physical indulgence, gambling and nocturnal intrigue (Sweet 2012: 199-235). All such activities are present in *Udolpho*, where Montoni and his associates keep late hours, indulge in play and consort with courtesans. For Emily, however – who is typically withdrawn into memories of her former companions – Venice is a space of visual threat: the city in which she is situated as an object for the attentions of Count Morano. Her experience of Venice is thus haunted by absence and threatened with vulnerable embodiment and spectacularisation. She cannot fully appreciate the spectacles she sees without company with whom she can discuss them and, simultaneously, she experiences the possibility of becoming a spectacle herself. Piozzi’s experience proves an apt counterpoint for Emily’s at this point – and for her encounter with Venice in particular. Like Emily, Piozzi’s experience of Italy was defined by separation from former companions (and travel companions) from whom she had been estranged following her re-marriage. Chief amongst these was her friend and mentor, Samuel Johnson, a potential model for Emily’s relationship with St Aubert (D’Ezio 2015: 348-349).[[123]](#footnote-123) Like Emily, Piozzi’s experience of Venice is touched by such absences – she makes multiple references to ‘Dr Johnson’, whose opinions and sayings on various matters are interpolated into her own judgements and ‘reflections’. Meanwhile, it is also in Venice that Piozzi begins to confront the anxieties surrounding her own slippage from spectator to spectacle. Her Venice is very much a gallery space and it is here, as will be recalled, that the attempt to view the famous picture within a Catholic refectory is denied unless she ‘put on men’s clothes’. This requirement is significant because it threatens to relocate the woman traveller from a position of empowered judgement and connoisseurship (the hallmarks of the Grand Tourist) to that of a spectacle. Tellingly, Piozzi feels that to comply would ‘violate’ her ‘own person’, subject to the suggestively “Gothic” authority of the monks who control this ambiguous space (Piozzi 1789: I.172). For both Emily and Piozzi then, Venice is a space characterised by both spectacle and absence, in which the female traveller – or travelling heroine – risks becoming a spectacle herself. Read through these contexts, the Gothic gallery of Udolpho – which gestures back to Venice – thus functions as an extension of this world, not apart from the revised imaginative geography of the Grand Tour, but a Gothic part of it.

What emerges from this analysis of *Udolpho* is an important sense of the way it extends the work of *Forest* in combining or, to use a more Piozzian term, entangling, the Gothic with the world of the Grand Tour. As the foregoing reading has demonstrated, the key feature of this is Radcliffe’s use of successive, contrasting, journeys, to problematize the more placid assumptions of contemporary Picturesque tourism. This also reveals Radcliffe’s use of travelogues as intertexts for *Udolpho* to be much more sophisticated than has previously been recognised, as different texts strategically succeed each other as models for the heroine’s experience: the complacent and companionate “domestic” travel of a text like Gilpin’s *Mountains and Lakes* ultimately giving way to the more critical and revisionary experience of Piozzi’s *Observations and Reflections*. As in *Forest* the reader is finally left with the experience of a female traveller for whom the imaginative geography of contemporary travel is a much more ambiguous space. Of course, like *Forest*, *Udolpho* concludes in retreat, with Emily and Valancourt settled at a restored La Vallée. This seems even less convincing however, given everything that has been glimpsed beyond the Picturesque idyll. Indeed, just as a reader of *Forest* is invited to recall the parallels between Adeline and Theodore’s chateau and its sinister counterpart at the edge of the forest, so too does the astute reader of *Udolpho* remember that the heroine’s home has so very nearly been absorbed into the more turbulent world beyond it. La Vallée has provided the domestic origin for both of Emily’s journeys, yet it has accompanied her on them as an anxious memory: rendered questionable by the glimpse of St Aubert’s papers (which, by suggesting her father’s infidelity, raise the implicit possibility that La Vallée may not, in fact, be Emily’s) and sought as property by Montoni. Tellingly, the latter example means that the sanctity and security of La Vallée is part of what is in contention within Udolpho itself – threatening the distance between these two apparently opposed spaces, at opposite poles of Emily’s travels.

Radcliffe’s third and fourth novels fully embed the Gothic within the imaginative geography of contemporary travel and its accompanying discursive practices, including the aesthetic framework – and framing – of Picturesque scenic tourism as well as the processes of appraisal and control that characterise the practice of the continental Grand Tourist. Moving beyond the more peripheral spaces and isolated ruins of Scotland and Sicily, both *Forest* and *Udolpho* insist that the Gothic possesses a potent and unavoidable presence within the heartlands of eighteenth-century travel, associated not simply with the ruins of Fontainville and Udolpho, but also with the “modern” French chateau and Venetian galleries that are inextricably associated with them. They substantially revise the organisation of these imaginative geographies by previous travellers so that the Gothic is now an active rather than a merely potential presence, but they also demonstrate the failure of those organisational practices and critique the logic that underpins them. The “traveller’s” uptake of the Picturesque abbey is a process of appropriation as much as appreciation, inadvertently mirroring the practice of the Gothic villain responsible for the history that uptake tries to ignore; the Venetian world of spectacle and display is not so far from Udolpho, where those same processes – and their objects – become terrifying. This revisionary fusion of Gothic and travel and its critical implications are presented through the perspectives of travelling female protagonists, informed by the equally revisionary experience and textual practice of writers like Piozzi. In this way Radcliffe arrives at the characteristic mode of ‘female Gothic’ defined by Moers, but she does so, as this study demonstrates, in a manner informed by an awareness of the contemporary world and print culture she is locating that Gothic within. This is the real significance of Radcliffe’s ‘travelling heroinism’.

Both novels also explore the tensions between spaces of stable retreat – and the settled political continuities that underpin them – and the turbulence and anxiety beyond. The next chapter will conclude this study by situating these aspects of Radcliffe’s 1790s fiction in the context of revolutionary travel. It will then focus on a text in which such issues are made explicit as the *Journey* into war-torn Europe returns to haunt Radcliffe’s own version of Gilpin’s *Mountains and Lakes* and the Picturesque histories they embody.

Chapter Five

Revolution, Retreat and Re-evaluation: Radcliffe’s *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*

After sailing four Miles from Ross, we came to *Goodrich-castle*; where a very grand view presented itself; and we rested on our oars to examine it. A reach of the river, forming a noble bay, is spread before the eye. The bank, on the right, is steep and covered with wood; beyond which a bold promontory shoots out, crowned with a castle, rising among the trees.

(William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*, 1782)

The steersman called to us in a low, but eager voice, and enquired whether we would permit him to attempt passing the castle, where, if we landed, we might probably be detained [. . .] By the help of twilight and our silence, he thought it possible to glide unnoticed under the opposite bank, or that we should be in very little danger if the sentinels should obey their order for firing upon all vessels that might attempt to pass.

(Ann Radcliffe, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*, 1795)

Throughout this study, eighteenth-century travel writing has offered a pre-existing space within which the Gothic could insert and assert itself. The texts the Gothic responds to reflect an imaginative geography that, broadly speaking, operates in continuity with the culture it affirms and underpins; validating a relationship with foreign regions that turns on the elite judgement and appraisal of the patrician Grand Tourist, or encoding the formative British historical and political narrative that the Picturesque emblematises – even as it leaves it out of the aesthetically framed ruins that otherwise mark the violence of that chronology. The Gothic’s response to this existing corpus of print culture and the imaginative geography that it sustains has been to pick up upon anxieties and ambiguities that are otherwise subordinated within it, until the field of travel also becomes a theatre for the Gothic imagination. This relationship takes a dramatic turn in the 1790s, however, as one of the most important arenas of touring travel – the continental regions that have underpinned over a century of Grand Tourism and become part of expanding Picturesque itineraries – becomes the stage for the French Revolution. This is made visible in another juxtaposition of Gilpin’s descriptions with Radcliffe’s in the epigraphs above. Here both writers are ostensibly describing a scenic river tour, but Radcliffe’s hasty journey past the Rhine’s re-garrisoned fortifications is clearly very different from Gilpin’s sedately staged views of the Wye’s Picturesque ruins. Of course, Radcliffe was not alone in registering – and experiencing – such a shift. Before exploring her *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* in more detail it is instructive to look briefly at the way the Revolution transformed conventional approaches to continental travel.

On a basic level the uprisings in France and the building of military conflict caused problems for travellers who found that ‘the outbreak of violence disrupted the usual tourist round’ (Black 1992: 343). Yet the Revolution did more than disrupt travellers’ itineraries; it also challenged the postures they adopted on their travels and the identities they crafted for themselves thereby. An early example of this is offered by the popular travel writer, Arthur Young, in his *Travels, During the Years 1787, 1788 and 1789, Undertaken more Particularly with a View of Ascertaining the Cultivation, Wealth, Resources and National Prosperity, of the Kingdom of France* (1792).

Young’s title alone is telling: already successful as a writer of travels that surveyed the condition of England and Ireland, the French tour appears as a relatively conventional attempt to extend this; an evaluation of foreign regions that will relate them to the domestic using the ‘opposition and intensification’ (Chard 1999: 40-83) of the Grand Tour. Yet the reference to the ‘*Kingdom of France*’ already borders on the anachronistic, whilst the years of travel are punctuated, rather than continuous, as if acknowledging that this geographical and political entity is no longer quite cohesive – and nor, perhaps, is the imaginative geography founded upon it. The tour begins constructing and evaluating that imaginative geography in a conventional manner as, at Combourg, Young observes:

One of the most brutal filthy places that can be seen; mud houses, no windows, and a pavement so broken as to impede all passengers [. . .] yet here is a chateau, and inhabited; who is this Mons. de Chateaubriant, the owner, that has nerves strung for a residence amidst such filth and poverty? [. . .] There is a very beautiful lake [and] a very little clearing would make here a delicious scenery [. . .] There is a chateau, with four rows of trees, and nothing else to be seen from the windows in the true French style. Forbid it, taste, that this should be the house of the owner of that beautiful water. (Young 1792: 83)

Economic critique moves naturally through politics to aesthetics; the inferior condition of the French countryside is associated with the poor taste and incapability of the landowner who can improve neither its agriculture nor its scenery. England, meanwhile, stands in implicit contrast to these failings of ‘the true French style’ and serves as the foundation of its traveller’s exceptionalism and judgement. Yet it is precisely this posture of privileged critique that closer experience of the Revolution gradually erodes.

In Paris Young opts to manage the speed of events by procuring a ‘catalogue’ of the pamphlets being published with ‘incredible’ rapidity where ‘every hour produces something new’. Having already admitted the need to adopt ‘rapid notes’ in place of detailed ‘memoirs of what passes’, the traveller now falls back upon writing about writing, as if already at a remove from the immediacy of ‘on the spot’ judgement that validates his commentary. Comparisons with England still serve to make sense of events, but even this comes under strain as Young notes that London’s most crowded shops ‘are mere deserts, compared to Desein’s, and some others here, in which one can scarcely squeeze from the door to the counter’ (Young 1792: 104). The traveller’s language stretches to hyperbole to maintain a parallel between the familiar and the foreign, whilst his person is not privileged and apart, but jostled amidst the objects of his observation.

The ideas propagated in the printing shops come to life in the coffee houses where Young observes orators upon ‘chairs or tables’ speaking ‘violence against the present government’. The traveller manages to maintain a semblance of distance from these figures, positioning them as ‘singular and astonishing spectacles’, the responsibility of a flawed ministry that permits ‘such nests and hotbeds of sedition and revolt’ (Young 1792: 104). This response to the alarms of revolutionary ferment attempts to adopt the same posture as at Combourg: a detached observation that proceeds smoothly from visual spectacles to their political causes and critiques these from a position of superior exceptionalism. As the violence Young witnesses escalates, this detachment and English exceptionalism surface more clearly in his text; the traveller forced to make explicit the qualities that should define him implicitly.

Having left Paris, Young travels through Strasbourg, where he witnesses mob violence first hand, including the crushing to death of ‘a fine lad of about 14’. His attempt to adopt a position of detached observation – standing ‘upon the roof of a row of low stalls opposite’ and beholding ‘the whole commodiously’ – is rendered awkward both by the shock of what he witnesses and by a telling parallel between the English traveller and the impotent French authorities. These are part of the scene, Young observes, yet like him they are ‘quiet spectators’ (Young 1792: 142). Their failings are no longer simple targets for the traveller’s superior critique, instead their lack of control seems to mirror his own – and blur the distinction between secure observation at the periphery of the scene and the turbulence of its centre. As if countering these uneasy elements, the episode is prefaced with the qualification that it is ‘a scene curious to a foreigner, but dreadful to Frenchmen’; pointedly separating the traveller from the shocking activity he witnesses. At the same time, however, Young gives not only the location and date of the entry, but also the time, ‘*Night*’ (Young 1792: 141). The act of writing that attempts to frame this encounter is also caught up in the need to make sense of it; pulled from calm reflection after-the-fact into the nocturnal obscurity it describes, a space defined by darkness, confusion and violent death.

The tenuous quality of the English traveller’s distance and detachment from the events he observes soon becomes much more alarming. A few days later Young is ‘questioned for not having a cockade of the *tiers etat* [third estate]’. To be without one is to be suspected of being ‘a Seigneur [an aristocrat]’ and liable to ‘be hanged’ accordingly (Young 1792: 145). The failure – or refusal – to acknowledge the traveller’s privileged status thus goes hand in hand with a direct threat to his person. It is only by declaring himself ‘an Englishman’ that Young is permitted to carry on, yet the reader is also informed that he ‘immediately bought a cockade’; his assertion of English exceptionalism thoroughly undermined by the need to give it up in adopting the habit of the French revolutionaries. As if to confirm this, Young promptly loses his cockade and this time his ‘assertion of being English would not do’ he is ‘a Seigneur, perhaps in disguise, and without a doubt a great rogue’ (Young 1792: 145). The irony here is that the loss of the traveller’s actual “disguise” – in the form of his cockade – is occasion for accusations of deception. Young is either a French revolutionary or a French aristocrat; the identity of an English traveller is solely denied him. His attempt to demonstrate a knowledge of English law and its superiority to French practice (the hallmark of the traveller’s discerning judgement) is held forth as the grounds for his person being spared, yet this safety is only ‘confirmed’ when Young cries ‘*vive la tiers, sans impositions*’ [‘long live the third estate, free from taxation’].[[124]](#footnote-124) Again, the assertion of Englishness seems less effective than the seemingly contrary adoption of French practises. As if finally acknowledging this, Young comments that his ‘miserable French was pretty much on a par’ with his accusers ‘own *patois*’ before recording his purchase of ‘another cockade’ (Young 1792: 146). The privileged posture of the genteel English traveller must be abandoned as the revolutionary tourist looks and sounds like a member of ‘les tiers etat’.

Young is a very different traveller from Hester Piozzi: a confident participant in the Grand Tour’s practices of enumeration and evaluation, rather than an ambiguous participant exercising a revisionary perspective upon it. Yet the anxieties that surface in his account are much the same as those that frequently form the objects of her *Reflections*. Forced from spectator to spectacle, Young is dragged – almost literally – from detached gaze to personal vulnerability; not the privileged observer he claims to be, but a component of the violence he tries to observe. To become objectified in this way is not just symbolically destructive of the traveller’s privileged identity; it also carries the real threat of personal annihilation. For both writers the continental tour becomes an arena for ambiguous bodies, into which they risk slipping by virtue of their own vulnerable embodiment.

The difference is that, whereas Piozzi reflects upon the Tour from a revisionary position at its periphery – the first woman traveller to publish an acknowledged account of it – Young is firmly at the centre of the institution of continental travel. His very title is a statement of the intent to absorb the Revolution within this literary schema. And he does not succeed. For Piozzi – and for Radcliffe – touring travel and its print culture are a space within which the Gothic can be revealed and located. For Young, revolution has transmuted the Tour into a space that is unavoidably Gothic. Passing through the countryside he observes that ‘many chateaus have been burnt, others plundered, their seigneurs hunted down like wild beasts, their wives and daughters ravished’ (Young 1792: 146). This is literally a landscape of ruins, populated by ‘villains’ whose violence matches that of any banditti. Far from documenting and illuminating Revolutionary France, Young leaves it in ‘shades of darkness’ (Young 1792: 147); writing and reading of continental travel, it seems, now requires rather than suppresses the vocabulary of the Gothic.

Young’s text is an important marker because it reveals a shift in the relationship between the writing of Gothic and travel that this study has explored. What has hitherto been an arena for the affirmation of both enlightenment principles and the political exceptionalism of the English traveller who wields them may now be the opposite. The question is no longer simply one of the Gothic imagination infiltrating travel (or being revealed there). Instead the arena of travel is itself a space of anxieties that may redound upon the assumptions they once confirmed. Is the continent a sphere for the confirmation of English judgement and exceptionalism, or a threat to it? Can ruination serve aesthetically as a placid, historically inert, marker of Picturesque political complacence when fresh ruins are being produced abroad?

This is a question of distance – between the revolutionary continent and the privileged sphere that its travellers proceed from and return to – and of the ability to retreat back across that distance into the cultural and political certainties it supposedly shields. Young finds such a retreat to be impossible within France, where his status as an English Grand Tourist is neither recognised nor respected. Instead he must effect a much more complete retreat: returning to England and leaving France not in the clarity of imaginative geography, but in Gothic ‘shades of darkness’

Young’s experience is not dissimilar to that of the Gothic protagonist, whose journeying encounters not just present concerns, but deeper threats to the identities and domesticities to which they wish to return and which anchor their identity. This logic is central to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) for example, where Emily’s journeying reveals and explores the uneasy relationship between the idylls of La Vallée and dangerous spaces beyond. That a traveller like Young exhibits this kind of experience might make a fairly neat coda to the apparition of the Gothic within travel writing that has been traced in this study. Yet something more profound may also be revealed here about the Gothic stakes of “revolutionary travel”. Though authors such as Piozzi (and Radcliffe) have identified gaps in the ability of imaginative geography to mediate Gothic ambiguities, the question now seems to be firstly whether it is (still) possible to *export* the discourses (of Grand Tourism and the Picturesque, in particular) that maintain such imaginative geography into a revolutionary sphere and, secondly, whether, in the event of that process’s failure, it is possible to retreat back to the privileged origin and basis of such exported discourses.

This question ends up being central to Radcliffe’s own travelogue as her *Journey* not only narrates such a “retreat” but makes it a part of its structure – and title. It thereby directly addresses the connection between the domestic and the distant; between the continent that – as Young’s account proves – had begun to overtly exhibit aspects of the Gothic Radcliffe herself revealed there – and Britain, where readers consumed the writings of both travel and Gothic fiction, whilst their own Gothic history supposedly sat in Picturesque stasis. This final chapter will read the *Journey* accordingly. First though, it is worth spending a little more time on the “export” of travel discourses into revolutionary landscapes, including those of “Gothic” fictions such as Radcliffe’s.

**Bicetre and Bastille – re-visiting *The Romance of the Forest***

The previous chapter identified the *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) as a novel in which the Gothic is encountered and explored through travel, no longer placed at the peripheries of Scotland and Sicily, but now a robust presence in the heartlands of an imaginative geography familiar to contemporary travellers and readers. The present chapter has so far suggested that this same imaginative geography was already becoming a locus of “Gothic” anxiety in the revolutionary 1790s, just as this fusion of Gothic narrative and contemporary travel occurred in Radcliffe’s fiction. Taking these conclusions together, it makes sense to briefly reconsider the kinds of Gothic-travel experience presented in *Forest*. This is a novel in which the discourses of Grand and Picturesque travel fail to mediate the Gothic (and eventually seem, as at Montalt’s Chateau, to be freighted with it). To what extent is this process also a parallel for the anxieties witnessed by Young, in which these same discourses are deployed to make sense of a revolutionary continent – and fail to do so?

*Forest* is Radcliffe’s first novel with a French setting, and her only fiction to be set chiefly within that country. Although the action clearly takes place before the Revolution, it is hard to discount the contemporary resonance of a narrative that begins with a ‘gentleman, descended from an ancient house of France’ escaping Paris, incognito, at midnight and attempting, ultimately, to retreat abroad (Radcliffe 1986: 2). Recent critics, such as James Watt, have also recognised the way Radcliffe ‘suggestively, although minimally, alludes to recent events’ (Watt 2014: 73) These include the connection between the name of Radcliffe’s ‘La Motte’ and a conspirator in the 1785-6 “Queen’s Necklace Affair”, involving Marie Antoinette, as well as the character’s own observation that the disused and ruined regions of their abbey retreat are ‘a palace compared to the Bicetre or the Bastille’ (Watt 2014: 74; Radcliffe 1986: 57) – references that would seem far from incidental to readers in 1791, two years after the Bastille itself fell.[[125]](#footnote-125) Accepting this highly suggestive context for the journey undertaken by Radcliffe’s antihero, it makes sense to look again at how La Motte negotiates the “revolution” in his political and legal status that provides the impetus for the first part of the narrative. His response, much like Young’s, is to fall back upon the identity of a traveller, promptly resolving to manage ‘dangerous and ignominious exile’ by becoming a tourist of sorts and to do so in a manner that clearly gestures towards contemporary travel traditions. La Motte’s plan to journey towards the ‘Southern Provinces’ (Radcliffe 1986: 3) mimics the trajectory of Grand Tourism and the previous chapter has detailed the way in which he adopts the Abbey as a locus for scenic travel and landscape aesthetics. It is, in fact, as a ‘traveller’ (Radcliffe 1986: 4) that he first introduces himself in the text, when meeting Adeline’s jailors. This moment makes the logic behind that manoeuvre explicit. When faced with uncertainty and personal threat, La Motte adopts the identity and behaviour of a traveller. Or, to put it a different way, it is as a traveller that La Motte seeks to manage and negotiate Radcliffe’s “Revolutionary” France.

Reading La Motte in this way makes his Picturesque response to the Abbey even more significant. As the previous chapter made clear, La Motte does not simply appreciate the ruin aesthetically: he sets himself up within it as a kind of landed proprietor. This process effectively restores La Motte to a version of the status he has lost in his flight from Paris. For this ‘gentleman’ and descendent of an ‘ancient house’ the Abbey and its “estate” presumably represent an amenable country retreat. This is exactly what La Motte makes of them in resolving to ‘consider this place my castle’ (Radcliffe 1986: 70). Settling at the Abbey allows La Motte to act out a version of the character he held before the “revolution” in his circumstances. Yet there is a deeper resonance to La Motte’s invocation of the Picturesque, in particular, as a means of managing “Revolution”.

Part of what defines and appeals about the Abbey is its isolated and self-contained nature. La Motte quickly recognises the virtue of the Abbey’s ‘concealment’ and, whilst its ‘desolation’ is ‘repulsive’, a ‘forest with liberty’ is preferable to ‘a prison’. These are the features a fugitive might appreciate, yet they give way almost instantly to something more complex. As La Motte pays more attention to his surroundings, the woods that so recently suggested ‘desolate’ isolation become ‘luxuriant’. They provide the Abbey “estate” with a limit that is able to ‘sequester’ it ‘from the rest of the world’ invoking the physically and aesthetically privileged status of the space so framed. Meanwhile, that world beyond is not removed so much as recomposed into a series of ‘natural vistas’ and views ‘retiring in distance’ (Radcliffe 1986: 23). The conversion of the Abbey into a Picturesque estate is even capable of becalming the world beyond it. This, of course, is how the Picturesque and its politics functioned for British travellers and readers, and such a process takes on added significance within a Revolutionary context. It is no surprise that Young’s travels find solace in well-managed French chateaus and anxiety in their burnt remains. The Picturesque aesthetic celebrates the accreting effects of time, so gradual as to be almost time*less*; history and its ruins becalmed within the framed and composed view. The corollary of this in a Picturesque politics is the carefully managed estate, preserved from the levelling of improvement and paternally managed by an attentive line of patrician squires. Such a logic is diametrically opposed to that of Revolutionary turbulence. This Picturesque politics is also very much grounded in English exceptionalism. It is what Young seeks to appreciate and identify with – as a properly educated traveller on the continent should be able to – when faced with the real turbulence of France. La Motte’s is clearly not a retreat into *English* exceptionalism, yet an appreciation of the novel’s relationship to contemporary travel and travel writing invites this kind of reading – as the previous chapter has already demonstrated. It is therefore reasonable to consider the novel’s invocation of the Picturesque as also being an invocation of a *British* attitude to landscape, its management and appreciation – a British attitude now applied, in *Forest* to landscapes the reader of 1791 would recognise as Revolutionary.[[126]](#footnote-126)

Read in this way, the remainder of the novel’s narrative and geographical trajectory takes on an added significance. The previous chapter read Montalt’s Chateau as the locus of a Picturesque collapse into Gothic: revealing the aggressively possessive undercurrent of power that underpins the composition of landscape for a singular gaze and rendering the Picturesque garden into the novel’s most memorable example of the archetypal Gothic maze. The focus of that analysis was the heroine, Adeline, excluded and objectified within a framed space that, from the interior, is disorientating and terrifying. But the Chateau must also be acknowledged as reflecting back upon La Motte’s Picturesque retreat at the Abbey. Not only is it Montalt who is revealed to be the Abbey’s real proprietor, but the construction of his Picturesque chateau seems to acknowledge the British nature of this aesthetic. Its interior is decorated with the classical relics of the Mediterranean and their artistic imitations – as if testifying to the experiences of a British Grand Tourist. Beyond stretch those gardens that resemble ‘an English pleasure ground’ – the framed nature of a Picturesque estate, not the formal ‘parterres’ of an actual French garden of the late-seventeenth century (Radcliffe 1986: 164). This anachronism resonates perfectly with an exploration of British travel discourses and aesthetics as mediators of revolution. And the point, of course, is that such mediation is deeply suspect. Montalt may present the ‘gay and splendid villa’ as a contrast to the Abbey’s ‘solitary and desolate ruin’ – a space of refuge and respite – yet it actually serves to parallel and amplify the Gothic space (Radcliffe 1986: 160). The ambiguous windings of the landscape garden are functionally equivalent to those of the former subterranean chambers and they make the occupant’s subjection to a singular authority all the more clear: drawing Adeline back towards the vision of the Marquis’s gaze. This suspicious movement from the Picturesque ruin to the neighbouring Chateau has currency in Picturesque travelogues. Fontainville itself is not part of the Chateau’s English-styled landscape garden, yet it serves as a hunting lodge for the Marquis who, it transpires, is responsible for the improvements to the Abbey upon his own ‘Gothic plan’; improvements that allow for precisely the kind of porous slippage between modern and ‘Gothic’ components that concerned Gilpin at sites such as Fountains Abbey (a suggestive source for Radcliffe’s Fontainville).[[127]](#footnote-127) This subtle parallel speaks once more to the importance of contemporary travel as a context for her work. If *Forest* plays upon the possibility of retreat from revolution into the “English” landscaped Picturesque, it is also aware that such retreat – and the separation it seeks – is suspect.

Radcliffe is not alone in being thus suspicious of the Picturesque as an emblem of Britain’s exceptional geographical and political security. As Chapter One has already discussed, there is an undercurrent of political anxiety in the writings of Picturesque theorists themselves. For critics such as Markus Poetzsch these concerns only become more acute in the revolutionary decade as the ‘spectre of political levelling’ in Brownian expanses confronts a Picturesque theory that was regarded with increasing suspicion (Poetzch 2009: 22).[[128]](#footnote-128) The specific (and convoluted) currents of such debates are less important, for the present purpose, than a general sense that the Picturesque was coming under political strain as Radcliffe presented it as a weak foil to ambiguous “revolutionary” geographies and fugitive experiences. Thus, in *Forest*, Picturesque sites are neither effective nor benevolent sanctuaries for the narrative’s outcasts and Parisian “emigres”. *Udolpho* does something similar (though its revolutionary analogues are perhaps less obvious without *Forest*’s more extensive French setting). This, after all, is also a story of exile from an ancestral estate – and an estate threatened directly with new ownership and improvement. It is also, as discussed in the previous chapter, a novel in which fugitive characters yearn for an earlier mode of companionate scenic tourism that is impossible in the world of *Udolpho* just as it increasingly was for continental travellers in the 1790s. Both novels also have a remarkable (though generally unremarked) awareness of a wider sense – or possibility – of military conflict surrounding the worlds of their protagonists. The contrast with *Castles* and *Sicilian* *Romance* is worth noting. Those fictions show more localised and ad hoc forces in the pay of their medieval aristocrats and landowners. In *Forest* such forces act on the behalf of a state as, Theodore and Louis, both military men, are associated with (and occasionally recalled to) regiments posted beyond the main narrative. In *Udolpho* Montoni’s forces act against a coherent state as part of a wider factional conflict that overtakes the characters at the eponymous Castle. This site never offers the kind of Picturesque retreat that Fontainville briefly promises – Emily certainly does not wander its woods and commune with wildlife – yet Radcliffe does briefly set up the Picturesque as an aesthetic refuge from the mounting conflict. As Montoni’s forces gather Radcliffe has Emily respond in a way that seems almost to parody Gilpin. Seeing some ambiguous figures on the distant ramparts, the reader is told that Emily ‘sketched them for banditti’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 276). Like the traveller, she bids for control of the scene by converting its more uncertain and threatening components into more harmonious aesthetic tropes: ‘Picturesque appendages’ and motifs for the reimagining of a view (Gilpin 1786: II.45-46). The twist, of course, is that the figures Emily sketches actually are part of Montoni’s quasi-militarised ‘banditti’ and it is they, not the heroine, that control the scene.

Read in this way, both of these novels challenge any sense that Radcliffe’s travel was simply distanced from the continental revolution their settings feint towards. More importantly, they do so by asking questions of the discourses that might isolate Britain and its travellers – such as Young – from that continental turbulence. *Forest* and *Udolpho* may not be explicitly revolutionary fictions, but their consciousness of a fugitive travel, no longer anchored geographically or aesthetically in a Picturesque sanctuary, is an important response to the French Revolution their contemporary readers would have been aware of. One of the reasons those readers would have been prepared to accept and comprehend such a conjunction between revolution and the Gothic in a Europe mediated by travel and the Picturesque is very simple. It was being offered to them explicitly by Radcliffe’s predecessor-come-contemporary: Charlotte Smith.

**The Picturesque as revolutionary export: Charlotte Smith’s *Desmond***

Much of Smith’s *Desmond* (1792) is effectively a fictionalised revolutionary travelogue, as its eponymous hero – like Young – records and examines his experiences on the continent. As such, *Desmond* might be placed (albeit at a slightly oblique angle) alongside Radcliffe’s *Journey*: the closest Smith comes to narrating her own version of the French Revolution, through the medium of travelogue.[[129]](#footnote-129) There is a more direct – and quite fascinating – connection with Radcliffe at this point in their careers, however. *Forest* is the novel in which Radcliffe both gestures towards Smith as a source (her similarly misspelled translation of ‘Guyot (sic) de Pitaval’s’ *Les Causes Celebres*) and begins to adopt the Smithian device of interpolating her own original poetry within the narrative. *Desmond* was published a year later than *Forest* but, far from resenting her competitor’s borrowings, Smith herself quotes some of that novel’s inset poetry.[[130]](#footnote-130) As such it is reasonable to assume that Smith was familiar with her contemporary’s recent fictionalisation of turbulent continental travel – even though her epistolary novel was to take a very different form and approach to Radcliffe’s ‘Romance’. *Desmond* may usefully set Radcliffe’s work in relief, therefore, as Smith much more overtly confronts revolution (and glimpses of the Gothic) through travel and the Picturesque.

This study began by using Smith’s first two novels, *Emmeline* (1788) and *Ethelinde* (1789)*,* as exemplary fictions for a pre-Radcliffean “Picturesque Gothic”: a mode within which Gothic sites are mediated within the aesthetics of the Picturesque as maintained by appropriately sensitive protagonists. These are important – and often overlooked – texts in which the Gothic is located within a contemporary British landscape of the type made popular by scenic tourism and its writings.[[131]](#footnote-131) Yet the affective agency of this Gothic is only activated when such sites are disrupted by villainous characters who fail to appreciate them either aesthetically or politically. The Gothic is dormant within a Picturesque Britain maintained by its properly attentive landowners. This is precisely the dynamic Radcliffe challenges at the outset of her career when she too locates the Gothic within British landscapes recently popularised by the literature of scenic tourism. Yet, by 1792, Smith was subverting this model herself. And she does so in a way that mirrors the limitations of a Picturesque discourse that are explored in *Forest,* a year before. *Desmond* does not simply abandon the Picturesque politics and Gothic framing of Smith’s early fictions. Instead it exports them to the continent as the traveller-protagonist, rather like Young, employs the Picturesque within a familiar imaginative geography that struggles to make sense of Revolutionary France.

A key episode in the novel occurs when the hero befriends Montfleuri, a French aristocrat and landowner with revolutionary sympathies. A visit to his estate in Lyonnais allows Smith to explore the expression of these sentiments through the familiar language of estate management. Yet her hero – perhaps like his readers – only has access to the limited aesthetic and political vocabulary of the Picturesque as a means of comprehending and communicating this in his role as epistolary travel writer. The situation of Montfleuri’s chateau, upon ‘a gentle rise’ bounded by hills and river-banks places it within a natural frame. Meanwhile, the estate is improved not by artificial levelling, but by the visible industry and occupation of its tenants, who have ‘supplied’ a Picturesque overgrowth of grape-vines (Smith 2001: 112).[[132]](#footnote-132) Desmond approvingly compares the situation of these occupants with ‘those whose lot has fallen in those villages of England, where [they enjoy] the advantages of a good landlord’ who – eschewing enclosure and improvement – maintains their access to ‘an extensive adjoining common’ (Smith 2001: 115). Other references to England abound in Desmond’s description. The chateau has been brought as nearly as possible into ‘the form of one of those houses, which men of a thousand or twelve hundred a year inhabit in England’: translating the “revolutionary” estate not just into a familiar aesthetic system, but also (somewhat absurdly) into a settled political and economic one (the estate’s agriculture too is organised ‘as we separate our fields in England’) (Smith 2001: 112-113).

There is a fine balance to what Smith is doing here, as she allows her protagonist to misread, or, at least, over-read, the French estate. It is acknowledged that Montfleuri – a traveller himself – has taken inspiration from ‘those plans of comfort and convenience which he saw were followed in England’ – yet his English counterpart fails to see this as a fluid dialogue between national characteristics. Instead the epistolary format allows Smith to mimic the practices of a typical English travel writer, critiquing from a posture of arrogant exceptionalism. Montfleuri himself is silent throughout this account of his estate. His actual intentions exist only in Desmond’s paraphrase, which cannot help slipping from acknowledging an English influence on the improved estate to a more general meditation on the respective merits and demerits of English and French practices. In Desmond’s framing, Montfleuri’s adaptations are such as ‘it must be acknowledged, the French, in general, have not hitherto had much idea’. Similarly, his apparent success is ‘much better than I ever saw it done in France before’. Read in this way the French estate ceases to be a product of Montfleuri’s revolutionary reforming, ceases even to be French, in effect. It becomes, instead, a point of identification for the English traveller and of contrast with the imaginative geography he continues to overlay upon France as a whole:

Were it not for a few obstinate and prominent features that belong to French buildings, which it is almost impossible for him to remove, it would be easy for me to imagine myself in some of the most beautiful parts of England. – A little fancy would convert the vineyards into hop- gardens [. . .] nor would they be much injured by the comparison; for, when the vine of either is in leaf, the hop, seen at a distance, has the most agreeable appearance. (Smith 2001: 114)

This seems to be a brilliant – if intentionally ridiculous – send-up of the English traveller’s prejudices and the discursive practices that express them. For Desmond it is not enough for Montfleuri to draw inspiration from England; his estate must become English, right down to the crops it produces (whose value is, of course, aesthetic, rather than economic). France’s ‘obstinate’ physicality may resist this improvement on a literal level, but is powerless to resist the traveller’s Picturesque ‘fancy’, which can swap out individual elements and perfect the prospect when ‘seen at a distance’ (Smith 2001: 114). Picturesque aesthetics next flow naturally into Picturesque politics as Desmond proceeds to contrast the misery of typical French ‘vassals and dependents’ with Montfleuri’s ‘peasantry’ who:

Resemble both in their own appearance, and in the comfortable look of their habitations, those whose lot has fallen in those villages of England, where [they enjoy] the advantages of a good landlord [and] an extensive adjoining common. (Smith 2001: 115)

This visual language, with its approval of ‘look’ and ‘appearance’, encodes the familiar politics of rural paternalism. For all his Jacobin fervour, Desmond cannot read the estate as an emblem of revolutionary France. Instead he reads it as an English archetype, *secured* from revolution. So long as these peasants receive the ‘advantages’ bestowed by their attentive landowner, there is no sense that they might clamour for political and economic self-determination.

Smith harnesses the epistolary format to ape the style of an English travelogue in this way, but she also breaks with it, briefly, to insert a comment that makes the purpose of this section explicit. A rare footnote reinstates the author’s voice to observe that ‘the English have a custom of arrogantly boasting of the fortunate situation of the common people of England’ whilst ‘always affecting to talk of the misery and beggary of the French’ (Smith 2001: 115). Any reader, nodding along to the narrator’s familiar descriptive strategies, is brought up short. Smith offers her traveller-hero to them as a lens through which to read Revolutionary France, but she invites recognition of that perspective’s limits.

These limits are twofold. The first problem concerns the integrity of the English model of paternalistic landownership and political continuity Desmond relies upon. This is explicitly rejected in Smith’s footnote and is also undermined more generally across the novel. Desmond’s primary correspondent is his former guardian, Mr Bethel. Bethel now lives in quiet retirement, yet his previous life has seen him dissipate family estates that have been in his family since the conquest. This associates his conduct with that of the villain, Verney, who is a feckless improver, gambler and absentee as well as husband to the heroine, Geraldine. The parallel is enforced as Bethel and Verney’s estates are jointly acquired by Stamforth, a minor villain and member of the ‘mushroom nobility’ (Smith 2001: 61). Desmond himself refers to Stamforth as an ‘arrogant upstart’ (Smith 2001: 202) and regrets that traditional ‘country Squires’ are ‘almost annihilated in England’ (Smith 2001: 74). A responsible and benevolent model of traditional land-ownership is gestured towards (as it is at Montfleuri’s estate) but the novel as a whole seems to imply that this is diminished and ambiguous. It seems intended, then, that *Desmond*’s eponymous hero understands revolutionary France by exporting a British Picturesque politics the novel (and its author) is not fully invested in.[[133]](#footnote-133)

This leads to the second limitation of Desmond’s interpretation. Not only does Desmond read France through a problematic discourse of Picturesque politics and aesthetics, but in doing so he misinterprets his objects and fails to comprehend their meaning within a revolutionary context that his perspective masks. In particular, he fails to recognise that Montfleuri’s reforms are not intended to improve the lives of his dependents so much as to remove their dependency. The self-determination Desmond’s Picturesque politics elides is, in fact, the goal of the estate, which is not designed to bring French landownership closer to English landownership, but to free the peasantry from the limitations of landownership itself. In this way the estate is as revolutionary as its owner.

A key example of this is offered by Montfleuri’s treatment of some adjoining property, lately owned by ‘a convent of monks’ associated with a nearby monastery. The description of these lands allows the English traveller to critique the mismanagement of Catholic estates on the continent in a manner that would not be out of place in Addison’s *Remarks*. Whilst Montfleuri’s “English” estate is ‘happy and prosperous’, these lands have ‘the appearance of a languid and reluctant cultivation’. However, the revolutionary climate has seen the monastery dissolved, its order dispersed and its lands purchased by Montfleuri. Desmond celebrates this acquisition, but seems to misinterpret its purpose. His immediate concern is that Montfleuri attend to ‘the ruin of a large ancient building’ that stands amidst these lands. The site makes ‘a fine object from the windows of [Montfleuri’s] house’ where its description conjures one of the aquatint illustrations that might accompany a volume of Gilpin’s *Observations*:

Nothing can be more picturesque: when in a fine glowing evening, the almost perpendicular hills on which it stands is reflected in the unruffled bosom of the broad river, crowned with these venerable remains, half mantled in ivy. (Smith 2001: 113)

However, the site is threatened by ‘the depredations of the neighbouring hinds, who . . . were in habits of carrying away the materials for their own purposes’ doing ‘more than time towards destroying this monument of antiquity’ (Smith 2001: 113). The stock criticism of the landscape’s poor cultivation and productivity is abandoned with almost comic haste as the local inhabitants are criticised for attempting to make good use of the ruin’s materials whilst the traveller’s concerns turn to its potential as an aesthetic prospect, fixed in its frame and safeguarded from human interaction. This interference carries a sense of Gilpinesque political impropriety: the peasants overstep the work of ‘time’ to destroy what it would convert to a ‘monument.’ Yet Montfleuri seems unlikely to sympathise with his friend’s wishes and Desmond’s failure to see this is surprisingly obtuse. This, it has already been communicated, is a man who has ‘pulled down every part’ of his own chateau ‘but what was actually useful to himself’ (Smith 2001: 112). It seems then that Montfleuri would have more concern for the utility of a building and its materials than for the effect it makes in a landscape. This is born out as the old monastery is to be converted into a workshop for the independent use of the local peasantry – people whom Montfleuri ‘will not allow to be called dependents’ (a phrasing that suggests Desmond himself may have mistakenly used such language in his paternalist enthusiasm) (Smith 2001: 116).[[134]](#footnote-134) Desmond’s misreading of Montfleuri’s estate is twofold then. By relying on the familiar perspectives of the English traveller, buoyed by a sense of national superiority encoded in his aesthetics and their political correlatives, he blinds himself to the real extent of the revolution he ostensibly celebrates and supports.

Though Smith’s novel is very different from Radcliffe’s ‘Romance’, it shares a suspicion of these Picturesque discourses and their projection outward. To read revolutionary France as a progression towards an essentially English political continuity is to misread it: to remain limited by an imaginative geography that has its own ways of reading the continent, but cannot appreciate this new form of alterity. Both novels make this point in similar ways by “transplanting” an “English” chateau into revolutionary France and offering it as a point of refuge and identification for their protagonists. In *Desmond* the mis-projection of England onto France is more explicit, yet there are intriguing parallels with Montalt’s more anachronistic “English-style” chateau. Both are mis-presented or misread as sites of sanctuary within a wider landscape characterised by fugitive travel and revolutionary turbulence. And, for both, this mis-reading and its consequences hinge upon the Gothic. Montfleuri’s chateau never becomes the locus of terror that Montalt’s is, yet it *is* a space in which the Gothic is misapprehended and mis-located in a way that has wider consequences and which leads the novel into a fascinatingly Radcliffean denouement.

As is evident from his response to the neighbouring ruin, Desmond’s taste for the Picturesque also encodes a taste for the Gothic. Tellingly, he has little interest in the ‘wonderful legends’ told by the local ‘country people’ and has not explored the site itself. Its merits are confined to aesthetics, as a distant object with the prospect (Smith 2001: 113). Like Gilpin at Tintern, Desmond seems inclined to resist any attempt to draw him into a closer appraisal of the ruin – and is suspicious of the local inhabitants’ interference with the site. The traveller does allow himself some affective indulgences, but these are carefully bracketed as Desmond recalls the ‘pensive and melancholy pleasure’ prompted by nocturnal walks amongst avenues of trees whose ‘encreasing obscurity’ could prompt the playful imagination of ‘the dim forms, and hollow sighs of some supernatural beings’ (Smith 2001: 114). It is as if Smith imagines what a reader or follower Gilpin might occasionally allow themselves to do, in specific and carefully demarcated circumstances; a nocturnal appendage to the Picturesque Gothic site, but never part of its proper description and illustration.[[135]](#footnote-135) Desmond’s Picturesque vision of Montfleuri’s estate is therefore one in which the Gothic is also properly located: a ‘monument of antiquity’ (and progress) enshrined in the distant ruin, or a brief nocturnal flirtation, equally lacking in real agency. Indeed, Desmond’s taste for the Gothic is yet another example of his over-reading of the estate in English terms. Tellingly, the affective fancy he describes is based on recollections of ‘childhood and early youth’ (another marker of the limited and “immature” nature of such supernatural flirtations) in a family home in ‘the weald of Kent’ (Smith 2001: 114). The Picturesque Gothic Desmond finds at Montfleuri’s estate is another facet of is misapprehended “Englishness”, but this carefully framed version of the Gothic is not actually to be found at the estate. In fact, Desmond’s supernatural reverie is prompted by the avenue of trees Montfleuri has already removed. By pointing towards the house, these arranged the estate around the centralised gaze of its owner. This is precisely the kind of dynamic Montfleuri is working to remove and it is telling that Desmond’s aesthetic cannot fully appreciate this endeavour. As at Montalt’s chateau, such a version of the Picturesque ultimately enshrines the authority and supremacy of the landowner who owns and arranges it – and Montfleuri is very much Montalt’s opposite in this respect. The traveller’s recollection of his English Gothic is therefore yet another projection of Englishness onto the estate, rather than a recognition of its actual qualities. Desmond is left to admit that his is a ‘very Gothic and exploded taste’ but still does not seem quite able to acknowledge that his host fails to share it (Smith 2001: 113). Ultimately then, *Desmond*’s Gothic is not to be found where its protagonist looks for it, comfortably ensconced in the familiar frames of the well-managed estate and its prospects. As in *Forest*, these sites are not effective containers for Gothic materials and the anxieties they express. This is made clear when it transpires that the Gothic *is* part of Smith’s exploration of revolution and revolutionary travel.

If Montfleuri’s estate invites oblique comparison with *Forest*’s own transplanted “English” chateau, the novel’s conclusion rapidly increases the parallels with Radcliffe’s novel. As the narrative progresses, its emphasis shifts from Desmond himself onto Geraldine whose voice and perspective drive the latter part of the narrative. She too is in France, at the behest of her husband, whose impecunious conduct has led her to become an implicit object of sexual barter with his confidants. Like Adeline betrayed by La Motte, she is driven into flight across a very explicitly revolutionary France, through a sequence of events that draw quite clearly on Radcliffe’s romances. First the heroine falls into the power of ‘a company of banditti’ possessed of the ‘terrific look which Salvator gives to his assassins’ (Smith 2001: 385). Like Julia during the climax of *Sicilian Romance* she is held in a dingy interior by this group who gaze upon her with ‘hideous countenance’ and seem determined to ‘plunder’ her person and effects (Smith 2001: 387). These ‘circumstances of horror’ are interrupted by the arrival of Desmond himself, who, like Radcliffe’s Hippolitus, clashes violently with the banditti and is introduced ‘covered with blood’ (Smith 2001: 387-8). Geraldine and Desmond are then forced into fugitive flight, along with the latter’s small train of servants until, like the La Motte party in *Forest*, they arrive, during the night, at the dilapidated Chateau Hautville. Here they find evidence of bloody violence that echoes Adeline’s discoveries in Fontainville, including a cap ‘one side covered with blood’ that parallels Radcliffe’s bloody dagger and is discovered, appropriately, within ‘a dark and Gothic hall’; indeed, Geraldine further fears that ‘the murdered body of some unhappy person to whom it belonged, might be concealed in the house’ (Smith 2001: 396, 398).

The echoes of Radcliffe seem too strong to be coincidental and Smith too seems to be making a point about the Gothic’s lack of clear demarcation within the Picturesque frames that her protagonist Desmond finds (or rather projects) and the imaginative geography they underpin. This is worth acknowledging as it finds Radcliffe’s contemporary (and predecessor within the context of this study) adopting her innovative fusion of Gothic and travel – and doing so in a way that almost seems deliberately allusive. Yet *Desmond*’s denouement also speaks more directly to the present concern with a revolutionary context for Radcliffe’s work and for *Forest* in particular. This is because Hautville has already appeared in the novel prior to its reintroduction as an arena for nocturnal Radcliffean thrills. The chateau, owned by an uncle of Montfleuri’s, is, effectively, his family’s ancestral seat; Desmond has previously visited there with his friend. Its inhabitants then are counter-revolutionary aristocrats, cloaked in the deteriorating trappings of their rank. Far from Picturesque, their landscape is appropriately desolate and uncultivated as, in an echo of the ‘tyrant’s hand’ of enclosure in Goldsmith’s ‘The Deserted Village’ (1770), ‘discomfited tyranny’ seems to ‘colour with its own gloomy hand every surrounding object’ (Goldsmith 1770: l.37; Smith 2001: 124). This version of Hautville sits alongside Desmond’s vision of Montfleuri’s estate within a political continuum that balances the Picturesque and the Gothic. The one is attentively managed, productive and harmonious, with the Gothic ruin reduced by history to a purely aesthetic function. The other is made ‘gloomy’ and foreboding, through present tyranny and its mismanagement. The reader has already seen Montfleuri’s estate (through Desmond’s Picturesque gaze) and knows that he may inherit Hautville. If so, Hautville would be brought within Desmond’s Picturesque vision of revolution as a kind of smooth transition, driven by benevolent landowners such as Montfleuri, rather than the violent energy of their erstwhile dependents. Its Gothic too would presumably fade into aquatint within a carefully preserved prospect view. This hypothetical conclusion would be in keeping with Smith’s earlier fictions, yet, as noted, Hautville’s role in the actual denouement is thoroughly Radcliffean. Its Gothic does not fade; it explodes. And it does so in a way that speaks directly to the realities of a revolutionary Gothic, in contrast to Desmond’s naïve ideal.

It transpires that the banditti responsible for the chateau’s bloodied state are the same as those who previously abducted Geraldine and injured Desmond. They originated in a ‘troop armed for the defence of the castle’ by the Count d’Hautville, who, in an exaggeration of absenteeism that prevents any sympathy for the émigré, has personally fled to Italy whilst still trying to maintain his ancestral holdings through violent force. The troops have held the castle in the meantime, making ‘excursions against the national guard’ (Smith 2001: 397). This explanation associates Hautville’s Gothic character with a familiar aristocratic tyranny, enacting counter revolutionary violence. Yet Smith does not allow the equation to be so simple. As Desmond himself observes, these ‘troops’ have done far more than was necessary to defend the castle, having ‘robbed and murdered’ travellers and unfortunates across the surrounding region. This complicates any simple binary between revolutionary and counter revolutionary forces. Far from preserving Hautville from revolutionary violence, they have inflicted such violence upon it – carousing, ‘intoxicated’ amidst their masters’ bloodied chambers (Smith 2001: 397). Smith stops short of associating these bandits with revolutionary violence – they are opportunists and freebooters – but the example of active self-determination they present is hardly appealing. Revolution has clearly made a Hautville a far more dangerous – and far more Gothic – space than it was a sickly aristocratic holdout. The removal of aristocratic tyranny has not unproblematically improved Hautville (the site is now Gothic in the most un-Picturesque sense) and the castle’s repetition in the narrative seems designed, at least in part, to make this point.

For Smith then, as for Radcliffe, revolution is not something “English” travellers can make sense of through an existing imaginative geography. The French Revolution cannot be made Picturesque, either through the ambiguous refuges offered to Radcliffe’s Adeline or through the idealisations of Smith’s Desmond. And, if the Picturesque cannot contain the revolution, nor can it contain its Gothic. *Forest* sets up spaces that deconstruct the schematics of the Picturesque Gothic whilst *Desmond* exposes the naivety of this viewpoint and shows that the “real” Gothic threat is located outside of it – and, crucially, cannot be gathered up into it. There is no easy succession or restoration at Hautville – any more than there is Fontainville. These ancestral sites are not Mowbray Castles, or even Grasmere Abbeys. They are left unrecovered by characters who retreat from them and from the turbulent geographies they inhabit. For Adeline and the La Lucs, the site of retreat is Savoy; for Desmond, Geraldine *and* Montfleuri, it is England. Both conclusions raise the questions of distancing and retreat with which this chapter has been occupied. In *Desmond* there seems a tacit admission that, for all his Jacobin enthusiasm, the protagonist cannot fully invest in a revolution that he only partially appreciates. Meanwhile, Montfleuri’s move confirms that revolution will not be steered by the paternalism of landowners *and* suggests that perhaps Montfleuri also comprehends this (even if Desmond does not). The novel leaves the Revolution an open question as its travellers pull back to an England whose own politics and exceptionalism have been questioned. The epistolary “tour” ends and retreat occurs, but distance does not seem so easy to maintain.

Revisiting *Forest* along with a contemporary text like *Desmond* allows for this recognition of the Revolution as a further context for Radcliffe’s use of travel to culturally locate the Gothic – and her concomitant use of the Gothic to challenge the stable imaginative geographies constructed and maintained within travel writing. Most significantly, it makes it clear that the use of travel as a means of framing and distancing revolution was already problematic within Radcliffe’s work, *before* she came to write the *Journey*, which necessarily questions such distancing. And, by acknowledging what an author like Smith does with her own revolutionary pseudo-travelogue, it is possible to see that questions of distancing and perspective – of the English ability to frame, comprehend and, when necessary, step back from, the Revolution – were a concern in other contemporary fiction, just as they were in a travelogue such as Young’s. All that remains now is to see how these concerns are explored in the final text to be discussed in detail within this study: Radcliffe’s *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*.

**Radcliffe as revolutionary traveller**

Radcliffe’s sole travelogue reverses the dynamic that has defined her work so that the writing of travel now follows the Gothic. This is literally the case as the profits from *Udolpho* enabled the tours that became the *Journey,* yet it is also the case in a more intriguing sense as Radcliffe herself now becomes the travelling woman that her novels have centred on.[[136]](#footnote-136) Like Emily, she too travels between the twin poles of a domestic geography marked by Picturesque placidity and foreign regions where the serenity and exceptionalism of that domestic sanctuary and its history are called into question. For Radcliffe these regions are not La Vallée and Venice-Udolpho, but the Lake District made famous and familiar by Gilpin (whose descriptions of it she had to hand in writing *Udolpho*) and the landscapes of Germany (and, to a lesser extent, Holland) rendered ambiguous by revolution.

Despite these parallels, it would be wrong to simplistically co-opt Radcliffe’s sole non-fiction as another Gothic narrative. But nor is it simply an ‘anomalous’ work within her ‘larger corpus’ as JoEllen Delucia acknowledges it might appear (Delucia 2014: 135). To adopt either position would defeat the objective of this study, which has tried to restore a more nuanced relationship between Gothic and travel in her work. The Gothic *is* present in the Journey – and is present with remarkable clarity. In Germany, Radcliffe explores a convent in which nuns endure a living internment that seems literalised in their anonymous garden burial. On the Rhine she witnesses castles patrolled by vague figures, whilst shrouded monks walk the shores. Back in England Radcliffe’s empathy with Mary Queen of Scots reanimates Hardwick Hall so that its chambers are viewed not through the freedom of the tourist, but the longing of the imagined prisoner. However, to regard these details as the most remarkable thing about Radcliffe’s travelogue would be to abandon two of the key claims of this study: firstly that the Gothic had long been an oblique presence in the writing of eighteenth-century travel; and, secondly, that Radcliffe had always been alert to that presence and to its significance and potential. To focus on the *Journey* as a “Gothic” text would also do a disservice to Radcliffe’s work does as a *travel writer,* as she explores, much more directly and immediately, those touristic practices and postures this study has restored as a crucial context for her fiction.

It is important, then, to avoid simply reading the *Journey* as a travelogue shaped, at the outset, by its author’s previous works. But nor is it as a conscious break with their practices and preoccupations. Modern scholarship has sometimes tended towards the latter position, tending to identify a newly sceptical element in the *Journey*’s use of aesthetic discourses such as the Picturesque. For Dorothy McMillan this actually means that Radcliffe’s experience of real travel ‘worked towards a loss of conviction in the landscape strategies of the novels’ (McMillan 2000: 52).[[137]](#footnote-137) The *Journey* does critique the effectiveness of the Picturesque in comprehending and composing tevolutionary landscapes, but to regard this as a watershed moment would be to overlook the fusion of Gothic and travel this study has identified as a central concern in her work. The encounters with Radcliffe’s ruins – from the anonymous abbey of her debut to the eponymous ‘frowning’ castle of her greatest success – resonate as Gothic set-pieces for a contemporary audience precisely because they sceptically rehearse the assumptions of contemporary travellers whose attempt to fix them using familiar aesthetics are doomed to failure. The *Journey* needs to be read as part of this body of work, not as a pivot away from it, and this means acknowledging the ways in which Radcliffe does indeed pick up and explore familiar discourses such as the Picturesque. The decisions she makes as a *travel writer* in the *Journey* are interesting precisely because they speak to an ongoing concern with the relationship between travel and the Gothic and to the more specific concern with distance and retreat in the revolutionary context explored in this chapter.

Crucial to this is Radcliffe’s decision to combine Continental and British tourism in the same travelogue. In supplying the missing part of her continental voyage with a domestic tour, Radcliffe establishes a continuity between these two spheres at a time when the terms of such continuity were being called into question. Concerns about distance and retreat are therefore a part of the text’s schema: a compound of continental-revolutionary and domestic-Picturesque travel that necessarily requires the latter to be read in light of the former. In doing so, Radcliffe is making a decision that speaks to the concerns about travel, Gothic and revolutionary distance explored in this chapter. There was no necessary reason why the two tours should be combined in one travelogue and this, as Jeanne Moskal notes, seems to be a relatively (if not absolutely) unique occurrence in travel writing of the period (2000: 57; 2001: 217). For Moskal this decision sees Radcliffe ‘juxtaposing foreign with domestic travels’ in order to produce a ‘nationalist binary’ between England and France in particular. (Moskal 2000: 57). This is an important reading and the first to properly explore the relationship between the regions Radcliffe combines within her travelogue. Yet there is conjunction as well as opposition in Radcliffe’s treatment of this relationship and this is made clear from the way it is arranged by and narrated within the text. Radcliffe might have separated the two tours, stepping, as it were, from the Swiss border to Cumberland. Instead she narrates the return journey *to* England in some anxious detail, revisiting previously secure regions. As Moskal elsewhere observes, this sees Holland – a corollary for English domestic security and previously ‘unperturbed by war’ – become a place where the travellers are ‘refugees surrounded by other refugees’ (Moskal 2001: 57). “Domestic” and “foreign” exist in a potentially transformative relationship, not a static juxtaposition, and this is born out elsewhere in the *Journey*. Both parts of the text *are* separate genre pieces in their own ways. Ostensibly, at least, the voyage through Europe ‘follows a basic pattern established by accounts of the Grand Tour such as Addison’s’ (Dekker 2004: 83), being careful to make notes of appropriate political and economic information (though this, it is implied, may also have been partly supplied by Radcliffe’s husband, William).[[138]](#footnote-138) The voyage through the Lake District, meanwhile, cannot avoid re-treading Gilpin’s Picturesque *Mountains and Lakes* which had so recently been a source for *Udolpho* (including the famous reference to ‘beauty sleeping in the lap of horror’).[[139]](#footnote-139) Yet the two sections are also inter-related, if not directly interwoven. The journeys through the United Provinces and Germany are consistently preoccupied with the markers of past – and present – warfare and military action that would normally provide raw materials for the domestic Picturesque, whilst the tour of the Lake District cannot help finding markers of the warfare taking place back on the continent.[[140]](#footnote-140) In these ways Radcliffe’s text seems set out to travel – and thereby assert – the relationship between a “Gothic” revolutionary sphere and the more complacent print culture that would deny that relationship with it. This, as the present study has shown, is a pre-occupation of Radcliffe’s entire career, in so far as her work intervenes in the arena of contemporary travel and the contested place of the Gothic there. The only difference is that it is continental travel itself that is now invested with anxiety, leading it to threaten the cultural assumptions it previously served to affirm.

To fully appreciate these tensions, fusions and revisions within the *Journey* it is necessary to read it as a carefully and consciously constructed text. This may be Radcliffe’s first and only travelogue, but, as this study has revealed, it is also part of a career steeped in the writing of travel. In fact Radcliffe’s very title is significant and rewards close reading. *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794, Through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany with a Return Down the Rhine: To Which are Added Observations during a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland* is the longest title of any travelogue discussed in this study. It is also highly composite, with its own internal tensions and begged questions. At first glance, it clearly references both of the travel traditions Radcliffe is using: the continental Grand Tour with its southern trajectory, its temporal specificity and its discrete regions; and the domestic Picturesque Tour with its characteristic ‘Observations’ on scenic objects such as Rivers, Mountains or, as here, ‘Lakes’, in equally specific regions. Yet neither component is quite so simple. The objective imaginative geography of the continental tour is quickly put under temporal and geographical strain. The time here is almost too specific, as the full years favoured by travellers such as Addison, Smollett, Young and others are replaced by a specific ‘Summer’. This necessarily fixes the *Journey* within a specific revolutionary context that ‘foregrounds immediately the backdrop of war’ (Wright 2010: 133), but it also calls attention more generally to the brevity of the tour, giving it a fragmentary quality. Accordingly, geography begins to fragment. Holland is the only discrete unit mentioned, whilst Germany is present only in terms of a ‘Frontier’ and a river journey. Both markers are strangely transitory: a frontier necessarily shifts, in ways that a border should not; a river like the Rhine moves through regions and crosses borders. That ‘Frontier’ in particular seems to take a central place in the title, as the focus of the voyages it enumerates. It is what is reached ‘through Holland’ and it is what other regions and markers are appended to, with a ‘return’ and an ‘added’ domestic sequence. Here the title seems to beg a question: what does it mean to focus a Journey on a frontier? As Angela Wright observes, this ‘immediately foregrounds the military conflicts that [Radcliffe] witnesses in Germany’ (Wright 2013: 111). To speak of a frontier also plays upon the geographical and ideological assumptions of the continental tour: replacing it with something shifting. The traveller is not simply in motion relative to a settled geography, awaiting their observations and remarks; instead that geography may be shifting itself. This is exactly what Radcliffe will experience in the *Journey* as the ‘frontier’ of military conflict arrives earlier than expected and pursues the travellers during the ‘return’ it necessitates. This speaks to the way revolution reworks a simple juxtaposition between domestic security and foreign alterity. Such a fixed binary could be managed (and sustained) by earlier Grand Tourists in the way Chard formulates as ‘opposition and intensification’ (Chard 1986: 40-83). Yet the frontier at the centre of Radcliffe’s title offers no such stable distinction. Then there is the addition of the domestic ‘Tour’ to follow the fragmenting continental ‘Journey’. Here is another begged question: what does it mean to follow a Journey with a Tour? It would seem that the latter is more stable and coherent, suggestive of a structure and loose itinerary that pre-exists this specific travel performance. This is actually the case, of course, as Radcliffe is enacting her version of Gilpin’s *Mountains and Lakes* (1786), published nine years earlier. The question then is once more of distance between domestic security and revolutionary turbulence, as if the title enacts its own “Journey” from a fragmentary continent into the familiarity of the Lake District. But, if so, that Journey combines these regions rather than keeping them apart. The Tour may be geographically distinct from the Journey, separated across the colon that bisects Radcliffe’s title, but it depends on the former for the temporal details that also mark and define a work of travel. A close-reading of Radcliffe’s title should thus warn against separating out discussion of the text’s two components or overlooking the nuanced way in which it treats the relationship between the domestic and the revolutionary and the possibility of uncomplicated retreat from one to the other. Recognising this as early as Radcliffe’s title should foster an awareness of it from the text’s outset, as Radcliffe’s *Journey* begins in Holland.

The Dutch section of Radcliffe’s continental tour may not be as dramatic as later parts in which the travellers witness – and eventually flee from – the advancing military conflict, yet these relatively placid sections nonetheless play a key role in the text’s exploration of the relationship between British domestic familiarity and revolutionary turbulence on the continent. For Moskal, Holland is an example of the ‘third nation or region’ through which ‘British traveller-writers’ of the 1790s negotiated the lack of access to the traditional Grand Tour trajectory, beginning in France (Moskal 2001: 216-17). The United Provinces perform this function by offering a continuity with Britain, as Radcliffe situates the Dutch ‘on the positive side of the English/French divide’ (Moskal 2001: 217) and furthermore ‘prefers the clean peaceful and orderly society of commercial Holland to that of Germany’ (Wright 2013: 111). Accordingly, this is also the closest Radcliffe comes to participating in the confident imaginative geography of a more conventional Grand Tour. The first stop on Radcliffe’s tour, Hellevoetsluis (‘Helvoetsluys’), is appraised through landmarks (the ‘lofty tower’ of a church in the distance), the dress of inhabitants, the quality of inns and the economic significance of harbour buildings and facilities - the ‘objects most interesting to a people’ whose chief concerns – and a point of parallel and connection with England – are ‘the opportunities of commerce’ (Radcliffe 1795: 1-2). The Dutchmen of the town ‘differ from Englishmen [. . .] chiefly by wearing coarser clothes and by bringing their pipes with them into the street’. Even Radcliffe’s inn is ‘kept by English people’ (Radcliffe 1795: 3). Such features combine to make easy sense of Holland for the English traveller; a manageable (and relatively slight) alterity that can be interpreted in relation to the domestic and familiar.[[141]](#footnote-141)

Yet, as Moskal also observes, the function of the ‘third term’ could be more complex, ‘resisting, reinforcing or rethinking’ the binaries it substitutes for (Moskal 2001: 217). For Moskal this is present in Radcliffe’s awareness of commercial rivalry between Britain and Holland and an accompanying ‘nationalist envy’ (operating though economic metaphors of ‘Dutch cleanliness and Dutch dirt’) that problematizes any simplistic continuity between the two regions (Moskal 2001: 219). There is also another, more literal, sense in which the stability of Holland as a ‘third region’ from which to more securely negotiate the relationship between domestic and revolutionary spheres is called into question by Radcliffe’s text. Holland, it is frequently observed, is a doubly reclaimed nation: geographically reclaimed from the very sea that connects it to England and historically reclaimed from the control of its continental neighbours, particularly Spain. These circumstances seem suggestively intertwined as they resonate with the revolutionary warfare just beyond the country’s borders. Thus engineering works keep out a sea characterised as a greedy invader, aggrieved by the enterprising spirit of the Dutch nation and poised to sack their towns in vengeance. At Hellevoetsluis ‘the opportunities of commerce’ have increased ‘dangers’ by ‘admitting the water in some parts, while, for their homes and their lives, they must prevent it from encroaching upon others’ (Radcliffe 1795: 2). In Radcliffe’s description it is the domestic ‘homes’ and ‘lives’ – the private spaces and the people within them – that are threatened, not merely the commercial enterprises for which the waters are held back.[[142]](#footnote-142) Later, Radcliffe describes the way in which ‘for many miles, the land is preserved from the sea only by an artificial mound of earth, against which the water heavily and often impetuously strives for admission into the sheltered plains below [whilst] one who stands on the land side of the embankment hears the water foaming, as if over his head’ (Radcliffe 1795: 4). The sea is not merely an indifferent environmental force, it is personified as a besieger, ‘impetuously’ contesting the Dutch fortifications with a view to pillaging the land they ‘shelter’. The traveller’s personal sense of this is particularly interesting. Radcliffe offers the customary descriptions of the scope and construction of these works, but she also includes that embodied sensation of the waters above and only slightly beyond, ‘foaming’ ‘over [. . .] head’ - as if already drowning (Radcliffe 1795: 5). Though secured by these “fortifications” Radcliffe seems to imagine what it would feel like to be present as they failed.

The metaphorical potential of the revolutionary traveller, standing in relative calm and continuity with England, whilst turbulent forces seethe beyond the immediate border, does not need much unpacking. Yet Radcliffe’s first readers would not have needed the metaphor. It is important to bear in mind, as Wright does, that Radcliffe was travelling in Holland ‘in the midst of the War of the First Coalition (1793-7)’ as ‘revolutionary French armies were drumming up opposition to Britain on the continent’ (Wright 2010: 133). The French conquered the United Provinces in the following year and so, as Moskal rightly stresses, ‘as Radcliffe prepared her book for publication in May 1795, the subjugation of the Dutch was recent news’ (Moskal 2001: 217). This crucial context lends a great resonance to the text’s implicit interest in the precariousness of the Dutch nation, even more so to its explicit descriptions of fortifications and military preparations. These feel more immediately significant than the commonplace enumerations of Grand Tourism; Radcliffe has it ‘upon good military authority’ that the defences at Hellevoetsluis are ‘in such repair’ that they might presently resist a siege of ‘five weeks’. The specificity of such information cannot help resonating in a context of revolutionary warfare when it is important, of course, to have ‘good military authority’ close at hand (Radcliffe 1795: 4).[[143]](#footnote-143)

This consciousness of a possible future (aided, perhaps, by future retrospection), finds a crucial parallel as the text moves from the inventories of Grand Tourism to the Picturesque appraisal of history. Radcliffe’s description of The Hague, for example, also acknowledges its limited ‘fortifications’, but present circumstances soon give way to a meditation on a previous conflict: the Eighty Years War with Spain. Here Radcliffe looks back to describe the ‘magistrates of the then infant republic’ fleeing, leaving ‘the streets to be over-run with grass, and the place to become a desert under the eyes of its oppressors’ (Radcliffe 1795: 28). This brief, but strangely vivid “flashback” is more significant than it might appear. It speaks to an ongoing concern with Holland’s precarious reclamation from the forces of nature *and* tyrannical powers. The traveller explores the ramifications of this through a familiar discourse. The primary motif is that of the overgrown ruin – the centrepiece of the touristic Picturesque Gothic with which Radcliffe’s fictions are so frequently concerned. Here, as at Tintern, or another of Gilpin’s ruins, overgrowth carries connotations of overthrow: as if the grass which has ‘over-run’ the stronghold has itself pursued the inhabitants from the place. The site then becomes ‘a desert’, divested of human occupants, but fixed, crucially, for the beholder: the ‘eyes of its oppressors’. The core mechanism of the Picturesque is present – ruination as the visual memorialisation of vanished political agency – yet the chronology and agency that should organise this process are out of joint. This is not ruination as the emblem of historical progress; for an imagined moment it is not the enlightened traveller who gazes on The Hague, it is the forces of invading ‘oppressors’. The markers of past violence and trauma – Holland’s own “Gothic” history – have become a suggestive future: reactivated by the threats that surround the country in the present – and the retrospective consciousness of their realisation in the near future. The distance between these temporal points is suggestively closed as Radcliffe moves from the flight of the historical Dutch Government to note that the present palace is also depopulated, the Princess and Hereditary Princess having retreated to Guelderland, following the apparent death of the Hereditary Prince in a recent engagement between Dutch and French troops. Radcliffe dwells on history in a way that disrupts the surfaces of traditional travel discourses, whether the calm enumeration of the Grand Tour or the *be*calmed illustration of the Picturesque. These episodes are consistent with the innovations this study has marked in Radcliffe’s fiction, echoing the way in which the histories of sites such as Fontainville resist the discursive practices of traveller protagonists. Yet they do more than simply introduce a Gothic revenance; they also speak to the precariousness of the revolutionary present.

This mechanism is present elsewhere in the Dutch tour. At Delft, Radcliffe visits the palace of William I of Orange and the nearby Nieuwe Kirk, which houses his tomb. Both are conventional focal points for a continental tourist: architectural spectacles to be examined, described and appraised. Throughout though, Radcliffe’s focus is less on their present state and more on their association with the Prince’s assassination and resulting ‘melancholy place in history’. At the palace strangers are ‘always shown the staircase on which [the Prince] fell, and the holes made in the wall by the shot that killed him’. This forms a stock part of a stock tour, yet Radcliffe goes beyond physical description to recount the tale of ‘the old man, who keeps the house’. For a moment, the traveller adopts the position of one of her own omniscient narrators as ‘with as much agitation and interest as if it happened yesterday’, this aged figure recounts a story of treachery and murder that might have formed part of an inset tale in a Radcliffean romance:

“The prince and princess came out of that chamber – here stood the prince, here stood the murderer; when the prince stepped here to speak to him about the passport, the villain fired, and the prince fell all along here and died. Yes, so it was – there are the holes the balls made.” (Radcliffe 1795: 22)

It is not so hard to imagine an Adeline or an Emily hearing such a legend from a guide or domestic when enquiring into a storied chamber. Radcliffe then maintains the narrator’s role as she fleshes out the story’s historical context, noting that the ‘detestable action [of] the assassin’ was instigated by Philip the Second of Spain (Radcliffe 1795: 22). Next, the ‘melancholy excited on this spot is continued by passing from it to the tomb’ in the nearby Nieuwe Kirk (Radcliffe 1795: 22-23). It is a history of ‘detestable’ violence then, together with its resultant ‘wretchedness’ and ‘melancholy’ that structures this part of the traveller’s modern tour. At the Kirk itself Radcliffe seems to indulge a Gothic register once more, offering the reader a rich set-piece:

There the gloomy pageantry of the black escutcheons, above a choir, silent, empty and vast, and the withering remains of colours, won by hands long since gone to decay, prolong the consideration of the transientness of human worth and happiness, which can so easily be destroyed by the command, or the hand of human villainy. (Radcliffe 1795: 23)

The passage is more affective than descriptive. Its properties are emptiness and vastness. It is silent, not discursive. Time is not fixed in the hallmarks of period and style, but as a constant sense of ‘withering’ and ‘transientness’. The stated effect is that of a memento mori and, again, it is not so hard to imagine one of Radcliffe’s heroines stumbling upon a similar space (perhaps beyond a veiled portal) and reacting in a similar way. The Gothic register is deployed with suitable expertise, yet it allows Radcliffe to do something equally interesting as a travel writer: decentering a Grand Tourist perspective through a process that, as in Piozzi, seems to work through a consciousness of individual mortality. As at the palace, description focusses history not upon dates and chronologies but upon human actors: the twice-mentioned ‘hands’ that animate and impel events, but are ultimately transient. Yet, whereas Piozzi might offer such recognition in place of a stock description, Radcliffe immediately includes its antithesis:

The tomb is thought not to be exceeded by any piece of sepulchral grandeur in Europe [. . .] it was begun in 1609 [with] 28,000 florins as its price [. . .]. The length is 20 feet, the breadth 15, and height 27. A bronze statue of the prince, sitting in full armour [. . .] renders one side the chief [. . .]. (Radcliffe 1795: 23)

In sharp contrast to the vastness and emptiness of the previous description, Radcliffe now reconstructs the site according to every necessary means of appraisal: date, price, materials, dimensions, architectural detail. The closest this sober evaluation comes to affect is a dutiful acknowledgement of the tomb’s place in the ranking of similar sites within the continental Tour (a ranking maintained by its travelogues). Even those transient hands and human actors are now robustly present, in the marble and stone of sepulchral sculpture. Side by side, the two descriptions seem to encapsulate a tension in Radcliffe’s Holland. The “surface” of a conventional travelogue is present, with its discourse of becalmed descriptions, connections and comparisons, but so too is a history of invasive violence and external machinations that might soon be repeated and, indeed, have been.

This sense of temporal and political slippage invests the imaginative geography of Radcliffe’s Holland with the ‘revolutionary’ turbulence that has yet to mark it physically. Present uncertainty is configured through an awareness of a potential convergence between past and future so that Holland too is situated at a kind of ‘frontier’ – one that has already shifted between the writing, editing and reading of the text. Radcliffe’s presentation of this uncertainty resonates with her fictional practice, not simply because it incorporates a Gothic register, but because it echoes what the Gothic has always done in her work: undermining the fixity and continuity of imaginative geographies deployed and maintained within contemporary travel.

Germany provides an immediate lesson in the limitations of such discourses. Its landscapes are frequently anticipated during the latter part of the Dutch tour: from the Waal they appear as the ‘faint and fainter blue of two ridges of hills’ producing, ‘with the mellow green of nearer woods and meadows’, a ‘combination of hues surprisingly gay and beautiful’ (Radcliffe 1795: 80). Yet the first thing Radcliffe remarks in Germany itself is the poverty of those landscape’s inhabitants: ‘from almost every cluster of huts barefooted children run out to beg [. . .] nearly throwing themselves under the wheels to catch your money, which [. . .] the bigger seize from the less’ (Radcliffe 1795: 85). In spite of this ‘the land is not ill-cultivated’, through Radcliffe observes ‘in the looks and manners of the people, that very little of its productions is for them’ (Radcliffe 1795 85-86). This precedes more detailed description of ‘delightful catches of extensive landscapes, varied with hills clothed in their summits with wood, where frequently the distance spires of a town peeped out most picturesquely’ (Radcliffe 1795: 86). As in Holland, two registers exist in parallel. It is not that the process of viewing is interrupted by beggars (as at Gilpin’s Tintern). The two descriptions are separate. Yet Radcliffe has them allude to each other in a way that exposes the decision to select one over the other. It is possible to look at the ‘catches’ of landscapes ‘clothed’ with wood, yet these very terms invoke the resources those landscapes produce, but which their inhabitants do not benefit from. To attend instead to ‘the *looks* [. . .] of the people’ [emphasis added] is to see this evidenced by objects, not subjects, of an “aesthetic” gaze. JoEllen Delucia has also acknowledged this systematic ‘malfunction’ of ‘conventional aesthetic theories’ (and associated touristic perspectives) as Radcliffe encounters the evidence of revolutionary conflict (Delucia 2014: 140). For Delucia this is ‘a critique of the distancing and alienating techniques at the heart of disinterested and abstract treatments of space and time’ that works by ‘breaking the frame’ of the Picturesque and other aesthetic discourses (Delucia 2014: 137). This certainly seems to be the case (and will recur throughout the German tour). What is also interesting though is the way Radcliffe seems to set up the distanced and abstracted view in parallel with the empathetic and particular. This renders the contrast between the two more visible, but it also makes it more specific. There is a sense that Radcliffe is aware of what a conventional imaginative geography cannot include and of the increasing precariousness of that limitation in a revolutionary situation that displaces present populations to further complicate the static sites and markers of Grand or Picturesque tourism. This becomes remarkably visible as Radcliffe’s Germany is ‘almost uniquely populated by convents and castles’ (Wright 2010: 136) allowing another set of “Picturesque” views to predominate in this section of the *Journey*.

Viewed from ‘some little distance’ the town of Neuss is promising. It ‘stands upon a gentle ascent’, marked by ‘the spires of several convents’. Yet Radcliffe begins a new paragraph with the strangely abrupt observation that: ‘On each side of the gate, cannon balls of various sizes remain in the walls’. No specific context is provided for these. They are not framed as the markers of a particular historical episode and the occasion for the Grand Tourist’s learned commentary: their ‘various sizes’ seem to suggest multiple sieges, yet it is unclear whether these are ‘vestiges’ of ‘ancient [or] modern history’; they simply ‘remain’ in the walls’ (Radcliffe 1795: 96). Nor are they noticed for their aesthetic effects: it is the balls themselves that are remarked, not the Picturesque ruination they might have produced. There is an echo of episodes in the Dutch tour here, as past conflict marks the present. Yet this time the incident does not operate through a parallel between persistent pasts and possible futures; instead the cannon balls resist explanation – and chronology – altogether. This sense of a pervasive conflict, unredeemed by the usual discourses of travel, persists as Radcliffe enters the town and is confronted by the markers of its *present* situation. She arrives ‘immediately into a close street of high, but dirty stone houses’ where the inhabitants cluster in ‘haggard’ groups and ‘stare upon you with looks of hungry rage, rather than curiosity’. The houses, meanwhile, ‘seem to have been left after a siege and never entered since’ (Radcliffe 1795: 96-97). The markers of conflict observed at the gates thus persist, gaining a greater association with contemporary civil and military unrest as the townspeople evoke the revolutionary fear of mob violence. There are echoes of Young here as the secure and special status of the English traveller is denied Radcliffe. Though there are no other ‘passengers’ in the town, her party are not objects of ‘curiosity’ and respect, but of a ‘hungry rage’ that is more suggestive of envy. Accordingly, the inhabitants ‘excite, at first, more fear than pity’ (Radcliffe 1795: 96). The pathos that occasionally accompanies the Grand Tourist’s judgement of inferior continental politics and economics is displaced by fear for their person. Unsurprisingly, the Picturesque is similarly ineffective here. As Delucia observes, this episode is a key example of its ‘malfunction’ in the *Journey* as the distant ‘spires nestled in the hillside disappear’ give way to a ‘breakage in the aesthetic frame caused by [Radcliffe’s] confrontation with war, hunger and want’ (Delucia 2014: 140). Once more, Radcliffe seems sensitive to the inherent property of revolution: a breakage in the chronologies that structure conventional descriptions and appraisals. The cannon balls that mark the walls and the houses that seem to be in a permanent state of siege damage are almost ahistorical, having no clear association with present or past conflict and no frame available for them thereby, as if the Revolution has given them a strange permanence.

In this way the *Journey’s* version of “revolutionary travel” seems to build upon the texts discussed earlier, including Radcliffe’s own novels. “Travellers” do not succeed in maintaining a privileged distance from “revolutionary” turbulence. Nor is it possible to sustain the projections of Picturesque sanctuary and stability envisioned by La Motte at Fontainville (or Desmond at Montfleuri’s estate).[[144]](#footnote-144) Instead the traveller is forced to negotiate a geography that resists such simple schema and (as at Neuss) refuses them a privileged position in relation to it. It is this sense of de-centered personal vulnerability that increasingly becomes a focal point for the experience of revolution.

At Cologne Radcliffe’s party are directly confronted with military authorities and required to show their ‘passport, for the first time’. The ‘soldier’ responsible does not understand the language of the documents (French) and his comrades encircle the travellers who are forced to pay in order to prevent an examination of their baggage. There is a faint echo here of earlier travel writers being importuned by continental beggars who press and impress upon their persons. For Piozzi such obstacles were visually unavoidable and questioned the imaginative geography projected by the Grand Tourist. For Radcliffe these obstacles are *physically* unavoidable and absolutely deny the privileged position of the traveller themselves. As if to underline this, the party are forced to write their names in ‘the corporal’s dirty book’ (Radcliffe 1795: 101). The act of writing should be the final affirmation of the traveller’s status: the process by which they muster and master the objects they have examined into the imaginative geography their account constructs and reiterates. Yet the literal author-ity of this act is here reversed. The traveller is directed to write and it is themselves – their name – that is inscribed within a ‘dirty’ book: as if the act of writing itself has transferred them from observing persona to embodied object; a part of the ‘dirty’ streets they traverse. The anxiety this invokes is present as Radcliffe describes being ‘allowed to drive, under a dark tower, into the city’ where ‘instantly, the narrow street, gloomy houses, stagnant kennels and wretchedly looking people reminded us of the horrors of Neuss’ (Radcliffe 1795: 102). Neuss, where the de-centering of the traveller and the limitations of the imaginative geographies of Picturesque and Grand tourism was so evident, has now become the archetype for this kind of ‘horror’: focussed upon the anxiously embodied traveller, out of joint with their objects. The continuation of these experiences at Cologne leads Radcliffe to offer a commentary on the vanities of travel, including the very Piozzean acknowledgement that:

A writer of travels, does not choose to show that his course could lie through any scenes deficient of delights; or that, if it did, he was not enough elevated by his friends, importance, fortune, fame or business, to be incapable of observing them minutely. (Radcliffe 1795: 104)

Radcliffe ends by observing that travel writers seem concerned that ‘their prosperity shall be painted on their volumes’ (Radcliffe 1795: 104). This metaphor is telling and it is significant that this passage comes here, after the experiences of Cologne recounted above (and of Neuss, immediately preceding them) The volumes that present a tour and its imaginative geography stand in for the embodiment they do not record; they represent the act of writing and author-ity that guarantees the traveller’s privilege as observer rather than object. Yet Radcliffe has but recently been entered into the ‘dirty book’ of a malignant official whose own authority she is very much subject to. The opposition between this all-too physical inscription and the imagined ‘volumes’ that should be ‘painted’ with her ‘prosperity’ is stark. The extended metaphor of writing and inscription speaks to the experience of the traveller seeking to write revolution, but in danger of being written upon by it. The episode is followed by one that translates this anxiety into what is probably the *Journey*’s most explicit Gothic set-piece.

Eventually Radcliffe does meet with an object worth appreciating and describing at Cologne: ‘a convent of the order of Clarisse’. A contemporary reader (or modern critic) anticipating the prospect of Radcliffe finally describing a real convent is unlikely to be disappointed by the following account of ‘the severe rules of this society’, whose members live in utter isolation from friends and family:

Such horrible perversions of human reason make the blood thrill and the teeth chatter [. . .] The poor nuns, thus nearly entombed during their lives, are, after death, tied upon a board, in the clothes they die in, and with only their veils thrown over the face, are buried in the garden of the convent. (Radcliffe 1795: 109)

All the hallmarks of the Gothic are present: the equation of conventual life with living entombment, the sadistic overtones of the nun’s mortuary treatment, and the final focus on their bodies as forgotten markers of suffering, hidden below the surface of a garden in which a heroine – or a tourist – might later wander. Radcliffe even supplies – and apparently shares in – the reader’s reaction. As an isolated incident this is one of the few overtly “Gothic” moments in the *Journey*. The specific context for the episode is important, however. Radcliffe arrives at this convent seeking a touristic refuge from the claustrophobic embodiment, imagery of incarceration and subjection to authority that characterises her experience of Cologne and develops the earlier anxieties provoked at Neuss. What she finds merely reflects these back at her, through the Gothic. The association with the metaphorically and literally entombed nuns is heightened by the observation that Radcliffe’s own inn ‘had formerly been a convent’ (Radcliffe 1795: 108). This evokes the kind of architectural palimpsest that typifies Gothic sites such as Radcliffe’s own. Does the traveller, like one of her heroines, now reside above the forgotten bodies of the site’s former occupants?[[145]](#footnote-145) This episode is more than an insertion of the Gothic into Radcliffe’s travelogue – a brief stylistic indulgence – it is interesting not just because it finds the traveller echoing the experience of the Gothic protagonist, but because it finds her echoing the experience of the *Radcliffean* Gothic protagonist: a hero or heroine who arrives at Gothic sites through the practices of travel and experiences them most vividly when the discourses associated with those practices fail. This, it seems, is also the experience of the revolutionary traveller, who seeks the materials of Grand or Picturesque tourism but instead finds herself reflected in the nuns whose spaces she now inhabits: subject to a less dramatic, but nonetheless unsettling, authority and restriction.[[146]](#footnote-146)

This experience comes to a head, famously, at Freiburg, on the Swiss border. It is here that Radcliffe is prevented from travelling onwards as, once more, her passport is suspected. The details of this incident are worth dwelling upon. It is not simply that the party’s documents are refused, but that they are *misread*. The passport is meant to confirm the Radcliffes’ status as English travellers. As such it serves to grant them the privilege associated with that role in general, and, more specifically, to confirm their separation from the revolutionary conflict they are passing through. This is the same privilege Young appeals to unsuccessfully before first being mistaken for a French aristocrat and then adopting the manner of a French revolutionary. Radcliffe too is suspected of being ‘native’: the official believes her name is ‘not Radcliffe, but something like it, with a German termination’ and that her party are ‘not English, but Germans’ (Radcliffe 1795: 275). The privileged person and permissions of the continental tourist are unsustainable in a geography transformed by revolutionary turbulence. This is affirmed as the travel *writer* is again subject to hostile acts of inscription and interpretation: their true identity “overwritten” by the insistent misreading of their passport.

This symbolic violence upon the traveller’s identity transitions into the oblique fear of actual violence to their person. Radcliffe goes on to describe the ‘terror’ with which the party ‘perceived ourselves to be so much in [the Commandant’s] power, in a place where there was a pretext for military authority’. To remain in Freiburg and dispute the issue would be to suffer ‘all the possible horrors of oppression’ enacted through the ‘malignant disposition’ of these authorities (Radcliffe 1795: 276). A Gothic language once more enters the travelogue in order to express the anxieties generated by this revolutionary collapse in the traveller’s identity. Freiburg, like Udolpho, is a space of confinement and ‘oppression’, standing before Sublime vistas and Picturesque prospects: the ‘far-seen delights of Switzerland’ whose ‘mountains’ were ‘so lately viewed with enthusiastic hope’. Denied her proper identity and status, Radcliffe, like her own Emily, vows not to be ‘ever again’ in the ‘power’ of the fortified city’s authorities and turns towards her own La Vallée: the sanctuary of England – the region that anchors – and might restore – the traveller’s privileged status (Radcliffe 1795: 277).

This incident is the fulcrum of the text Radcliffe constructs in her *Journey*. She begins a process here that resonates with her wider decision to combine these apparently very different journeys within the same travelogue. Critics have tended to consider the two sections of Radcliffe’s *Journey* as existing in juxtaposition and opposition as continental experiences place the separateness and security of England in relief. For Moskal, the text provides ‘an ideological unity based on a myth of English national identity’ that is maintained by placing England – specifically the Lake District – within a ‘taxonomy of national characters’ explored across the wider travelogue. This creates a ‘simple, pervasive binary between what is English and what is not’ (Moskal 2000: 56-57). For Watt, Radcliffe’s ‘experience of continental Europe’ also appears to strengthen her fondness for an “island race” rhetoric grounded in ‘the idea of Britain’s spatial separation from the rest of Europe’ (Watt 2014: 69) – a separation Katarina Gephardt sees embedded in landscape descriptions, where the ‘appreciative survey of British landscapes [. . .] is predicated on the boundary between Britain and the Continent’ (Gephardt 2010: 15). These perspectives can be evidenced through references to Radcliffe’s own comments, such as her sympathy with ‘Englishmen, who feel, as they must, the love of their own country much increased by the view of others’ – views of ‘human suffering’ that offset the ‘simplicity, the innocence and the peace’ of scenes in the Lake District (Radcliffe 1795: 187, 405; qtd. in Watt 2014: 69). Such sentiments embody a desire for distance and retreat to English security, as desirable for Radcliffe as it is for other revolutionary travellers such as Young. Yet they do not necessarily imply her belief in an English exceptionalism. As Wright observes, Radcliffe clearly sympathises with the suffering peoples she witnesses (and depicts) and her reference to England’s ‘natural security’ is just that: a fact of geography, not social and political superiority (Wright 2010: 140-141). Moreover, the *Journey* is structured and composed in a way that renders geographical separation questionable. This is a text concerned with the fluidity of binaries barriers and borders – including the shifting ‘frontier’ at the centre of its title – and the relationship between its two sections is one of articulation and overlap as much as opposition and juxtaposition. This is apparent in the Lake District, but is foreshadowed much earlier as England begins to enter Radcliffe’s *Journey*, well before she arrives in England itself. This is because it now becomes a reference point for the final part of the continental journey. In fact, Radcliffe prefaces her account of the passport’s refusal by remarking the ‘reports we daily heard of some approaching change in Switzerland unfavourable to England’ (Radcliffe 1795: 275). This is presented to allay the disappointment at the border, but, together with the official’s refusal to recognise and respect the travellers’ nationality, it also serves to bring the security of England – and Englishness – into question. The domestic sanctuary is both a point of refuge – a destination away from continental turbulence – and a site implicated within – and under threat from – that same turbulence. This sense persists as Radcliffe describes a return journey that gradually transmutes into a kind of fugitive flight.

Leaving Freiburg, Radcliffe writes that ‘the attractions of home gathered strength’ and ‘the inconveniences of Germany [. . .] could scarcely be noticed when we knew them to lie in the road to England’ (Radcliffe 1795: 278). This has the effect of reasserting the privileged status of Englishness, yet it also associates England, more implicitly, with the turbulence that necessitates this return. Rather like Smith’s Desmond, Radcliffe projects Englishness as a means of orientating the journey through revolutionary Europe. The question is whether this will work; whether obstacles and ‘inconveniences’ really will be ‘scarcely noticed’ on the return journey. It soon becomes apparent that they will not be. Instead, the consciousness of impending conflict seems to build as Radcliffe gets *closer* to home. In Biel, a day from Freiburg, the travellers arrive at midnight to find the way ‘rendered nearly impassable by military carriages’ (Radcliffe 1795: 278). On the second day they are delayed by a lack of post horses, which have been commandeered for the Austrian army. Later, arriving at Mentz, Radcliffe finds an inn ‘filled with refugees’ and hears reports of ‘unfortunate events to the allies’ (Radcliffe 1795: 279). In this way the travellers experience an escalating conflict that involves English interests, even as they draw closer to England itself. This lends an urgency to the final section of the continental tour, as if the pursuit of revolutionary turbulence might cut the travellers off before they reach England; it also troubles any sense of binary opposition and “polarity” between Britain and the continent.

It is now that the decision is made to make the reminder of the German journey by boat, with Radcliffe noting that ‘Mentz is the usual place of embarkment for a voyage down the Rhine, the celebrated scenery of whose banks we determined to view, as some compensation for the loss of Switzerland’. As a ‘customary’ practice this feels like a means of re-asserting the schema of continental travel and scenic tourism, in the face of mounting conflict. Yet there is a tension here. After all, it is this very conflict that is hastening Radcliffe’s departure, as she acknowledges a desire to ‘escape’ the ‘fatigues’ and ‘uncertainties’ created by the present conditions and the ‘unusual influx of travellers upon the roads’ (Radcliffe 1795: 280). These presumably include the armed forces and refugees Radcliffe has so far encountered and whose demands have already reduced the availability of horses for a land journey. Their description as ‘travellers’ strives to maintain a veneer of conventionality, matching the presentation of the river tour as a scenic diversion rather than a practical necessity. Yet the reality of the situation becomes clear when the party makes ‘enquiries for a passage vessel’ and discovers the ‘unpleasant truth, that the dread of another invasion now began to be felt at Mentz, where, a fortnight before, not a symptom of it was discernible’ (Radcliffe 1795: 284). Revolutionary conflict is now proactively re-inscribing the regions the travellers have already recorded in her tour – and threatening to overtake them. Though presented as a ‘customary’ scenic tour, the river journey is a means of escape, in all but name.

A reading of the *Journey* that places it within the wider context of later eighteenth-century travel writing can spot something else quite fascinating here. In offering the reader an ostensibly scenic river tour (complete with castles along the shore-line) Radcliffe is reworking one of the ur-texts of Picturesque tourism. She is, if the pun may be excused, returning to the source of Gilpin’s aesthetic as her *Return Down the Rhine* (sufficiently significant to be a named section in the *Journey*’s title) adopts the perspective and materials of his debut *Observations on the River Wye*. Here too are historic fortifications, viewed from the river that should, as Gilpin had demonstrated thirteen years previously, provide an ideal foreground for such compositions: framing and reflecting their Picturesque potential. The problem, as Delucia observes, is that whereas Gilpin had introduced the Picturesque ‘to describe the beauty of ancient Welsh castles for British tourists’ Radcliffe is describing a landscape which is *presently* at war. As such ‘an aesthetic used to assimilate temporally distant Welsh rebellions into the now-peaceful British Isles invites spectators to rethink the occlusions and displacements of the Picturesque’ (Delucia 2014: 145). Delucia herself does not draw a specific parallel between the *Rhine* and the *Wye* “tours”, yet her observation is highly appropriate to Radcliffe’s river voyage. The Picturesque river journey is itself ‘displaced’ here, exported to the revolutionary continent (in an echo of the fictional travellers discussed earlier) and tasked with reframing anxious retreat as leisurely scenic tourism. Yet, in the process it restates an ambiguous continuity between England and the continent. As Radcliffe draws nearer to England, she travels over a familiar “English” imaginative geography whose constituent properties of historical and aesthetic stasis seem troublingly reanimated.

A striking example of this is offered at St Goar where ‘the Rhine nowhere, perhaps, presents grander objects either of nature, or of art’. Here Radcliffe describes a ‘coup d’oeil’ of historic fortresses, ‘their ancient and gloomy structures giving ideas of the sullen tyranny of former times’ since which ‘generations’ have ‘passed away into the silence of eternity’ (Radcliffe 1795: 305). Though Radcliffe emphasises the Sublime here, she sets it within a Picturesque frame of historical assimilation, so that the ‘ancient and gloomy’ Gothic is reduced to a ‘sullen’ marker of ‘tyranny’ long-past: (the former term somewhat undercutting the impact of the latter). The sublimity of the scene is invested instead in the natural forces that outlast these human structures. Thus far Radcliffe’s Rhine is not so far removed from Gilpin’s Wye. Yet the fortifications’ historical stasis is awkwardly juxtaposed with the subsequent observation that the place has ‘in time of war a numerous garrison’ and therefore ‘an air of somewhat more animation than might be expected’. The point – though Radcliffe does not state it so directly – is that this *is* such a ‘time of war’. As such, the party soon find themselves confronted with another military checkpoint, this time manned by ‘a Hessian sergeant’, with the result that the traveller’s ‘names and condition’ are once more ‘written in his book’ (Radcliffe 1795: 308). The incident is not presented as bearing any kind of threat. Instead Radcliffe seems at pains to make it ridiculous, noting that the official seems unable to read any language but German.[[147]](#footnote-147) Yet, for all this, the reader must remember that it was only a short time ago – in travel and travelogue – that Radcliffe was entered into a similar ‘dirty book’ by an officer whose inability to “read” the travellers’ identity was more menacing than pathetic. Foolish as the Hessian sergeant may be, it is noted that he ‘demanded’ this act of inscription and apparent that such orders cannot be refused.

As at Freiburg, this confrontation with “despotic” military authority seems to introduce a Gothic register. At Boppart, the traveller’s eye is drawn down from the ‘fine Benedictine nunnery and abbey’ that are ‘perched’ upon the ‘mountain above’ to the more immediate vision of ‘two Capuchins’ walking ‘along the shore, beneath the dark cliffs . . . wrapt in the long black drapery of their order’ with ‘their heads shrouded in cowls that half concealed their faces’, the result appearing ‘gloomily sublime’ (Radcliffe 1795: 310). The transition recalls the preface to Radcliffe’s own *Sicilian Romance*, with its shift from the Picturesque aesthetics of distantly framed architecture to the obscure agency of a figure whose movement in the foreground reanimates the prospect in a very un-Gilpinesque manner.[[148]](#footnote-148) Following the Rhine’s ‘eastern bank’ beyond Boppart Radcliffe describes the:

Narrow and gloomy forest glens [. . .] once terrible for more than their aspect, having been the haunt of robbers, of whose crimes some testimonies still remain in the tombs of murdered travellers near the shore. In the ruins of castles and abandoned fortresses within the recesses of these wild mountains, such banditti took up their abode. (Radcliffe 1795: 315)

This is another passage that would not be out of place setting the scene in one of Radcliffe’s fictions – perhaps describing the fearful anticipations of a travelling heroine. Yet it is not simply that the author is letting slip an urge to exercise her favoured fictional style in her travelogue. In context this description has a specific resonance. Whereas the description at Boppart transitioned away from Picturesque distances to a ‘gloomily’ obscure foreground, here the shift is even more pronounced. The ‘ruins of castles and abandoned fortresses’ may be posited amidst distant ‘wild mountains’ but there is no opportunity to convert them into a Picturesque scene, for the simple reason that there is no such scene to be seen. The architecture a traveller like Gilpin would appraise from the river is not visible from the river. Its place is taken, instead, by the ‘tombs of murdered travellers’. This is a fascinating example of an anxiety that has pursued travel writing throughout this study: the fear that the traveller themselves might lose their privileged subjectivity and become a mortuary object within the landscape they view. Here though it is particularly apt. This fugitive river tour does not reflect the scenic pleasures of the Picturesque, but the anxieties of the Gothic.

Revisiting Cologne, the conceit of the river tour comes under strain from proximity to the military frontier – ‘the inconveniences of its neighbourhood to the seat of war’ (Radcliffe 1795: 326). Cologne has already stymied attempts at Picturesque framing and presented instead the ‘Gothic’ convent, site of discomforting bodies that unsettle the traveller’s own embodiment. If anything, this is made more explicit. The streets are now populated with other travellers in disorderly retreat from the approaching armies, so that ‘gentlemen’ are seen ‘carrying their own baggage’ and ‘families’ are heard of having ‘passed the night in the open marketplace’ (Radcliffe 1795: 327). These are joined by the arrival of ‘hospital waggons’ bearing ‘the emaciated figures and ghastly countenances’ of their wounded occupants’ beneath the windows of Radcliffe’s lodgings. The distinction between wounded soldiers and fugitive travellers – between revolution and its erstwhile observers and commentators – seems unclear as both flow into the city and become objects of suffering embodiment. Radcliffe’s own security and separation is not guaranteed. Her existing vessels and ‘watermen’ are ‘not allowed to proceed lower’ down the river, whilst to travel once more by land would be to join ‘the crowds of travellers, that must fill the inns on the road’ – a scenario that absolutely inverts the tourist’s privilege. New boats are eventually procured with ‘some difficulty’, but it is hard now to sustain any sense of the Rhine voyage as a voluntary indulgence in a favoured aesthetic. Instead, the river tour that seemed designed to circumvent this revolutionary turbulence now seems overtaken by it.

Once more the Gothic communicates this anxiety as, Udolpho-like, the Rhine’s fortifications become threatening spectators rather than Picturesque spectacles. Travelling between Cologne and Dusseldorf, Radcliffe’s boat pauses ‘opposite to Zons’. Her description here recalls one her heroines, enjoying the temporary respite of a scenic reverie: ‘listening to an old French song [having] almost forgotten the chance of interruption from any abuses of power.’ The narrative style continues as Radcliffe introduces the ‘low, but eager voice’ of the boat’s ‘steersman’ who fears that the party might be ‘detained’ if spotted by the nearby fortifications. So the party fall ‘silent for a quarter of an hour’ as they ‘glide unnoticed under the opposite bank’ (Radcliffe 1795: 330). The same approach must soon be taken at Dusseldorf itself, which Radcliffe must pass with only a brief view of the city walls and palace, ‘rising immediately above the water’ (Radcliffe 1795: 332). These incidents seem to acknowledge the long implicit sense that the travellers have become fugitives, slipping past threatening fortifications. They also represent the explicit impossibility of a kind of scenic travel – informed by Gilpin’s seminal Wye tour – that, so far, has merely been strained and distorted. As *River Wye* explains, to view a castle from the water is ideal. Yet, whereas Gilpin can describe having ‘rested on our oars’ (Gilpin 1782: 17) to better compose a view of structures such as Goodrich Castle, to do the same at Dusseldorf would be ‘a sacrifice of too much time to be made, while an army was advancing to the opposite shore’ (Radcliffe 1795: 331).

Soon Radcliffe takes leave of the Rhine with a farewell that acknowledges the tensions in this part of her *Journey*. The river has ‘presented to us, at first, features of the boldest grandeur, mingled with the sweetest beauty’: an exemplar of Picturesque fusion. Yet it has also been required to bear the travellers ‘safely past a shore, pressed by the hasty steps of distress, as well as threatened by those of ravage from a flying and a pursuing army’ (Radcliffe 1795: 348). The ‘frontier’ foregrounded in Radcliffe’s title has pursued her throughout the Rhine *Journey*, recasting regions she has already visited (such as Mentz and Cologne) in a way that undercuts the process by which continental travel writing traditionally fixes its materials into a stable text and the imaginative geography it sustains. On its own this is a powerful example of the way Revolution reworks such practices, harking back to the questions begged in the earlier close-reading of the *Journey*’s full title. But the specific details of the Rhine tour mean there is even more at stake here and that the central fulcrum of Radcliffe’s title is being addressed: the relationship between the revolutionary continent and the Picturesque heartland of the English Lake District. The Rhine voyage is the last significant section of Radcliffe’s continental tour. As such, it is precursor to the coming description of England. Yet this is more than a circumstance of geography. Throughout the river journey, Radcliffe has been orientated towards England, both literally in her references to it as a destination and (what is perhaps *more* important) figuratively, in the way her Rhine invokes and reworks Gilpin’s Wye. The safety offered by the Rhine then is, in some sense, the safety of an English tradition of scenic tourism. As in a text like *Forest* or *Desmond*, this has come under strain when transplanted from domestic to “revolutionary” travel. But, whereas both of those novels uphold the possibility of a retreat (most explicitly in *Desmond*, where Smith’s characters take refuge in England) Radcliffe’s *Journey* complicates this by continuing into that retreat. This is a crucial feature of her text (and of her construction of that text). The continuation into England raises the question of continuity between the revolutionary continent and domestic security that might otherwise have been eluded. The Rhine voyage has already begun to pose that question, but the final part of Radcliffe’s *Journey* will necessarily explore it further.

**In Gilpin’s footsteps: the lake tour**

Radcliffe’s style changes slightly for her Lake tour. Whereas the continental *Journey* had tended to proceed methodically (even re-describing points on the return voyage) it is very much the Lake District, rather than England as a whole that is Radcliffe’s focus now. She offers only passing descriptions of Kent and London before more detailed descriptions of Derbyshire and Lancashire begin the domestic tour proper. This has the effect of situating the Lake District in particular as an epitome of the English retreat and sanctuary that Radcliffe has looked forward to from Europe. This is appropriate to an accepted sense of the region and its people as being isolated from the turbulence and vices of modernity – as Watt recognises when he states that Radcliffe’s ‘description of the people of the Lakes seems to be inflected by a deep sense of “national” exceptionalism’ (Watt 2014: 69); their ‘plain but not rude’ character preserved in contrast to continental counterpoints. The Lake District also has a wider significance, however, for Radcliffe and for eighteenth-century travel writing. This, as the subject of Gilpin’s “magnum opus”, is the epicentre of the Picturesque tradition and the texts that had influenced Radcliffe throughout her career. Indeed, there is a neat symmetry here. Just as Gilpin presaged his *Mountains and Lakes* with the earlier and shorter *River Wye*, so too does Radcliffe commence her own Lake and Mountain tour after having completed a “scenic” river tour.[[149]](#footnote-149) This study has explored the way Radcliffe reworks Gilpin throughout her career, from the Scottish setting of her first fiction to the use of his *Mountains and Lakes* as a model for the companionable scenic tourism in the first part of *Udolpho*. Throughout she has revealed and explored the potential for a Gothic imagination Gilpin’s aesthetic aims to exclude. This though is the first (and only) time Radcliffe will follow in Gilpin’s footsteps as a published travel writer. For her then, the Lakes are not just a convenient addendum to the *Journey*; they are a return to the heartland of the travel tradition that has influenced her career so far. Viewed in this way, the relatively short Lake tour becomes one of Radcliffe’s most important writings. It also carries extra weight as a counterpoint for the revolutionary continent. This is the epicentre of the Picturesque aesthetic, together with its politics of continuity and paternalism. Radcliffe’s portrayal of it must be – and is – significant.

The Picturesque is immediately established as a register for the domestic tour, which promptly appraises England’s characteristic nexus of ‘sheltered mansions [. . .] substantial farms [and] neat villages’ all comparable to ‘cabinet pictures’. These are contrasted with ‘German scenery’ that can be ‘viewed to advantage only from a distance’ (Radcliffe 1795: 370-71).[[150]](#footnote-150) Distance *from* the continent seems established, yet any sense of complete transition is undercut by almost equally prompt references to revolution. Kendal is one of the first significant stops on Radcliffe’s Lake Tour and here she observes ‘an obelisk’ commemorating the Glorious Revolution of 1688. This is a foundational moment in the Whig historiography that underpins the stable continuity of Picturesque politics, yet Radcliffe’s remarks place it within a far more turbulent contemporary context:

At a time, when the memory of that revolution is reviled, and the praises of liberty itself endeavoured to be suppressed by the artifice of imputing to it the crimes of anarchy, it was impossible to omit any act of veneration to the blessings of this event. (Radcliffe 1795: 389)

For Moskal, this is an essentially conservative ‘denunciation of the Foxite equation between 1688 and 1789’ that refuses to associate 1688 with the ‘crimes’ of 1789 and therefore ‘holds the revolutions in stark binary’ (Moskal 2000: 58). Yet, the statement can also be read in the opposite sense as criticising the demeaning of liberty through ‘imputing to it the crimes of anarchy’ so that it functions as ‘a critique of the repressive British political climate of the 1790s’ (Delucia 2015: 292; Watt 2014: 68). What is clear is that the relationship between the two revolutions *is* potentially ambiguous, presented as a matter of interpretation and imputation. The ‘starkness’ of Radcliffe’s statement also draws attention to itself in a manner neatly paralleling the monument that occasions it. It cannot be embedded within scenic descriptions – the ruins that emblematise a break from the anarchic past and the estate landscapes that reflect a settled political present. Instead it must be made explicit in a way that is uncharacteristic of both the landscape and the text.[[151]](#footnote-151) Already, there is a sense that continental revolution troubles the complacency of political principles that must be asserted monolithically, rather than be left implicit within the Picturesque – and remain open to interpretation even then.

Part of what seems to be at stake here is the exceptionalism and isolation of which the Lake District is emblematic – what Watt calls Radcliffe’s ‘fondness for [an] “island race” rhetoric’ (Watt 2014: 69). The continental revolution can recast the significance of objects within the landscape, as at Kendal, but it also appears in more innocuous places. In nearby Hawswater Radcliffe visits a parsonage. Here there is ‘a long window, overlooking the lake’ and offering a perfectly composed view of ‘the opposite woods, and the meadows that margined the water below’. Like a Claude glass, or other piece of Picturesque paraphernalia, this window seems able to invest the prospect with ‘the delights’ of multiple seasons: ‘the luxuriance of summer and the colouring of autumn successively spread[ing] their enchantments’. The situation is idyllic and ideal, explicitly sheltered and apart from the landscapes it seems to recompose as well as view. This is strangely and surprisingly undercut when Radcliffe observes that:

Here, too, lay a store of books, and, to instance that an inhabitant of this remote nook could not exclude an interest concerning the distant world, among them was a history of passing events. Alas! To what scenes, to what display of human passions and human suffering did it open. How opposite to the simplicity, the innocence and the peace of these! (Radcliffe 1795: 402)

For a reader of Radcliffe’s full *Journey*, the ability of the Revolution to make itself felt in a remote corner of the Lake District must have a powerful resonance. After all, these scenes of ‘human passions and human suffering’ have not so long ago been witnessed (as at Cologne, for example) within a text that is itself partially ‘a history of passing events’. Radcliffe may assert the ‘opposition’ between these very different scenes, but they are part of a continuity her text performs as well as observes. The reference to revolutionary ‘passion’ and ‘suffering’ as ‘scenes’ is also important. In this way the Picturesque potency of the window seems undercut, not by what it frames, but by something that forms part of that framing perspective. It is not possible to view these scenes without knowledge of other scenes, for which the ‘books’ and their ‘history’ provide a reminder that gestures back through Radcliffe’s own text.

These examples seem to trouble any sense that Radcliffe presents the Lake District in robust isolation from her continental voyage. Instead they do the opposite: reading at least some of the markers of England’s Picturesque heartland through the context of revolution. Of course, such explicit instances are relatively rare. The Lake District is not immediately affected by political and military activity in the way that Germany, or even Holland, were. However, acknowledging these connections does provide an interesting context for a more prevalent feature of Radcliffe’s Lake Tour and one that contemporary readers may have eagerly awaited: her own descriptions of British ruins, many of which are strikingly out of joint with their Picturesque predecessors.

Shortly after leaving the parsonage, Radcliffe travels down into Bampton vale. Here she describes a ‘glade so sequestered and gloomily overshadowed, that one almost expected to see the venerable arch of a ruin, peeping between the branches’. At first this feels like the kind of imaginative “improvement” of a scene permitted and encouraged by Gilpin: inserting additional Picturesque materials that the scene’s potential seems to demand. For Gilpin, this might be the occasion to draw back and judge the different effects to be achieved, along with their merits. Instead, Radcliffe draws the reader further *into* the prospect she has conjured: animating it with ‘monks glid[ing] beneath the solemn trees in garments scarcely distinguishable from the shades themselves’ (Radcliffe 1795: 404). Whereas Gilpin tends to carefully bracket or elide the stories and histories associated with real ruins, Radcliffe imagines a ruin and peoples it with activity; whereas Gilpin carefully composes and describes a scene, Radcliffe invests hers with an obscurity that baffles the eye. This is something she has done many times before in her fiction, yet it is a very different approach to Picturesque *tourism*. The effect is to loosen the traveller’s grip on landscapes that are materially and chronologically *present*, overlaying them with an obscure history. There are echoes here of descriptions on the continent where Picturesque chronologies were often rendered ambiguous, or re-animated in ways that resonated with present turbulence. Elsewhere, this effect is much more pronounced as Radcliffe visits physical ruins, with their own troubling histories.

Brougham Castle is one of the border fortifications Gilpin describes as ‘adorn[ing] the country they once defended’ (Gilpin 1786: II.86). His only historical and political reference here is to note associations with benevolent land ownership in the person of the Countess of Pembroke. For Radcliffe, the ruin’s history is much more detailed, much more troubling and much more *present*. Her description begins, quite strikingly, with a refutation of the Picturesque Gothic. In place of ‘the magnificence and gracefulness, which so often charm the eye in gothic ruins’, Radcliffe notes that sites such as Brougham ‘exhibit symptoms of the cruelties, by which their first lords revenged upon others the wretchedness of the continual suspicion felt by themselves’. Like Udolpho, this castle seems identified with a malevolent personality rather than coherent visual properties. It is not simply that the ruin fails to ‘charm the eye’; Radcliffe seems uninterested in taking a view that allows it to do so. Instead she lists interior features: ‘dungeons, secret passages and heavy iron rings remain to hint of unhappy wretches, who were, perhaps, rescued only by death from these horrible engines of a tyrant’s will’. The chronology and aesthetics of the Picturesque are collapsed so that the ruin’s physical details speak to the presence of history, rather than its passage. In fact, this effect extends beyond visible features. Radcliffe muses that the ‘bones’ of the Castle’s ‘victims’ are likely to be ‘laid beneath the damp earth of these vaults’ (Radcliffe 1795: 427). The implication, it seems, is that no amount of framing, composition or improvement can remove a historical resonance that would always be invisibly present at the ruin, beyond the means of the Picturesque to alter. Having demolished any attempt at presenting the castle’s exterior, Radcliffe tours its interior. Here, as in Holland and Germany, she indulges her taste for narration, noting that:

One almost saw the surly keeper descending [. . .] heard him rattle the keys of the chambers above, listening with indifference to the clank of chains and to the echo of that groan below, which seemed to rend the heart it burst from. (Radcliffe 1795: 428)

As has been the case surprisingly often in the *Journey*, Radcliffe offers a passage that feels lifted from her fiction. On the continent this process of reanimating turbulent and troubling histories seemed to resonate with present conflict, resisting the ability of Grand or Picturesque tourism to fix, frame and defer it. In the Lake District there is a less obvious relationship with current events, yet Radcliffe’s refusal of the Picturesque here may be even more significant. The conclusion is one that has been drawn throughout this study’s discussion of her fiction: the Gothic may be present beneath the veneer of an imaginative geography that ostensibly excludes it, invested in the wider imaginative and print culture of touring travel. To find Radcliffe making this point so explicitly when she finally undergoes her own domestic tour is appropriate. Yet, as the previous discussion has shown, there is a case for situating these descriptions within a broader context that *is* informed by Radcliffe’s experience of revolutionary travel. If episodes such as Kendal and Hawswater suggest that the Lakes do not offer a simple refuge from wider events then it is fitting that Radcliffe does not seem willing to accept a simplistic arrangement of their contents. England’s ruins could have been presented as a becalmed alternative to the troubling animus of Neuss, Cologne, the Rhineland castles, or even the Hague. Radcliffe ensures that they are not, just as her text keeps those other regions distant, but present.

As this study has demonstrated, Radcliffe knows what is at stake when describing a ruin within the “heartland” of Picturesque travel – and writing. The parallels between troublingly reanimated histories here and on the continent are therefore as significant as those more explicit references that also gesture towards revolutionary turbulence. The Lake District may offer a point of separation and security, as critics have tended to argue, yet revolution and its affects remain in view. An oblique, but effective example of this is offered in an episode that lies near the beginning of the domestic tour, but serves to re-present some of the questions that run through it.

During her journey north to the Lakes Radcliffe pauses to visit Hardwick Hall, in Derbyshire. This episode – and the decision to recount it in some detail – is interestingly situated within the text. Derbyshire receives no mention in Radcliffe’s title and stands slightly outside the schema of binary opposition between the revolutionary continent and the “sheltered” “domestic” Lake District that critics have seen in the *Journey*. Yet Hardwick is perhaps as close as Radcliffe comes to her *own* domestic tour, lying less than ten miles south of Chesterfield, home of her maternal family and relations.[[152]](#footnote-152) Indeed, there is almost a sense that Radcliffe has turned from tourist to tour-guide here, as she observes to the reader that ‘we may make one stop’ to ‘mention Hardwick’. At first this seems to be the occasion for a scenic view. Radcliffe sketches in the Hall’s situation on ‘an easy height’ with ‘three towers of hoary grey’ rising ‘with great majesty among the old woods’ so that its ‘features, of a most picturesque tint’ are ‘finely disclosed’ against the backdrop of the ‘Derbyshire hills’ (Radcliffe 1795: 371). The frame is promptly broken, however, as the mansion becomes animated by its “past”. Hardwick was incorrectly believed to have served as a prison for Mary I, Queen of Scots and this affective “history” draws the writer – and her reader in – so that Radcliffe follows ‘not without emotion, the path Mary had so often trodden, to the folding doors of the great hall, whose lofty grandeur, aided by silence and seen under the influence of a lowering sky, suited the temper of the whole scene’ (Radcliffe 1795: 372). This overturning of the Picturesque has all the hallmarks of Radcliffe’s best fictional set-pieces. Like Udolpho, Hardwick is invested with a property of ‘silence’ that stymies the discursive empowerment of companionable tourism, turning the ‘we’ of the travelogue into the isolation of an implied “she”. Meanwhile, the Hall acquires its own property of looking, its ‘lofty grandeur’ associated with the ‘lowering’ sky. Even the exterior that provided a platform for Picturesque appraisal now feels like a prison courtyard, to be crossed on the way to the ‘folding doors’; Radcliffe the scenic tourist becomes Mary, the incarcerated “Gothic heroine”. This transition is almost literally effected as ‘the scene of Mary’s arrival and her feelings upon entering this solemn shade came involuntarily to the mind’. Radcliffe herself now seems to experience:

The noise of horses’ feet, and many voices from the court; her proud yet gentle and melancholy look, as, led by my Lord Keeper, she passed slowly up the hall, his somewhat obsequious, yet jealous and vigilant air, whilst, awed by her beauty, he remembers the terrors of his own Queen. (Radcliffe 1795: 372)

It is as Mary, in effect, that Radcliffe (and her reader) enter Hardwick and it is her consciousness that frames the succeeding rooms and their contents (variously imagined as being viewed or used by the imprisoned Queen). This is a compelling reworking of the conventions of scenic tourism and an appropriate coda for the many other *fictional* set pieces this study has identified across a career that persistently identifies and claims a space for the Gothic within the imaginative geographies of contemporary travel and its writing. What though, might it say about the effect – and affect – of revolution on Radcliffe’s domestic travels? Connections are oblique, but significant within the wider contexts explored through this chapter. The “history” of Mary’s imprisonment is quintessentially English, yet its narrative presentation mimics similar histories on the continent, such as the ‘melancholy’ fate of William I - and the experience of the ‘princess who had the wretchedness to witness it’ (Radcliffe 1795: 22); the focus on female incarceration and an ‘involuntarily’ association with the traveller also recalls Cologne’s Convent of Clarisse. England’s own turbulent history, it seems, is not immune from the troubling reanimations of Holland and Germany, whilst the description of Elizabeth I – ‘slyly proud and meanly malevolent’ (Radcliffe 1795: 375) – disturbs any simple opposition between protestant England and Catholic Europe. If this is a kind of “homecoming” for Radcliffe – a stop outside the advertised itinerary of her tour – then it keeps alive the questions raised further afield.

Ultimately, *Journey* delivers on the promised tension of its title: opening up and maintaining the question of distancing and retreat between England and the revolutionary continent. This construction demonstrates Radcliffe’s craft as a travel writer, just as her Gothic fictions have demonstrated her consistent engagement with the tradition of contemporary travel writing. Her own description of domestic ruins and other sites that so pointedly resist the fixity and placidity of the Picturesque offers a fitting conclusion for a study that has traced this relationship across her fiction so far. Yet it also speaks to the importance of that relationship when (re)assessing Radcliffe’s own significance. Far from being a writer who offered (and undertook) imaginative retreat, the *Journey* shows her to have been engaged with the questions revolution posed to a key arena of eighteenth-century print culture. One she had indirectly participated in for some time and now finally did so as a travel writer herself.

Conclusion

1764 Revisited

The following work was found in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter.

(Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764)

About the year 1764, some English travellers in Italy, during one of their excursions in the environs of Naples, happened to stop before the portico of the *Santa Maria del Pianto*. [. . .] Within the shade of the portico, a person with folded arms, and eyes directed towards the ground, was pacing behind the pillars [. . .] there was something too extraordinary in the figure of this man, and too singular in his conduct, to pass unnoticed by the visitors [he] had an eye, which, as it looked up from the cloke that muffled the lower part of his countenance, seemed expressive of uncommon ferocity.

(Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian; or, the Confessional of the Black Penitents*, 1797)

The year 1764 bears an overdetermined significance for the Gothic, seeing both the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* and the birth of Ann Radcliffe.[[153]](#footnote-153) As attractive as this correlation is, it is difficult to claim that it is more than a happy coincidence – what Walpole himself might have called a “serendipity”; Radcliffe was presumably not inspired to write Gothic fiction by the fact that she was born in the year of *Otranto*. Yet there is another connection between Radcliffe and this year that feels far more deliberate – and significant.

Radcliffe’s final published novel, *The Italian* (1797), is also ‘about the year 1764’ (Radcliffe 1998b: 1); these are the first words of its preface, in which a party of English travellers visits a Neopolitan church, is surprised by the sanctuary it offers to an assassin and is drawn into reading the manuscript volume that contains the Gothic narrative of the novel proper. In this way *The Italian* is also about *travel* in the year 1764 and the encounter with Gothic materials on a version of the Grand Tour.[[154]](#footnote-154) The model for this already exists in the earlier preface to *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), a fact that is easy to observe, but worthy of more remark. Radcliffe’s second novel enters into the imaginative geography of continental travel through a paratext that deliberately frames its discovery and emergence there, endowing it with a resilient ‘still to be seen’ presence her traveller cannot ignore; her fifth novel leaves that arena in much the same way, explicitly confronting the traveller with the ‘uncommon ferocity’ of the assassin’s gaze that cannot ‘pass unnoticed’ by the travellers (Radcliffe 1993: 1; 1998b: 1).[[155]](#footnote-155) Why did Radcliffe choose to repeat this framing strategy only once and only now? The simplest answer is that she was concerned to make a statement about the Gothic’s relationship with contemporary travel and to do so in a way that looked back to the genesis of that relationship in Walpole. The decision to set *The Italian* in the year of her own birth may be intriguing from a biographical perspective, but the deliberate significance of her decision to set it in the year of *Otranto* feels far more readily borne out by the text itself.[[156]](#footnote-156) Walpole’s narrative is initially supposed to have its basis in a manuscript ‘printed in Naples, in the black letter’ and “rediscovered” in 1764 (Walpole 1998: 5). Radcliffe’s narrative is also based on a manuscript discovered ‘in the environs of Naples’ in that same year (Radcliffe 1998b: 1). In Walpole, as Chapter One discussed, this connection between the Gothic and the world of contemporary travel is deferred; in Radcliffe’s version it is made explicit. By revisiting Naples in 1764 she is deliberately revisiting and restating the question of the Gothic’s location within the arena of contemporary travel.

That question, as this study has consistently demonstrated, is central to Radcliffe’s development of the eighteenth-century Gothic imagination. What *The Italian* does is pose it more obviously and more emphatically. There is no longer a historical shift as the text transitions from preface to narrative: the main story is also set in 1758, endowing it with a contemporaneity that, as Saglia observes, is ‘an unprecedented feature in Radcliffe's canon’ as she ‘takes the opportunity to intrude into the contemporary world in its less familiar aspects’ (Saglia 1996: 13). Unlike *A Sicilian Romance*,the narrative of *The Italian* is not just encountered within the ‘contemporary world’, constructed through the imaginative geography of the Grand Tour: it is also set within it.[[157]](#footnote-157) As such it is about the encounter with the ‘less familiar aspects’ of that imaginative geography, including the Gothic, and this is what is set up by its preface. There *are* precedents for this in Radcliffe, however, as this study has demonstrated by examining the settings for her earlier novels and the specific travel writings that provide their intertexts. Each of these works is also concerned with the way the Gothic is situated and encountered within the imaginative geography of contemporary travel and with the discourses and perspectives available for managing its presence there. By interpolating and revising those approaches they are also concerned with the Gothic’s contemporary presence and proximity for the eighteenth-century reader (of travel or fiction) despite the apparent spatial and historical distance effected by their settings. In this way the previous chapters have demonstrated the highly considered nature of those settings. Unlike some of her successors and imitators, Radcliffe did not simply select popular and appropriate locations for her Gothic: it was her conscious intervention in the Gothic’s location that identified those appropriate settings and made them popular.

The setting and set-up for *The Italian* needs to be understood as equally deliberate and considered. Following her own recent experiences of a fraught continental travel Radcliffe revisits the Grand Tour in its mid-century ascendancy and she does so in order to revise, indeed to effectively rewrite, the emergence of the Gothic within its imaginative geography.[[158]](#footnote-158) In this way, through the new context provided by this study, the location of the Gothic through travel in Radcliffe’s final published novel is no longer the exceptional example it appears to be within Saglia’s reading, but is rather the culmination of a process traced across the preceding chapters. The ‘terrifying effect’ of the assassin’s ‘looking up’ is what defines the encounter in Saglia’s reading as it ‘defies the construction of reality and the dominance of the foreign observer’ in a way that frustrates the Grand Tour’s ‘peculiar modes of observation and evaluation’ (Saglia 1996: 14, 13). Yet this process also *looks back* to those earlier encounters with the Gothic, through travel. What the assassin represents is a kind of Gothic content the traveller cannot interpret and dismiss. *He* may look away, but that other gaze will be “still to be seen” – and still seeing – as it interposes upon the objects the tourist wishes to look at, but must now turn away from. The assassin’s presence bodies forth an alternative narrative – and one that implicitly speaks, once more, to the traveller’s own precarious embodiment – yet even the process of reading that narrative does not fully account for it. It is easy to forget that the history of Vivaldi, Ellena and Schedoni that *The Italian* presents is *not* actually that of the assassin in its frame who ‘has no relation’ to the history recorded in the manuscript whose reading he inspires (Radcliffe 1998b: 3). It is not simply that the Gothic presence brings forth its own narratives within the field of travel; the reading of those narratives does not exhaust that presence, which instead persists there. It is not possible to move back from the landscape to the library.

This is a scenario that has also taken place across the works discussed in this study. It is suggested by *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*’s (1789) unnamed ruined abbey, echoing the anxieties of contemporary Scottish travellers as it commands silence and remains unclaimed at a conclusion its persistence questions. It is foreshadowed in *A Sicilian Romance* and the ruin that will not stay fixed and becalmed within the Picturesque frame, instead bringing forth its own narratives, heralded by the apparition of a friar whose eye also meets the traveller’s. It underpins the labyrinthine (re)constructed ruin and garden spaces of *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), both of which present surfaces that gesture back to the landscapes of travel, but draw their own “travellers” into more disorientating and disconcerting depths. It is epitomised by *The Mysteries of Udolpho*’s (1794) eponymous castle, whose own ‘frowning’ gaze combines all these effects just as it anticipates that of *The Italian*’s assassin: denying the onlooker a Picturesque frame, silencing their discourse and drawing them from external observation to interior incarceration. And, finally, it is also present in Radcliffe’s *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* (1795), which explores the anti-Picturesque ruination and revolutionary turbulence that seems to follow the traveller home, questioning the possibility of retreat – of “looking away” – as it reanimates the Gothic history of the domestic Picturesque and haunts sites like Hardwick.

This study has been the first to demonstrate and explore the way in which these texts variously draw upon and depict encounters with the Gothic in contemporary travel, endowing it with a place in that imaginative geography precisely because it cannot be easily resolved and dismissed there. It has examined modes of eighteenth-century travel in which the Gothic was being encountered and assessed the way in which that encounter was played out and depicted in the kinds of travel writing Radcliffe draws upon. This has then made it possible to reconsider individual texts, from the specific Scottish and Sicilian travelogues that inform *Athlin and Dunbayne* and *Sicilian Romance* to the very different *Observations* of Gilpin and Piozzi that inform a range of Radcliffe’s works. It has become clear that these are more than simply repositories for scenic set pieces, or shortcuts to a safely exotic alterity. Instead they represent another important arena for the exploration – albeit often tentative and limited – of the Gothic’s situation within eighteenth-century print culture. Radcliffe’s innovation is to perceive and respond to this engagement as she revises the location of the Gothic within that same print culture.

Tracing this developing relationship between eighteenth-century Gothic and travel writing has been the original contribution made by this study. It has demonstrated the way in which Radcliffe’s works progressively relocate the Gothic within an imaginative geography created and maintained by contemporary travel, moving from the peripheries of Scotland and Sicily into the heartland of continental tourism before responding there to the turbulence of revolution. In the process it has also made the case for the importance of travel writing to the development of the eighteenth-century Gothic imagination. Works such as William Gilpin’s in particular provide a popular framework for recognising and responding to the Gothic that is crucial to its engagement in fiction such as Radcliffe’s and Smith’s. At the same time, the revisionary perspectives that may arise within the work of women travellers allows for a more nuanced sense of the ‘travelling heroinism’ that underpins a particularly ‘female gothic.’

Finally and perhaps most importantly, the work here hopes to add to the understanding of Radcliffe’s artistry and the scope of her achievement. It celebrates her role as a conscious and deliberate innovator in the cultural location of the eighteenth-century Gothic who was able to do this precisely because she was a sensitive and perceptive reader of the way the Gothic had previously been located, in travelogues as well as novels. This innovation resonated for near contemporaries such as Keats, whose description of ‘going among’ Radcliffean ‘scenery’ (Keats 1958: 245) provided one of the opening epigraphs for this study, and it continues to do so. When travellers, readers and critics come across the spectacular vision of the Gothic ruin, overlooking and looking back from the landscape, they do so because Ann Radcliffe placed it there for them.

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1. The closest the novel comes to overground travel in the main narrative is a late episode in which Theodore and Isabella encounter each other in a woodland cave. Even here any sense of a broader geography is avoided: Theodore does not journey to the woodlands, he simply ‘arriv[es] there’ before ‘rov[ing] insensibly to the caves’ (Walpole 1998: 75). The only other recognition of the woodland is a brief mention of its ‘gloomiest shades’: even this rare exterior has the quality of an interior. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This term is, of course, Edward Said’s. Its function in making sense of eighteenth-century travel writing and encounters with the Gothic therein is explained in Chapter One. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This is despite the fact that, as Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith have observed, it is the texts and qualities Moers associates with ‘travelling heroinism’ that have formed the basis for most subsequent accounts of Female Gothic (Wallace and Smith 2009: 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. As Angela Wright has argued persuasively, a focus on the exotic nature of Radcliffe’s settings also tends to situate her as a conservative author, ‘whose exploitation of foreign locations was always in the service of domestic interests’. Wright counters this by attending carefully to Radcliffe’s own travelogue, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*. The present study further nuances Radcliffe’s use of foreign settings in her fiction by revealing the extent to which these texts also made critical interventions in the contemporary travel writing that presented the domestic traveller’s mastery of foreign landscapes – and their Gothic potential. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The function of much eighteenth-century travel – particularly Grand Tourism – as a self-conscious project of enlightenment knowledge-making has been remarked by various studies and summaries of travel writing in the period (see, for example, Batten 1978: 5; Fussell 1987: 129; Hulme and Youngs 2002: 4; Buzard 2002: 37). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Excluding the posthumous *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The present study counts itself amongst these. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Saglia’s account does not deal with specific travellers and travelogues in detail. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For important recent work on Gothic publishing and eighteenth-century print culture see also Edwards 2014 and Mandal 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. McEvoy has elsewhere surveyed tourists’ responses to ruins in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though here she is concerned with a wider range of texts and not specifically with responses to the ruin’s Gothic potential within the framework and expectations of published travel writing (see McEvoy 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. It is worth observing that Radcliffe is also the first Gothic writer after Walpole to employ specific geographical markers in her titles: most obviously in *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne: A Highland Story* (1789) and *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), but also implicitly in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian; or, the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1797) (the more obscure *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) being the only exception). In contrast, Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (1778) is vaguer (and was even more so under its original title of *The Champion of Virtue*). Even texts with more fully realised settings such as Sophia Lee’s *The Recess; or a Tale of Other Times* (1783) and Charlotte Smith’s *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (1788) and *Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake* (1789) do not specifically advertise these within their titles (the locations of Smith’s castles and lakes being unspecified). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Jo Ellen Delucia has recently explored the significance of Radcliffe’s move, with *Udolpho*, to George Robinson: a publisher with an ‘interest in travel narratives’ and other more “philosophical” genres as well as the ‘Gothic and historical fictions’ he also ‘invested in’ (Delucia 2015: 291, 295). This illustrates the adjacency of travel writing and Gothic fiction within eighteenth-century print culture and points to Radcliffe’s works as offering the kind of overlap that will be explored in this study. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For in-depth studies of Grand Tour travel, see for example: Chaney 1998, Chard 1999, Black 2002, and Sweet 2012. For accounts of the Picturesque and related domestic tourism, see: Andrews 1989 and Copley and Garside 1994. Some broader histories do consider Grand and Tourism as related stages in the development of popular tourism (see Buzard 1993; 2002) or as overlapping arenas for the consideration of specific issues such as aesthetic discourse or female authorship (see Bohls 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. On the publication history, reviews and commercial success of Gilpin’s works see Barbier 1963: 67-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Chloe Chard considers the Grand Tour as a work of imaginative geography that works through ‘a network of rhetorical and theoretical strategies for understanding and appropriating the foreign’. In particular, the classically-educated tourist’s assumption that a real geography ‘bears the traces of an ancient past’ enables them to begin in a relationship of ‘relative familiarity’ with it (Chard 1999: 13, 20). Pam Perkins also seems to have something like Said’s model in mind when she summarises ‘the tendency of travel writers [in Italy] to make the strange familiar [. . .] by repeating details about a foreign culture in such a way that this supposed revelation of the exotic fits in comfortably with an established British literary discourse’ (Perkins 2006: 41). However, the present study is the first to consider how a wider imaginative geography of eighteenth-century travel operated across the two main traditions of travel writing Radcliffe’s works draw upon and, crucially, to assess the situation of the Gothic within that construction. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. For a comprehensive guide to the itineraries of the Grand Tour see Black 2003; for a more concise survey of the ‘framework of expectations and assumptions’ that structured the literary tour, see Buzard 2002: 38-42. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. On the popularity of Addison’s *Remarks* as a frame of reference for Grand Tourism in the eighteenth century see Buzard 2002: 40; Black 2003: 306; Bohls and Duncan, 2005: 5; and Sweet 2012: 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Existing scholarship has tended to observe Addison’s broader importance in establishing the Gothic as an inferior standard for aesthetics (particularly in architecture) during the early eighteenth century (see Sweet 2014: 16; Townshend 2017: 86). The present study is specifically interested in Addison’s actual responses to potentially Gothic materials and experiences on the Grand Tour. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Pam Perkins argues that part of what is remarkable about the traveller whose experience frames *The* *Italian*’s preface is his apparent ignorance of conventional travel narratives, allowing him to be shocked by the country’s otherwise stereotypical violence and intrigue. For Perkins, this is part of the way Radcliffe works to ‘defamiliarise’ Italy in a way that clearly works against its co-option as an imaginative geography (Perkins 2006: 40). The present study agrees with the result of this process, but finds Radcliffe engaging more proactively with travel writing, across her career, so that conventional perspectives upon the Gothic are not so much refused in her texts as revised and reworked within them. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. E. J. Clery has also suggested that ‘Muralto’ might also be an Italian approximation of Walpole (Clery 1995: 62). Angela Wright has further observed that such a ‘translation’ possesses a ‘witty crudeness’ on the part of a fluent French speaker and translator (Wright 2013: 27). Again, it seems as if Walpole is deliberately keeping his and his text’s relationship to a real Italy at arm’s length. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Gilpin discusses the ‘formidable appearance’ of the ‘hazard and expense’ involved in reproducing this ‘great variety of plans and drawings in his preface, which also presents the *River Wye* as ‘an essay in a smaller work’ intended to assess the popularity of his format (Gilpin 1782: i-ii). For a detailed account of the origins, preparation, publication and success of Gilpin’s various Picturesque tour-books, see Barbier 1963: 41-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Dale Townshend makes a similar point in observing that the Picturesque offered ‘the primary aesthetic lens through which British culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries perceived, appreciated and responded to the ruined Gothic piles that ever since the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the sixteenth century, so littered the national landscape’ (Townshend 2014a: 2). Sweet, meanwhile observes that Gilpin’s system – which was ‘nothing without a ruin’ – was therefore ‘the medium through which many readers gained their appreciation of the picturesque’ (Sweet 2017: 54). The present study seeks to further explore the role played by Picturesque travel writing in bringing Gothic materials into a specifically print culture in a form that could be further popularised – and significantly adapted – by Radcliffe. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. On the disputed and contested relationship between Picturesque and Sublime aesthetics see Punter 1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. An intriguing, though faint, connection between the appreciation of Gothic sites by Gilpin and Walpole can be drawn here, via McEvoy’s observation that the latter’s ‘very ability to choose Gothic signified liberation from the contexts that had traditionally gone with it. Strawberry [Hill] could be as it was, precisely because the days when Catholicism was the state religion were centuries away (McEvoy 2016: 25). In both cases the potential appreciation and / or presentation of Gothic sites for tourists and travellers was bound up with its separation from an actual or potential history. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. In this way Gilpin anticipates later more theoretical accounts of the Picturesque such as that of Uvedale Price, who is ‘proud’ of the ruin ‘in a picturesque point of view’ *and* of what that presence represents: ‘that the abodes of tyranny and superstition’ together with the ‘suspicious defiance’ they personify are now ‘in ruin’ (Price 1842: 366). Thus, as Townshend observes, ‘the function of ruin was as much political as it was aesthetic’ (Townshend 2017: 94); these two functions are often combined in Gilpin’s presentation of the Gothic. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Radcliffe herself was also distinctly alert to the ‘imaginative potential of the supernatural’ at ruined sites, as Hamish Mathison and Angela Wright's comparison of her description of Furness Abbey with other contemporary accounts reveals (Mathison and Wright 2017: 214; 212-215). Her own response to the domestic Picturesque is explored further in Chapter Five; the intervening chapters consider the frequent interpolation – and revision – of Picturesque approaches to the Gothic ruin by Radcliffe’s fictional “travellers.” [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Townshend has also more specifically observed the way in which Gilpin’s Picturesque Gothic functions by ‘eschewing the principles of architectural associationism’ at work in other eighteenth-century responses to ruins and which might otherwise allow the ruin to prompt a fuller imaginative response (Townshend 2017: 97). The present study is particularly interested in the way in which this very particular mode of approaching the Gothic ruin is the one that achieves prominence in the travel writing and print culture to which authors like Radcliffe then respond. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. An example of this is offered by Michael Charlesworth, who describes the way in which the ruin of Rievaulx Abbey could be viewed from within an artificial temple constructed on the nearby terrace. Doing so at night would induce ‘the spectacle of the darkened abbey’ and ‘an intimation of Gothic terror and the Gothic novel’ (Charlesworth 1994: 72). As affective as Charlesworth imagines this might be, it would nonetheless have been a carefully staged experience. Such indulgences of the Gothic may also be best understood as examples of the way in which the success of the Gothic novel eventually ‘fed back’ into later forms of tourism more directly concerned with Gothic affect becoming visible at particular sites such as Netley Abbey and Berry Pomeroy Castle where tourists might jettison or eschew the Picturesque frame (see Townshend 2014a; McEvoy 2016: 127-159). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. For a further account of Picturesque politics, the context of improvement and rural dispossession and the power structures implicit in the development of the prospect view in landscape see Daniels and Watkins 1994, Barrel 1983, Bermingham 1987 and Labbe 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Similar means are adopted elsewhere in Gilpin where rural inhabitants can, like the landscape itself, be Picturesquely re-imagined: a process that converts them into pictorial figures and erases their real presence thereby, but may nonetheless seem ideologically ambivalent. See Copley 1994: 56-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The further implication is that, of the two clergymen, Mason is better entitled to be the gentleman owner of such an “Estate,” with Gilpin relegated to the “living” interest corresponding with his actual property. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Smith’s influence upon Radcliffe – and vice versa – is an interesting topic that can be only obliquely engaged with in a study such as this. As Lorraine Fletcher notes, Radcliffe’s inclusion of original poetry in *The Romance of the Forest* was a device pioneered by Smith ( Fletcher 1998: 141) who would adopt Radcliffe’s trademark chapter epigraphs, beginning with *The Banished Man* in 1794. The two writers also quoted each other. Rictor Norton notes that *Udolpho* quotes from Smith’s ‘The Emigrants’, but is not quite correct to claim that ‘Charlotte Smith never returned the compliment by quoting her rival’ (Norton 1999: 50). In fact her *Desmond* (1792) had already quoted some of the inset poetry from *The Romance of the Forest*. It was Radcliffe who had a favour to return in 1794, and she seems happy to have done so. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Smith’s family was of the landed gentry and historically wealthy, but her father – Nicholas Turner – developed a gambling addiction that encumbered him with debts and forced him to sell off lands and remarry to the daughter of a rich grocer. Charlotte, whose expensive education was cut short and who was emotionally attached to the estates that were being sold or “usurped” appears to have resented her incoming stepmother (Fletcher 1998: 18, 22-24). She was subsequently forced to marry and engaged at fifteen to Benjamin Smith. Her husband proved to be financially incompetent, failing to take up responsibilities in his father’s business and squandering the resources provided for him and his family. This included inadvisable property purchases and improvements (see Fletcher 1998: 41-2). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Vivien Jones has identified Smith’s later work *The Old Manor House* (1794) as one of a group of novels in which heroines ‘refuse to collude with the proprietorial gaze’ of the masculine Picturesque (Jones 1994: 131) thus entering into the kinds of debate about the subjects and objects of its aesthetics revealed in the letters between Gilpin and Mason. The present analysis is more concerned with the way in which Smith’s earliest fictions employ a more conventionally Picturesque attitude to the Gothic, but will consider the way in which they gesture towards its limitations and ambivalences. Chapter Five will explore these more fully with respect to Smith’s revolutionary pseudo-travelogue, *Desmond*. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. The quotation here given is the translation supplied by Lorraine Fletcher in her edition of the text (Smith 2003: 56 n.1) [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Gray’s travels were an early influence on the Picturesque, being part of the 1775 *Memoir* edited by William Mason, who also encouraged and advised on the publication of Gilpin’s works in the 1780s. Gilpin himself read Gray’s epistolary accounts of the Wye and was gratified when Gray in turn looked over the manuscript that would become his own *River Wye*, an exchange he describes in its dedication (Gilpin 1782: iii-iv). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Miles regards *The Old English Baron*, *The Recess* and *Emmeline* as ‘the most significant of these’ (Miles 1995: 78). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Montgomery, the hero of Smith’s *Ethelinde* (also published in 1789), is descended from Jacobites, slain in (and ruined by) the rebel defeat at Culloden. This sets up a deferred relationship to the Highlands – and their function as a site of political ambiguity – but also brackets it historically. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. As Milbank observes, Radcliffe’s ‘first choice of a Highland setting is a novelty, anticipating Walter Scott by many years’ (Milbank 1995: ix). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. As Milbank observes, ‘Radcliffe’s novel shows that she had read the travel literature on the Highlands of the time’ (Milbank 1995: xii). Her particular familiarity with Pennant and Johnson is suggested by apparent allusions and incorporations, some of which will be discussed here and others of which are observed by Milbank in her edition of the novel. Both of these texts were also highly popular, with Pennant’s tour going into several subsequent editions and Johnson’s acquiring its own notoriety. Gilpin’s popularity and Radcliffe’s use of his work elsewhere makes her familiarity with his Highland tour likely, particularly given the author’s habit of circulating manuscript versions of his Picturesque tours for some time before formal publication. The “Lady’s” anonymous tour seems to have had a single edition, but its negotiation of the female traveller and writer’s position and its presentation of a highly reflexive attitude to the conventions of its genre make it an interesting potential source for Radcliffe. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Radcliffe’s next two novels, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) would make their respective sixteenth and seventeenth century settings clear. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797) would be more specific still: the main narrative of the former commences in 1584, whilst the action of the latter takes place in 1758 – within living memory of the 1764 Mediterranean tour that provides its frame narrative. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Examples such as Slane, Blair Atholl, Col and Auchinleck were frequently described and / or illustrated in popular travelogues such as Thomas Pennant’s *Tour in Scotland* and Samuel Johnson’s *Western Isles.* [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. A coastal location would also explain the ‘bleak winds’ that ‘howl mournfully’ during Osbert’s imprisonment on the east side of the castle (Radcliffe 1995: 17) (where the sea would lie, given the north-easterly setting of Radcliffe’s novel in in a region on the north-east coast). Given that her plot requires Malcolm’s castle to be both assaulted and escaped, Radcliffe would also have had an incentive to adapt Dunbar’s island location if using it as the inspiration for Dunbayne. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Subsequent editions add a range of additional illustrations, many of which are not referred to or discussed by the author. This may indicate that less overtly scenic works such as Pennant’s *Tour in Scotland* were still sufficiently “visual” to be repositioned by publishers seeking to satisfy tastes inspired by the success of Gilpin’s Picturesque. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. The frequent references to sound and speech here also gesture towards the discursive nature of the Picturesque as a practice centering on companionable discussion and comparison of objects, together with the dissemination of their descriptions. This aspect of Picturesque travel will be explored in more detail with reference to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in Chapter Four. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Gilpin’s *High-Lands of Scotland* includes numerous mountain lake scenes that fit Radcliffe’s description and provides several illustrations. Examples include views of Loch Tay and Loch Fyne (Gilpin 1789: I.152; II.2). Mountain cascades are also the occasion for illustrations in Pennant’s *Tour in Scotland*, for example at Taymouth (Pennant 1771: 80). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Dekker also observes that Osbert’s ‘excursions seem not to differ in essentials from the short individual walking tours [. . .] undertaken in Radcliffe’s and later times’ (Dekker 2004: 97). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. The reader has been informed that the quarrel between Athlin and Dunbayne originated in ‘encroachment’ by the latter on the ‘domain’ of the former and that the present state of the conflict has seen the surviving Athlin family ‘withdrawn’ into their castle following the death of the Earl. Further encroachments have presumably not been effectively resisted as the doubtful state of Athlin’s martial capacity has ‘constrained’ Osbert’s mother, Matilda, ‘to endure in silence her sorrows and her injuries’. Osbert’s valley – which, having been reached in a day’s “rambles,” cannot lie far from Athlin – may well be part of the territory usurped from his father (Radcliffe 1995: 1, 5). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. For a description of such anxieties as they lie beneath the politics and practice of Picturesque landowners see Fulford 1996: 119-127. For an excellent analysis of the potentially revolutionary context for such unrest, see Poetszch 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The distinction between the perspectives of Malcolm and Osbert (whose ability to appreciate the interconnected economics and aesthetics of the Picturesque estate has been established at the opening) supports Toni Wein’s claim that ‘in the struggle between Malcolm and Osbert, we witness the distinction being drawn between aristocratic heroes who are “parasitic on the nation” versus those who are “a part of the nation”’. Malcolm’s character illustrates more than ‘the failed policies of feudal tenure’ (Wein 2002: 101) though, as Radcliffe’s villain also inhabits a more contemporary debate on estate management and localised political responsibility in the eighteenth century: one which extends beyond a feudal fiefdom to the disinterested monetisation of property at a distance. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. See also Wein 2002: 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Indeed, as Chaplin argues, the reader has now discovered that ‘both houses “uphold a legal economy that stems from vengeance’ (Chaplin 2007: 114n). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Andrews makes a similar point (as Hooper acknowledges) observing that ‘many later eighteenth-century tours to the highlands were undertaken specifically for the pleasure of challenging or endorsing’ Johnson; though, ‘Picturesque taste’ eventually ‘usurped his authority’ (Andrews 1989: 197-198). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. On Johnson’s *Western Isles* as a reworking of the Grand Tour see Rogers 1995: 30-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Colley’s association of Scottish anxieties with the coherence of “Britain” in the 1760s is generally supported by other historiography on this period. Alexander Murdoch, for example, sees the issue as one of negotiating participation, rather than an order ‘imposed from without’ (Murdoch 1999: 116). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Watt also refers to ‘the association of Scotland and despotism in anti-Bute propaganda of the 1760s’ as a context for the way the complicated conclusion of *Athlin and Dunbayne* ‘figures its Scottish Highland setting as remote as well as recognisable’ (Watt 2014: 71). The present chapter more specifically examines the role of travel writing in responding to these anxieties and thereby establishing an apposite setting for Radcliffe’s complicated Gothic plot. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. This is not to deny the important point Alison Milbank makes when she identifies *Athlin and Dunbayne*’s ability to expand our sense of the eighteenth-century Gothic so that its ‘tropes’ are not simply ‘directly reactive to the French Revolution’ but may also be associated with an ‘indigenous cultural context’ to which Scotland’s own revolutionary histories in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contributed (Milbank 1995: vii). However, like the travellers under discussion, the present study explores the ambivalent potential of Scotland’s incorporated future as much as its revolutionary past; its participation in later eighteenth-century Britain rather than lingering suspicions of Jacobitism. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Walpole’s familiarity with *The North Briton* and its reception is indicated by references in his correspondence during the early 1760s. Wilkes himself appears in these letters as a ridiculous figure, but one whose antics are a reliable source of amusement. As Walpole writes to George Montagu following Wilke’s duel with Samuel Martin: ‘Believe me you are in the wrong to stay in the country; London never was so entertaining since it had a steeple or a madhouse. [. . .] Wilkes has been shot by Martin, and [. . .] is reverenced as a saint by the mob, and if he dies, I suppose people will squint themselves into convulsions at his tomb, in honour of his memory’ (Walpole 1948: X.110-111). It may well be that one of the many possible connotations of the northern catholic provenance Walpole was then devising for *Otranto* concerned the anxiety and controversy surrounding the Scottish (though merely Episcopalian) Bute: a controversy that, like Walpole’s reinvigoration of the Gothic as a combination of ancient and modern romance, also centred on an ambivalent union. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The extent to which an idea of Gothic historical origins could function as a positive political mythology in the eighteenth century has been explored by Samuel Kliger (Kliger 1952) and more recently summarised by Sean Silver (Silver 2014: 3-6). James Watt has further made the case for a category of patriotic ‘loyalist Gothic romance’ espousing similar values and stemming from the model Reeve provides (and Radcliffe responds to in *Athlin and Dunbayne*) (see Watt 1999: 42-69). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. The travellers this chapter identifies as potential sources for Radcliffe will be discussed more or less chronologically, with the exception of Gilpin who will precede Johnson and The Lady. Though travelling (and publishing) after them, Gilpin’s picturesque tour exemplifies an established approach both of these authors react to. In addition, his unpublished writings were, as Wenner agrees, sufficiently ‘well known’ to explain other authors’ evident familiarity with them (Wenner 2010: xvii). The relative confidence of Gilpin’s aesthetic and political vantage also aligns him more closely with Pennant than with the other writers here discussed. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Indeed, Pennant frequently uses ‘North Britain’ in place of ‘Scotland’ – underlining this continuum and rehabilitating the vocabulary of Wilkesite scottophobia to do so. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Pennant’s *Tour* is partly prompted by his work on *British Zoology* (1766) and a desire to ‘speak with more precision’ on this subject, which deems it ‘far more prudent to visit the whole than part of my country’ (Pennant 1771: iv). As a Welshman, travelling north from England, Pennant’s use of the term ‘country’ aligns him absolutely with an inclusive idea of Britain that his text sets out to investigate Scotland within; the scientific interests that inspire this project also bring Scotland within a broader geography across which the traveller’s enlightened technical expertise operates. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. The extent to which Pennant’s zoological focus informs his text is evidenced by the plates that accompanied its first edition, over a third of which are illustrations of wildlife. Tellingly, Pennant’s scientific approach also draws upon geology: another technical discourse that quite literally replaces transient surface difference with an underlying continuity. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. In fact Pennant’s text provides a good example of the currency Picturesque aesthetics and its terminology already had in the 1760s and 1770s, prior to the commencement of Gilpin’s publications in the 1780s. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Though the illustration does reveal that Pennant, or at least his draughtsman, is not as engrossed in aesthetic technicalities as a committed Picturesque theorist such as Gilpin: it lacks the rear screens necessary to a proper Picturesque frame and the ruin is too regular to satisfy – at least without recourse to the mallet Gilpin wishes for at Tintern. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Breadalbane is also located within a genealogy of traditional local responsibility, as, with an antiquarian’s interest, Pennant describes a “vellum” document recording the Breadalbane family’s history (Pennant 1771: 82). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Hamish Mathison provides an account of the relationship between legislative attitudes to the supernatural and the growth and function of “Gothic” writing in and of Scotland, observing that ‘a nation most probably cannot have a “Gothic” literature until it has stopped burning its citizens for witchcraft: until such time text alone will struggle to sate credulity’s appetite’ ( Mathison 2012: 36). Whilst Pennant, as a traveller from England and Wales, is not participating in a Scottish literature of witchcraft, his text does suggest that such materials must now be managed purely in terms of their literary representation. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Gilpin may also have been personally acquainted with Pennant, who had corresponded with his father (see Barbier 1963: 7). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. That this is intended as a process of incorporation is subtly indicated by Gilpin’s full title, which, for the first time in this his third set of Picturesque *Observations*, refers to *Several Parts of* *Great Britain* of which the *High-Lands of Scotland* are merely one. In this respect Gilpin’s project is not dissimilar to Pennant’s. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Referred to in Chapter One. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. See Barbier 1963: 67-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Rogers situates Johnson’s *Journey* as a self-conscious ‘Grand Detour’: travelling in the wrong direction, at the wrong time of life, but with many typical expectations of the Grand Tour’s imaginative geography intact (Rogers 1995: 30-67). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Though travelling along the same road upon which Macbeth heard ‘the fatal prediction’, Johnson dismisses the overt supernatural as his party ‘travelled on not interrupted by promises of kingdoms’ (Johnson 1775: 51). [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. For a more general account of the Journey as a ‘heroic’ attempt to master Scotland through Lockean empiricism and legitimate record, see Glendening 1997: 65-120 and also Fulford 1996: 103-107. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Fulford finds a more general anxiety over the loss of effective and responsible political management in Johnson’s landscapes, which lack a ‘natural order that might act as the foundation for a social or moral order’. Fulford astutely observes that the notorious criticism of Scotland’s ‘uniform nakedness’ encodes a social and political anxiety. Unplanted, the landscape is without the markers that confirm it as ‘property’ within a continuity of responsible ownership and management: ‘families had not planted for their descendant’s benefit, a sign of the possible destruction of the legitimate transmission of land and values that sustained order in society’ (Fulford 1996: 103). This reading reveals that, despite being an arch-Tory with little interest in Gilpin-esque scene-painting, Johnson’s comments occupy the same register as the Whig anxieties encoded in the Picturesque: an abdication of local political responsibility, rendered visible on the level of landscape aesthetics. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Alison Milbank’s edition of the novel draws attention to the similarity of these passages in a footnote, but does not explore the broader significance of this connection. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. This text has traditionally been attributed to Mary Ann Hanway, but more recent scholarship has revealed that this is unlikely to be accurate (see Hagglund: 2010: 155-157; Wenner 2010: xi-xii). The present study shall continue to refer to the author as the ‘Lady.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. This is part of a broader manipulation of the epistolary format that matches different registers to different readers within the text. No one approach is clearly dominant and the result is a prismatic view of the travel experience that further undermines the pretensions of a single, monolithic, judgement. Chapter Four shall revisit this practice in more detail in the context of revisionary perspectives adopted by women travel writers in the late eighteenth century and the models they provide travelling heroines such as Radcliffe’s. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. See Wenner 2010: ix-x. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. As Hagglund and Werner have observed, the Lady adopts a self-consciously sentimental and quixotic personae (Hagglund 2010: 36; Wenner 2010: x) and is well aware of the currency of different poetic and aesthetic lenses – including the Picturesque (Wenner 2010: xvi-xvii). [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. The significance of this development is amply indicated by the way in which it makes *Athlin and Dunbayne* seem like an anomaly in spite of the tradition of Gothic novels with British settings that had predominated in the 1770s and 1780s. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Excepting her posthumous *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. The difficulties of the sea voyage from Naples to Sicily are described in published travelogues. Brydone records his severe sea-sickness on the voyage out (Brydone 1773: I. 25-26), whilst Swinburne is forced to delay his return due to adverse conditions (Swinburne 1783-85: II.418). This is one of many details replicated in Radcliffe’s novel, where characters twice attempt and fail to make the short sea journey across to Calabria and mainland Italy. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. For more information on the development of Sicilian tourism, including details of published and unpublished journeys, see Black 2003: 48-50. The present study is primarily concerned with the published travelogues Radcliffe appears to have read before writing her novel. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Brydone and Swinburne’s travelogues were popular, going through several editions in the 1780s (Swinburne’s was itself re-published in 1790, the year of *Sicilian Romance*) and both were drawn upon in a guidebook *The Present State of Sicily and Malta, Extracted from Mr Brydone, Mr Swinburne, and Other Modern Travellers* (1788). It is unsurprising, therefore, that material in Radcliffe appears to draw directly on both texts. Rictor Norton observes that *Sicilian Romance*’s anachronistic description of a musical entertainment probably has its roots in a passage from Brydone, whilst elsewhere noting that Swinburne’s Sicilian tour is cited in a footnote to Radcliffe’s posthumously published poetry (Norton 1999: 72-73). Alison Milbank’s notes to her excellent edition of *Sicilian Romance* also observe several points at which passages echo both travellers. These include general descriptions of the Sicilian landscape, the incorporation of its banditti into aristocratic service and, of course, Radcliffe’s central use of the caverns peculiar to the region and described by both authors (Milbank 1993: 202n; 206n; 209n). [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. It is a hallmark of Swinburne’s responses to classical remains that he commends their situation, often employing an aesthetic register drawing upon the developing tradition of scenic tourism. For example, ‘nothing could be more judiciously chosen’ than ‘the situation of Segesta’ where the effects of ‘light and shade’ give ‘something singularly awful and sublime’ to the ‘effect’ of its remains (Swinburne II. 232-235). At Selinus, meanwhile, Swinburne wishes to ‘examine’ the ‘relics of remote antiquity’ in the varying conditions of ‘departing day, the beams of the moon, and the first dawn of the ensuing morning’ but cannot due to the interference of a modern festival (Swinburne 1783-85: II.247). These passages suggest a shift from a more sober neo-classical appraisal to the personal stimulation of Romantic tourism, but it is important to recognise that such appraisals are still reserved for specific sites and framed as technical appreciations or investigations rather than invitations to affective abandon. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. The castle of Mazzini is ‘on the northern coast of Sicily’ with an ‘eminence’ in its grounds commanding ‘the straits of Messina’ with ‘the city of Palermo [. . .] also distinguishable’ in the distance (Radcliffe 1993: 1,6). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. The reader is also likely to recall that, on route to his present hosts, Swinburne was prevented from seeing a particularly appealing set of classical remains by the local fear of banditti in their vicinity (Swinburne 1783-85: II.259). [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. The Villa Palagonia is in the region of “La Bagaria” (Baghera) to the east of Palermo and therefore in the direction of Radcliffe’s own Gothic castle. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. In addition to the obvious subterranean space in which Maria Vellorno is alive in death, it is worth recalling the ‘mansion of the murdered’ beneath the ruined monastery into which Hippolitus wanders towards the conclusion of the novel. Here another monastic space with its own ‘recesses’ and ‘benches’ is also made a disturbing ‘receptacle’ for ‘bodies which remained unburied’: stored here by local banditti, but clearly drawing on the unease generated by the Capuchin vaults – including the capacity to suggest a future fate (Radcliffe 1993: 166-167). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Interestingly, the gender of Radcliffe’s traveller is unclear. Expectations of continental travel writing and the anonymity of the novel’s authorship would probably have lead readers to assume a male narrator. As the next chapter shall make clear, however, Radcliffe’s ambiguously gendered traveller may also draw upon attitudes developed in ambiguously situated travel writing by women such as Hester Piozzi. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. This process of being drawn into the interior of a Picturesque ruin also has a precedent in episodes such as Gilpin’s experience at Tintern where, as discussed in Chapter One, the traveller experiences a similar disorientation and vulnerability. The difference is that, whereas Gilpin can manage the ruin’s “animation” by consigning its occupants to history (as analogues for monkish indolence) Radcliffe’s traveller is presented with an excess of history that converts the landscape of scenic travel into that of the Gothic narrative the ruin houses. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Malcolm Andrews includes the ‘indulgence’ of a ‘pleasing melancholy’ as ‘one of the most compelling motives for the Picturesque tourist to visit ruined abbeys and castles’ (Andrews 1989: 42). For Andrews this strand in the Picturesque contemplation of ruins draws upon a tradition of ‘meditation mortis’ expressed in earlier Graveyard Poetry of the mid-eighteenth century. Within actual Picturesque travel writing, however, this kind of response is less common. It is probably more precise to argue, as does Dale Townshend, that the indulgence of a romantic imagination at particular ruins such as Netley Abbey moves in a manner contrary to the mainstream Picturesque of Gilpin. For a poem such as George Keate’s *The Ruins of Netley Abbey*, as Townshend reads it, the ‘emptiness’ left by Picturesque ahistoricity ‘serves to prompt and incite the workings of the romantic imagination’ (Townshend 2014a: 383). However, such responses still maintain a level of intention and control that differs from Radcliffe’s travelling protagonists, for whom a perspective of authority, comprehension and control over such sites is often exactly what is at issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Discussed in the Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Milbank also observes that both parts of the novel are therefore concerned with ‘ways of seeing’ and responding to the Gothic ruin (Milbank 2014: 94) but does not deal specifically with the ruin as an object for contemplation in and through travel – and what this means for the parallel between the two “worlds” of Radcliffe’s text. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. This is confirmed at the novel’s conclusion, when Radcliffe’s narrator acknowledges that the Marquis’s Gothic story ‘was fabricated for the purpose of concealing’” his real crime. In observing that his narrative ‘discovered some art’ Radcliffe may also be said to nod at the effectiveness of stock Gothic patterns in achieving such distancing and misdirection (Radcliffe 1993: 195). [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Isabella Van Elferen has more generally remarked that the use of sonic effects such as disembodied and / or inarticulate voices are one of the ways in which Radcliffe presents her characters’ inability to make sense of alien or threatening spaces (Van Elferen 2012: 20-22). The present study is more concerned with the specific contrast between these experiences and the visual control associated with the traveller. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Moers’s account is centred largely upon *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and may therefore be partly excused for ignoring Radcliffe’s own continental tourism, which took place following that novel’s publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Radcliffe had clearly read Piozzi, who, for her part, went on to appreciate and discuss her contemporary’s fictions in her correspondence (see D’Ezio 2015: 344-345). It is also possible that the two writers may have been acquainted (see Norton 1999: 32; D’Ezio 2015: 346). [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. This is explained in a dedication and preface where, as Barbara Britton Wenner notes, the letters’ description as ‘a little bundle’ gradually ‘swelling’ before ‘going out into the world’ associates them with a homely language of maternity and care: part of a strategic self-deprecation that excuses the ‘efforts’ and downplays the claims ‘of a female pen’ (Anon 2010: 3-4; Wenner 2010: xii-xiv). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. It is interesting to note Radcliffe’s own practice in the preface to her *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* (1795), ahead of that text’s discussion in the next chapter. She ‘begs leave to observe’ that her account is based on ‘mutual observation’ with her husband William whose ‘assistance’ underpins some of the text’s ‘economical and political’ remarks. However, Radcliffe nonetheless refuses to place ‘the joint names of her husband and herself’ on her ‘title page’, in part due to a disdain for the ‘extraordinary novelty’ of such a step (Radcliffe 1795: v). Humble as she may appear, Radcliffe ensures that her text is presented in the conventional manner of a sole-authored travelogue – and that that author is female. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Piozzi also wrote descriptions of her other journeys, including trips to Wales and Scotland, but these were left unpublished. Instead, it was the institution of the Grand Tour that she specifically chose to tackle in her sole published travelogue. For a discussion of Piozzi’s unpublished travel writing see D’Ezio 2010: 69-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. John A. Dussinger argues that features of Piozzi’s style – such as her ‘repeated ejaculations of “Well!”’ – are part of a ‘rhetorical strategy’ that addresses an imagined reader and therefore constitutes a version of the epistolary style. This is a helpful observation that also draws attention to Johnson’s ‘presence’ in the text as a recollected fellow-traveller and imagined audience (Dussinger 1992: 52, 47-48). It is important to note the distinction between this and a conventional epistolary account, however. Piozzi’s voice is never dependent upon the validation or acquiescence of an interlocutor; her speaking voice may internalise aspects of the epistolary style, but it is not constrained by it. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. As Bohls has demonstrated, it was precisely women’s embodiment – being ‘defined by their bodies’ – that ostensibly prevented them from participating in travel aesthetics (including the Picturesque) predicated on disinterested observation (Bohls 1995: 67). [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. As aforementioned, Moers finds Piozzi’s to be a ‘distinctly unconventional female travel book’ (Moers 1978: 128). Meanwhile, McCarthy writes that Piozzi’s ‘character as a writer is closely connected with [. . .] the obstacles raised in her time against female success in literature’ (McCarthy 1985: xi) whilst Dussinger notes that ‘Piozzi appears to be conscious of herself as a woman writing in a male-dominated genre’ (Dussinger 1992: 46). [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. For D’Ezio this approach is a deliberate rejection of easy conventions in an attempt to ‘broaden the boundaries’ of ‘the Grand Tour narrative’, replacing conventional ‘binary symmetries opposing Britain and Italy’ with direct ‘insight’ into a ‘tangible’ experience of Italy – drawing upon what she herself describes as the ‘demi-naturalisation’ stemming from her marriage to an Italian husband (D’Ezio 2010: 81-82; Piozzi 1789: I.66). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. As a commentator on the Gothic Piozzi is perhaps best known for her witty jests about the fashion for Gothic novels in the 1790s: ‘The Mysteries of Carlton House surpass those of Udolpho’ and Radcliffe’s novels are ‘about as like [Macbeth] as Peppermint Water is to good French Brandy’ (qtd in McCarthy 65). Such comments are not unmixed with respect, however. Radcliffe remains the best practitioner of Gothic in Piozzi’s view and the comparison of Montoni with the Prince Regent cuts both ways, perhaps saying as much about the contemporary relevance of Gothic materials as it does about their abstraction. Elsewhere Piozzi can be found to take Gothic writing seriously and to be acquainted with what is now considered its canon. In addition to Radcliffe she read works by Lewis, Beckford and Mary Shelley and was happy to acknowledge their strengths; *Vathek*, for example, is described as ‘a mad book to be sure [. . .] yet there is a sublimity about it’ and Piozzi was deeply engaged by *Frankenstein* (see: McCarthy 1985: 66-67). Fascinatingly, Piozzi may also be one of the first to record a form of Gothic literary travel undertaken *through* Radcliffe’s works. Holidaying in North Wales during 1794 she wrote that ‘I reproach myself daily that I forgot to bring them down *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: it would have such an effect read by owl-light among the old arcades of our ruined Castle here’ (qtd in Norton 1999: 103). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. This attitude is present in Addison’s critique of the ‘great poverty and want’ deriving from poor governance and is also exemplified by Smollett, who also registers ‘the extreme poverty of the lower people’ in France and Italy, but similarly ascribes this to the effects of European Catholicism (Addison 1705: 183; Smollett 1766: I.55).

     [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Merry was a friend of Piozzi’s and a founding member of the Della Cruscan circle of British sentimental poets based at Florence when she visited there. As a result of their acquaintance Merry wrote a poem ‘To Mrs Piozzi’ herself. Rolf Lessenich has provided an interesting account of the Della Cruscans and the alternative perspective they offered to the way the Grand Tour’s Augustanism ‘disparaged modern Italy as an impoverished and benighted land of physical and moral decay’ as well as Piozzi’s collaboration with Merry and others in publishing *The Florence Miscellany* (1785) (Lessenich 2010: 157, 163). [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. In this respect Piozzi may be said to anticipate a more general shift Sophie Thomas identifies in later Romantic tourism. Thomas finds that the classical ruin’s ability to sustain a coherent and confident chronology leading up to or affirming an eighteenth-century modernity (and which is exemplified in the sorting and clearing undertaken by Addisonian Grand Tourism and its writing) was gradually replaced by a sense of sites such as Rome as a ‘historical palimpsest of ruins’ in which a ‘heightened sense of the presence of death and decay’ became apparent and maintained alongside the ‘more positive nineteenth-century view of ruins’ (Thomas 2008: 66-67). In this way Thomas updates the research undertaken in earlier studies such as Ann Janowitz’s *England’s Ruins* which focusses upon the ‘rationality and intelligibility’ of eighteenth century accounts (such as Addison’s) in which, as Janowitz writes, ‘Rome rises as a museum’ (Janowitz 1990: 32). Piozzi offers an interesting point of transition between these two attitudes to the ruin, one informed, as the present study has argued, by her gendered identity and a sense of her own precarious embodiment. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Such a suspicion also recalls the prologue to *A Sicilian Romance*, where the Picturesque tableaux at Mazzini is in fact finally broken by the entrance of the Friar, reanimating its history. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. This desire is also similar to that of the Duke de Luovo in *A Sicilian Romance*, when, during his increasingly bewildered pursuit of Julia, he attempts to co-opt the anonymous ruin as a platform from which to scan the surrounding landscape. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. La Motte’s sense of masculine expertise is amply indicated by the dismissal of his wife’s reservations when selecting the Abbey as a residence: ‘La Motte, however, seldom consulted his wife until he had determined how to act’ (Radcliffe 1986: 23). [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Adeline and her captors travel from the abbey for a short, but unspecified time, before a ‘two hours’ gallop brings them to the perimeter of the Chateau’s grounds (Radcliffe 1986: 156). [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. This is an example of the ‘Gothic Cartography’ Brabon observes in writers such as Radcliffe, a mechanism through which foreign settings can comment on domestic issues such as the ownership and management of lands and estates (see Brabon 2006). It also serves more particularly to embed the Gothic within the experience and writing of travel through which tourists and readers would engage with such landscapes and the debates they provoked. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. The novel also features the briefer experiences of a second heroine, Lady Blanche de Villefort. The present study focusses upon Emily as the primary heroine whose successive journeys make up the majority of the narrative and organise it around experiences of travel beginning and ending in the domestic security of La Vallée. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. D’Ezio has provided a recent account of *Udolpho’s* numerous ‘direct correspondence to and borrowings from Piozzi’ (D’Ezio 2015: 350-351). [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Jayne Lewis has argued more generally that Radcliffe is attracted to an aesthetics that works through linguistic practices as opposed to fixed visual models (see Lewis 2006). The present argument is specifically concerned with the way she incorporates and represents a contemporary practice of Picturesque travel based on companionable discourse. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Indeed, the Pyrenees to which the St Auberts travel are already visible at the boundary of the prospects seen from La Vallée. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Like Smith’s Emmeline Mowbray, St Aubert and his daughter also combine aesthetic wanderings in the vicinity of La Vallée with attention to the immediate needs of the rural population, including ‘old pensioners’ to whom they distribute ‘weekly stipends’ (Radcliffe 1998a: 15). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. On the role of Venice within the typical Grand Tour itinerary see Black 2003: 40-42; Sweet 2012: 199-235. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. On Radcliffe’s use of Piozzi as a source for her Venetian sections see, for example, Norton 1999: 74-75; D’Ezio 2015: 349-350. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. D’Ezio sees Johnson and St Aubert as comparable paternal figures, seeking to ‘restrain Hester Thrale’s and Emily’s sensibility’ (D’Ezio 2015: 348). This leads her to suggest that Radcliffe may have read Piozzi’s *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson* (1786) and *Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson* (1788) prior to writing *Udolpho* (D’Ezio 2015: 349). With respect to the function of both figures within a travel framework, it is also worth recalling that Johnson, like St Aubert, was the companion of some of Piozzi’s previous journeys and the intended companion of more. Also like St Aubert, he died whilst Piozzi was travelling. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Author’s own translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Other critics have also observed a potential for revolutionary parallels. Though quick to dismiss the notion of *Forest* as a political ‘*roman a clef*’, George Dekker argues that Radcliffe ‘responded to the momentous political transformations and debates of her time’, observing that the story of Adeline and her companions’ ultimate retreat to Savoy is one of voluntary ‘expatriation’ in which ‘crossing a national border to seek asylum’ invariably resonates as ‘a political act’ (Dekker 2004: 106). Jo Ellen Delucia also suggests that novel’s ‘banditti’ be ‘put in conversation with the refugees and prisoners of war’ Radcliffe ‘read about and later encountered’ in the revolutionary 1790s (Delucia 2014: 148). [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. This is in keeping with the practice of actual travellers in the 1790s who, as Katarina Gephardt observes, used the opportunity of post-revolutionary travel to employ ‘British standards’ of taste and aesthetics that had been “discovered” through the intervening development of domestic tourism (Gephardt 2010: 5). This is also a feature of what Ben Brabon calls Radcliffe’s ‘Gothic Cartography’: the use of European settings to explore the ‘transformations’ of a British ‘geography’ marked by improvement and enclosure (Brabon 2006: 840-841). Revolution provides a further development of this as “domestic” discourses are “exported” to address transformations in a continental geography; a process that may call those discourses - and the distances over which they operate - into question. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. In Gilpin’s account Radcliffe would have found a real “Gothic” ruin uneasily associated with the modern house of its owner who connives to incorporate them into his wider landscaped park (see Gilpin 1786: II.179-189). [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Both Price and his ally, Richard Payne Knight, were supporters of Charles James Fox. As such their theories of halcyon paternalism could, in the eyes of Anti Jacobin critics, seem to espouse an ‘ungovernable wildness’ (Poetzsch 2009: 22). [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Indeed, as Delucia observes, *Desmond* and the *Journey* were both published by George Robinson, alongside other texts that actively – and often radically – engaged with the subject of the French Revolution (Delucia 2015: 292). [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. The novel’s heroine, Geraldine, makes a reference to the ‘planetary fires’ of Radcliffe’s “Night” (Smith 2001: 241; Radcliffe 1986: 83). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. It will be recalled that Smith’s first novels follow the geographical sequence of Gilpin’s popular tours to South Wales and the Lake District more or less exactly. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Montfleuri himself has ‘cut those long avenues’ of trees which ‘pointed towards the house’: a process that de-emphasises the centrality of the landowner and prevents the landscape appearing purely as a locus for his gaze (Smith 2001: 113). [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. In this way *Desmond* takes up the concerns left at the conclusion of *Ethelinde*, where Sir Edward Newenden is able to recover and restore his Grasmere estates, but occupies them as a lone widower - leaving the future of the Picturesque estate uncertain beyond the current generation. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. The point is further reinforced as it becomes clear that the monastery previously expressed the limits of paternalistic benevolence, keeping the local people in idleness and charitable dependence that contrasts with Montfleuri’s vision. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. This kind of limited and controlled affect recalls what Charlesworth finds in visitors to Reivaulx – an indulgence that remains carefully framed and demarcated (see Charlesworth 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. On the connection between the success of *Udolpho* and the undertaking of the Radcliffes’ tour, see Moskal 2000: 56 and DeLucia 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. In addition to McMillan see Bohls 1995; Kingsley 2008; Gephardt 2010; Delucia 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Critics have differed as to the significance of Radcliffe’s prefaratory admission that ‘where the economical and political conditions of countries are touched upon in the following work, the remarks are less her own than elsewhere’ (Radcliffe 1795: v). For Magdalena Ożarska this means that the *Journey* must have ‘resulted from many long conversations between the spouses and for that reason cannot be attributed to Ann Radcliffe exclusively’ (Ożarska 2014: 191). It is interesting to speculate as to how the final text was indeed composed, but it is also correct to observe, as Norton does, that Radcliffe ‘does not otherwise distance herself’ from her text’s ‘political remarks’ and to conclude that had she not shared them ‘she would not otherwise have published them under her own name’ (Norton 1999: 108). Though she identifies passages that seem to suggest William’s ‘editorial expertise’ Wright has also highlighted the way in which Radcliffe’s ‘numerous interventions upon national politics’ express a ‘profound discomfort with the effects of war’ and finds this attitude to be consistent with the views expresses in her other writings (Wright 2010: 135; 2013: 111-112). The present study identifies Radcliffe as a perceptive and responsive reader of travel literature who would be well aware of the conventions governing political and economic commentary on a “Grand” tour and who, moreover, as Delucia observes, was now with the ‘firm’ of Robinson, a publisher of travel narratives alongside other texts whose output expressed a ‘dangerous and unwavering commitment to radical politics’ (Delucia 2015: 292). It therefore gives Radcliffe her due as the arbiter of her text’s content. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Radcliffe also adopts Gilpin’s characteristic title formula in presenting her own ‘*Observations during a Tour to the Lakes*’. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Other recent critics have also seen this inter-relationship as more of an open question posed by the text. For Delucia, ‘Radcliffe’s accounts of the Continent and her native England work together in the travel narrative to frame the questions of distance, aesthetics and national identity that she poses throughout the text’ (Delucia 2014: 146). [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Though Radcliffe does not mention it, Hellevoetsluis was also possessed of a significant historical connection with England, being the point from which William of Orange’s forces departed prior to the Glorious Revolution. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. As Moskal observes, it is Dutch domesticity that forms one of the most resonant points of identification with England – and a sense of shared threat from the French (Moskal 2001: 218). [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Tellingly this assessment is preferred over more general points of interest, such as the fortifications’ construction and history (recorded in an ‘inscription’ the author ‘omitted to copy’) or the visual spectacle of the ships in harbour (passed over in a sentence) (Radcliffe 1795: 4). [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Townshend and Wright have suggested that ‘Radcliffe’s deliberate decision to exclude illustrations from her foray into a genre that was usually accompanied by visual supplements affords insight, perhaps, into how the writer perceived herself and her writerly abilities: a verbal renderer of vivid pictures as dextrous as any landscape painter’ (Townsend and Wright 2014: 10). In the same way, the rejection of illustrations that would necessarily have fixed prospects into static frames may reflect Radcliffe’s artful renegotiation of Picturesque conventions within the *Journey*. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Again there is a Piozzean element to this, recalling the descriptions of Rome or Pompeii, where the author travels over, and suggestively identifies with, bodies that seem more present than the typical objects of Grand Tourism. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Reading the episode in this way also avoids reducing it to a typical example of English anti-Catholicism. As Wright observes, Radcliffe’s critique here is qualified and specific and is tempered with more positive depictions of other convents (Wright 2010: 137). As such the order of Clarisse for Radcliffe is not simply a mere Gothic stereotype: it reflects a more specific anxiety that seems to resonate with Radcliffe herself. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. His ‘fears’ concerning the travellers are rendered through a quotation from a contemporary satire describing absurd measures to be taken against Revolutionary agents, ‘lest foul invasion in disguise approach’ (Radcliffe 1795: 308). The quotation is from the anonymous *Criticisms on the Rolliad* (1785) where the defences to be adopted include ‘a platform on the northern pole’ a ‘breastwork on the milky way’ and ‘numerous batteries’ employed ‘to guard the turnpike road; / lest foul invasion in disguise approach / Or treason lurk within the Dover coach’ (Anon 1791: 24). The latter couplet, quoted in part by Radcliffe, seems to refer directly to the threat of Revolutionary agency returning home from the continent; *The Rolliad* being, in part, a satire on Pitt’s policy at the time. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. The episode might also be said to presage the later preface to *The Italian* (1797), where the obscured visage of another religious figure actively stymies the gaze of a disconcerted Grand Tourist. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Gilpin used the *Wye* tour to ‘test the reaction of the public’ before publishing his *Mountains and Lakes* and other ‘larger works’ (Barbier 1963: 69). [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Gephardt insightfully observes that this ‘contrast also suggests a retreat from the large scale of historical painting, which might mirror contemporary events unfolding on the Continent, to landscape painting as a prism for appreciation of the English countryside’ (Gephardt 2010: 16) – further underlining the function of the Picturesque frame as a retreat from political and temporal turbulence. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Watt identifies this as ‘Radcliffe’s clearest expression of political principle’ but rightly observes that little else in the *Journey* is so explicit on the causes – and cause – of the revolution (Watt 2014: 68). [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. On Radcliffe’s early life and family history see Norton 1999: 13-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. The nativities of Walpole’s first Gothic story and its most famous inheritor were separated by a mere five months. Radcliffe was born on 9 July 1764. *Otranto* was published on 24 December. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. *The Italian* is the novel of Radcliffe’s that has already received the most attention in terms of its relationship with travel writing, exemplified by Saglia’s important reading (Saglia 1996). The present study has chosen to focus on comparatively neglected texts and their contexts in order to make the most worthwhile contribution to an understanding of Radcliffe’s broader use of travel in locating the Gothic. However, *The Italian* is important as a point of culmination for that process. This conclusion therefore situates *The Italian*, as read by Saglia and others, within its own demonstration of a broader relationship between Gothic and travel writing across Radcliffe’s earlier works. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. *The Italian* is Radcliffe’s last published novel and her last novel with a European setting. Whatever her intentions in 1797, she did not ultimately choose to write another fiction set within the world of continental travel. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Norton has suggested various ways in which aspects of Radcliffe’s biography might be read through the content of her fictions (see Norton 1999: 137-151). These arguments can seem intriguing, but are often reliant on plausible conjecture and are difficult to clearly substantiate. The present study is more interested in the connections between Radcliffe’s works and the other texts she is likely to have read and considered. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. It is worth recalling that, as Chapter Three demonstrated, *Sicilian Romance* is also concerned with the contiguities between the worlds of travel and Gothic narrative, as configured, for example, by the doubly-ruined Castle Mazzini. *The Italian* makes these connections more overt and explicit. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Access to the continent was renewed in the mid-1760s, following the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1763. Not uncoincidentally, this is the period of popular travelogues including Tobias Smollett’s *Travels Through France and Italy* (1766) and Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768). [↑](#footnote-ref-158)