The Female Gothic in Ann Radcliffe's Romances:
The Characterisation of the Heroine and the Villain in Light of Patriarchy

Eva De Ridder

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Marysa Demoor

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List of abbreviations


G&G: reference to Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: the woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination*

Shw: reference to Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*

Hv: reference to Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*


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1. Introduction

The genre of Gothic fiction began in Great Britain in the eighteenth century with Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which laid the foundation for the typical conventions of the Gothic genre. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, women also started to write novels and they took an interest in Gothic fiction. Shortly after, the Female Gothic emerged from the Gothic genre and grew into a subgenre that was, according to Smith and Wallace, first described by Ellen Moers in 1976. This subgenre is mostly written by female authors and has its own literary conventions: in the typical plotline, a young heroine is imprisoned in a Gothic building by a ruthless villain who threatens to kill or rape her. In the end, the heroine escapes from her persecutor and thereby defeats the villain. The Female Gothic is depicted by many critics as a way of covertly expressing women’s desire to undermine the patriarch, as the actual source of danger threatening the heroine is the eighteenth-century patriarchal society. One of those female authors whose writing is classified at the beginning of the subgenre of the Female Gothic is Ann Radcliffe. Her first romance was published in 1789 and soon after, more romances followed. These appeared to be very influential on later Female Gothic authors, especially due to Radcliffe’s nuanced characterisations of the courageous heroine and the relentless villain. In this dissertation, I wish to examine how Radcliffe’s literary work demonstrates the genre conventions of Female Gothic literature, as she stood at the beginning of the subgenre and influenced many later Female Gothic writers. More specifically, I will focus on the representation of patriarchal society and on the gendered characterisation of heroine and villain in light of patriarchy. How are they characterised and do these characterisations reflect a view on gender roles in the patriarchal society of the eighteenth century? Is patriarchy subverted in Radcliffe’s literary work? Can her romances be called revolutionary, or are they still quite conservative? For this purpose, her three most famous romances will be explored, *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), as they belong to her earlier work (*The Romance of the Forest*) en her later work (*The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*), in that way reproducing a thorough image of the

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3 This explanation of the Female Gothic can be found in several sources and will be further addressed below.
entire range of Radcliffe’s literary work. In the following chapter, a short biography of Ann Radcliffe will be given, in which the focus lies on her writing career. In the third chapter, female authorship in the long nineteenth century will be discussed, in which a description of female roles in patriarchal society will be included. This is followed by the fourth chapter, which gives a historical overview of the Gothic, the Female Gothic and the Male Gothic genres and their characteristics. The fifth chapter contains textual analyses of the three romances in chronological order: *The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*. First, the characterisation of the heroines will be examined, secondly the characterisation of the villains and thirdly, other themes connected to patriarchy will be explained, more specifically the themes of family and the convent. In the end, a final conclusion will be given, in which the findings of this research will be laid out. For the theoretical part, the second, third and fourth chapter, I mostly relied on secondary sources, as this is necessary to give a thorough theoretical and historical outline. The rest of this dissertation, the fifth chapter, consists of textual analyses, which are based on primary sources, more specifically Radcliffe’s romances. In this part, I display more of my own findings, as there were less secondary sources available on those specific aspects to rely on, although at certain points, secondary sources will of course still be used and mentioned, especially in the last two sections on the themes of family and the convent.
2. Ann Radcliffe: biography

2.1. Life and marriage

Ann Ward, later Radcliffe, was born in London on 9 July 1764. Her parents were William Ward and Ann Oates of Chesterfield and she did not have any siblings. She received a relatively formal education: when her family moved to Bath in 1772, Ann is said to have entered ‘a school run by Sophia and Harriet Lee, who were early innovators in [...] Gothic fiction and drama’. In 1787, Ann Ward married William Radcliffe, consequently taking the surname Radcliffe. Her husband was a journalist and he owned the English Chronicle later on. Most of the biographical information that is available about Ann Radcliffe comes from the obituary William wrote of her (Miles).

About their marriage we only know the account that William Radcliffe gave us, which is that they were very happily married. Diane Long Hoeveler calls Ann Radcliffe a ‘bourgeois wife of a man who stayed late at the office almost every evening’ (Hv, 54). She also mentions that Ann entertained her husband, when he came home in the evening, by reading him her writing results, which are described by Hoeveler as ‘amusing little tales of corpses, poison, and adultery’ (Hv, 54). Their marriage remained childless, which presumably granted Radcliffe more free time to write.

Ann Radcliffe died on 7 February 1823 at home. Her physician, Charles Scudamore, was with her and according to him, the cause of death was ‘the inflammation of the cerebral membranes’ (Miles). This would have been induced by Radcliffe’s asthma from which she suffered later in life. Other critics (Rogers and Norton) state that the cause of death was ‘a bronchial infection’, which was worsened by Scudamore (Miles). She was buried in London, at St George’s Church on Hanover Square, and she left no testament.

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6 Diane Long Hoeveler, Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), xi+ 250 pp., p. 54. Henceforth, references to this source are given within the text, abbreviated as ‘Hv’, followed by the page number.
2.2. Writing and career

William claimed that Radcliffe started to write for pleasure, to entertain herself when her husband was working (Miles). In the Oxford edition of The Romance of the Forest, it is stated that it was his encouragement that made her decide to start writing. She published five romances during her lifetime: The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne (1789), A Sicilian Romance (1790), The Romance of the Forest (1791), The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) and The Italian (1797). She also wrote a travel journal, A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794 (1795), a narrative poem, St Alban’s Abbey (1826), and a posthumously published romance, Gaston de Blondeville (1826). She wrote an influential poetic essay, ‘On the supernatural in poetry’ (1826), in dialogue form, in which she explained the aesthetics of Gothic poetry. Her first two literary works were published anonymously and were not very successful, although A Sicilian Romance elicited some response, but it was only after her third romance that she became a celebrated author (Miles). She was called ‘the Great Enchantress’ and ‘the Shakespeare of Romance writers’ and was valued as one of the leading novelists of the Gothic genre, which was then often called ‘the Terrorist System of Novel Writing’, ‘the hobgoblin-romance’ or even ‘the Radcliffe romance’. Her fame continued with the last two romances she published during her lifetime, The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Italian, of which numerous editions were published. Whereas the average, however still quite successful writer received eighty pounds for the copyright of their novel, Radcliffe received five hundred pounds for The Mysteries of Udolpho and eight hundred pounds for The Italian, which can be compared to sixty thousand pounds today.

Radcliffe’s romances are all quite similar in plot, though very innovative formally. Miles indicates that ‘all her romances contain a heroine with a modern sensibility who finds herself imperilled by the forces of feudalism. Generally speaking, her plots turn on the inheritance of property’ (Miles). Her narratives also include a romantic aspect: the heroine is searching for a good suitor, whom she marries and they live happily ever after. Formally, her romances were very innovative. Her landscape description was impressive because of her combination of the sublime and picturesque beauty.

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7 Ann Radcliffe, The Romance of the Forest, p. i.
9 Miles (ODNB); E. J. Gery, ‘Introduction’, in The Italian, ed. by Frederick Garber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. vii-xxxi, p. vii. Henceforth, further references to this source will be abbreviated as ‘Cl’ within the text.
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also discusses the ‘poetic’ style of her writing, which was characterised by ‘her ability to evoke moods of melancholic introspection and enchantment’ (Miles). Not only her language use was ‘poetic’, but she also included poetry in many of her works. She used epigraphs from popular poets, for example Shakespeare and Milton, and she also wrote sonnets and songs, which are recited by the heroine when she is alone. Another innovation for which she was famous was the technique of the ‘explained supernatural’. This means that the seemingly supernatural incidents in her romances were explained by very simple and natural causes, thus constantly misleading her readers (Miles).

After The Italian was published in 1797, Ann Radcliffe unexpectedly discontinued her publications. By then she had published five romances and one travelogue in a period of eight years. The public was confused about this abrupt silence and started speculating. Rumours began to spread, which were often ‘Gothic’ explanations: some said she had died, others argued that she was driven mad by her own imagination. One story even claimed that she was imprisoned at Haddon Hall in Derbyshire, where she was driven insane. An anonymous poem ‘Ode to Horror’ stated that she died of insanity, caused by ‘the horrors’ (Miles). A less disturbing explanation that her husband gave for the termination of her career was that she received an inheritance, so she did not need to write for money anymore (Miles). Since William himself first claimed that his wife started to write for pleasure, this explanation does not seem plausible. There was also no evidence that she disliked publicity. Another, more credible explanation is that she could not handle criticism (Miles): she would have stopped writing because of many ‘anti-Gothic’ publications in periodicals. Around 1795, there were many publications by authors who imitated Radcliffe’s style. Critics started to criticise Radcliffe’s work together with the imitations and they ‘accuse[d] her of subverting norms of gender and genre’ (Miles).

Although she stopped publishing after her fifth romance, The Italian, Radcliffe continued to write. She still wrote about the journeys she made together with her husband, though only within Britain. As already mentioned, she also wrote a narrative poem, St Alban’s Abbey, and one last romance, Gaston de Blondeville, which were both

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10 Miles refers to ‘Talfourd, 95’ and ‘Norton, 211’.
published posthumously in 1826 (Miles). In conclusion, Radcliffe was a very popular female author, although that was not very common at the end of the eighteenth century. In the next chapter, I will discuss the female authorship of the long nineteenth century and the struggles and anxieties that women had to go through in order to establish their literary career.
3. Female authorship in the long nineteenth century

Many critics considered the nineteenth century as ‘the Age of the Female Novelist’. This age is often called ‘the long nineteenth century’, starting after the French revolution in 1789, around the end of the eighteenth century, – when Radcliffe’s romances were published – and ending at the beginning of the twentieth century, before the start of World War I in 1914. However, even until far into the nineteenth century, literature was still thought to be written exclusively by men. Creativity was seen as a male property. ‘The metaphor of literary paternity’ was widely used to describe literature as the realm of men, in which the author is seen as a father and patriarch. Women, on the other hand, were only considered as characters confined in literature, created by men. Men thus seemed to feel as if they owned and controlled women; they also seemed to believe ‘that women exist[ed] only to be acted on by men, both as literary and as sensual objects’ (G&G, 8). As they thought that they had ‘patriarchal rights of ownership’ over the images they had created in their literature, women were often repressed and confined in those works (G&G, 12-13). Male writers started to produce the images of ‘angel’ and ‘monster’ for women. The ‘angel’ image is the perfect woman that men wish to create in their narratives. This image originated from the Middle Ages, when the Virgin Mary was the greatest symbol of (female) purity, which developed into a ‘domestic angel’, ‘an angel in the house’, as is created by the poet Coventry Patmore in his verse-sequence The Angel in the House, which represented the Victorian feminine ideal (G&G, 20-23). This poem emphasises the virtue of Honoria, the central figure, whose story is based on the notion that woman serves to please man. This ‘angel’ idea is also described by Showalter, who notes that it became part of the middle-class ideology of the proper sphere of womanhood, which [...] prescribed a woman who would be a Perfect Lady, an Angel in the House, contentedly submissive to men, but strong in her inner purity and religiosity, queen in her own realm of the Home’ (Shw, 14). In many texts, this domestic ideal contrasted with a wicked serpent outside of the house, the ‘monster’ image (G&G, 29). In this negative image, women were given different names, such as ‘witch’, ‘bitch’, ‘fiend’ or ‘monster’ (G&G, 28). This ‘monster-

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12 Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, rev. edn (London: Virago Press, 1984), 378 pp., p. 3. Henceforth, further references to this source will be abbreviated as ‘Shw’ within the text.

13 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), xiv + 719 pp., p. 3. Henceforth, further references to this source will be abbreviated as ‘G&G’ within the text.
woman’, that male authors produced, symbolised women’s independence. They thus created this negative image to ease male fears about women being independent. Ambition and fierceness were considered as masculine features and therefore ‘monstrous’ in women, while those features were seen as normal in men (G&G, 28). In the eighteenth century, satirists integrated this ‘female monster’ in their literature, which was upsetting to women because at this moment, they started to pursue a literary career (G&G, 30). Gilbert and Gubar further explain the underlying reasons for this literary misogyny of the eighteenth-century satirists:

In all these incarnations [...] the female monster is a striking illustration of Simone de Beauvoir’s thesis that woman has been made to represent all of man’s ambivalent feelings about his own inability to control his own physical existence, his own birth and death. [...] Male dread of women, and specifically the infantile dread of maternal autonomy, has historically objectified itself in vilification of women, while male ambivalence about female ‘charms’ underlies the traditional images of such terrible sorceress-goddesses as the Sphinx, Medusa, Circe, Kali, Delilah, and Salome, all of whom possess duplicitous arts that allow them both to seduce and to steal male generative energy. (G&G, 34)

As already mentioned above, male writers thus ease their fears about female independence by creating this negative image of women in literature, while this creation also symbolises male insecurity about themselves as well as their dubious attitude towards women’s attractions. The cause for men portraying women as monsters is clearly complicated. These representations caused women to be frightened of writing. Female writers were proclaimed to be “unsexed” or perversely sexed female[s’], as writing was not appropriate for angelic women, so they were considered ‘monster[s]’ or freak[s’], like Errour from Spenser’s The Faerie Queene or Lady Macbeth from Shakespeare’s Macbeth (G&G, 34-35). Another famous female monster is Lilith, who was the first female and the first monster in Hebrew mythology. She was the first wife of Adam and believed to be equal to him, so when Adam imposed his will on her and demanded obedience, she was furious and articulated God’s name, which was forbidden. After this, she fled. God’s messengers ordered her to go back to Adam or else, each day a hundred of her children would die, of which Lilith chose the second option: she chose the horrible sentence over ‘patriarchal marriage’ and ‘male domination’ (G&G, 35). Her
story has been specifically linked to ‘female authorship and female authority’: the story of Lilith would demonstrate what happened to women if they would try to become independent (G&G 35-36). They have to be submissive, or else they will be cursed. Despite those images of ‘angel’ and ‘monster’, by the end of the eighteenth century, women became successful authors and they started to change the traditions of male literature in their own, female texts (G&G, 44).

Although women started writing and changing male literary traditions, the ‘angel’ and ‘monster’ images have been omnipresent in male literature, which caused them to emerge in female literature as well. Female authors thus did not really succeed in eliminating these ‘angel’ and ‘monster’ images, as Virginia Woolf stated they had to do in order to gain literary autonomy (G&G, 17). Those images, denying and ridiculing female creativity and female authority, have dramatically affected the images women (writers) had of themselves. They had to determine their own identities, but this process was hindered by the male images of women: the image the female author had of herself was created by men (G&G, 17). Since the eighteenth century, conduct books came into existence. Those books encouraged young girls to be obedient, humble and noble. They also developed the “eternal feminine” virtues of modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, civility, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability, politeness, and women should also please their husband at all times (G&G, 23).14 As already mentioned, this was part of ‘the middle-class ideology of the proper sphere of womanhood’ (Shw, 14). This ideology also caused the first female occupations in the Victorian age to be practised at home or to be related to the stereotypical female functions of ‘teacher, helper, and mother’, such as the professions of ‘social reformers, nurses, governesses, and novelists’, which were considered proper professions for ladies (Shw, 14).

Because literature was long seen as exclusively male, and the patriarchal images of women affected women’s investigation of their own identities, women long refrained from pursuing a literary career. Gilbert and Gubar label this phenomenon ‘anxiety of authorship’, which they oppose to Harold Bloom’s model of ‘anxiety of influence’ (G&G, 46-50). With this model, Bloom means the anxiety that the author did not produce his own literary work and that the literature of former authors (unconsciously) influenced

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14 Those standards can also be found in: Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity, ed. by Vivien Jones (London: Routledge, 1990), xi + 257 pp.
him so much that his work becomes insignificant and unoriginal. The model that Bloom designed is completely based on masculinity and patriarchy, which offers a clear division between male and female authors (G&G, 47-48). The female writer encounters that ‘anxiety of influence’ very differently than the male writer, because her predecessors were mostly men, so she deviated greatly from them (G&G, 48). The female author had to fight against the female images displayed by those male predecessors:

Not only do these precursors incarnate patriarchal authority […], they attempt to enclose her in definitions of her person and her potential which, by reducing her to extreme stereotypes (angel, monster) drastically conflict with her own sense of her self – that is, of her subjectivity, her autonomy, her creativity. On the one hand, therefore, the woman writer’s male precursors symbolize authority; on the other hand, despite their authority, they fail to define the ways in which she experiences her own identity as a writer. (G&G, 48)

This ambivalent position of the female author towards her male predecessors caused her to feel an ‘anxiety of authorship’ instead of an ‘anxiety of influence’: she feared that she was incapable of writing. She had to battle against patriarchy and against the male definition of women. In order to do this, the female writer often looked for a female predecessor and role model, who symbolised the possibility of defying male domination in literature. With this role model, the female author accounts for her rebellion (G&G, 49-50). Simultaneously, however, she regards her femininity as an obstruction. Gilbert and Gubar discuss this struggle for literary autonomy further:

Thus the loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from male predecessors coupled with her need for sisterly precursors and successors, her urgent sense of her need for a female audience together with her fear of the antagonism of male readers, her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatization, her dread of the patriarchal authority of art, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention – all these phenomena of ‘inferiorization’ mark the woman writer’s struggle for artistic self-definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterpart. (G&G, 50)

This ‘inferiorization’ led to the female ‘anxiety of authorship’ that pervaded female literature, mostly from the eighteenth and nineteenth century (G&G, 51). Fortunately,
those female authors fought hard to defeat their anxieties and as a result, contemporary female writers are now writing with literary authority (G&G, 51).

In A Literature of their Own, Showalter suggests that female writers participate in a different 'literary subculture' from that of male writers. This female subculture has its own distinctive literary traditions and history (Shw, 11). Since the second half of the eighteenth century, female authors started to emerge. For example, in 1773 the Monthly Review published that female writers almost completely took over the literary scene. From the Minerva Press, it appears that female authors published double the amount of novels as male authors. Because of this female literary success, men started to mimic female conventions and some people even presumed that male authors started publishing feminine, 'sentimental novels under female pseudonyms' (Shw, 16-17). Many stereotypes of female authors were developed. She was represented 'with ink halfway up her fingers, dirty shawls and frowsy hair' (Shw, 6). In the twentieth century, she was considered 'childless' and 'neurotic', often unmarried, and if she was married, her husband ensured she could write in a quiet home (Shw, 6). In contrast with their apparent success, however, the first women who started to write felt insecure and inferior, which might have been caused by the concept of 'femininity' that was continually imposed on women (G&G, 60). Some of those women writers, however, did not acknowledge that they found it foolish of themselves to write. Nevertheless, even those women often experienced shame and regret about their writing activities (G&G, 61). Before the twentieth century, male authors expected female authors to be inferior to them. Female literature was assumed to demonstrate 'the feminine values' that patriarchy prescribed, for instance in the conduct books, but meanwhile, female authors did not consent to those prescriptions anymore (Shw, 7). However, if a female novelist did not want to be assaulted, she had to behave unpretentious and criticise her own work, by presenting it as insignificant, silly narratives to amuse readers (G&G, 61-62). She then also had to write about 'the “lesser” subjects', because they were more proper subjects for ladies. In short, the woman writer seemed to have two options: either she could admit she was inferior to man, and write on feminine subject matter, or she could argue that she was just as good as any male writer, and risk being disregarded or severely criticised (G&G, 64). However, these were not her only options. Another option was publishing her novels anonymously or pseudonymously. Some female authors tried to overcome their gender obstacle by adopting a male pseudonym and thereby
pretending to be a man, so their literary work would be taken seriously. Famous examples are George Sand, George Eliot and the Brontë sisters whose pseudonyms were Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. Pretending to be a man, female authors were allowed to disregard proper feminine topics and focus on ‘higher’, more intellectual subjects. However, this ‘male mimicry’ often led to an identity crisis in the female writer caused by rejecting her femaleness, so it was not the ideal solution to the gender issue (G&G, 65-66). Despite those limited options, a tradition of female literature came into existence during the nineteenth century with female writers who were able to write in masculine genres. This tradition has two prominent characteristics. The first one is that those female authors did not want to choose the two earlier mentioned options of ‘female modesty’ or ‘male mimicry’ (G&G, 72). Instead, they addressed ‘female experiences from a specifically female perspective’ (G&G, 72). Showalter states that only this can be called ‘female literature’, as she believes that there is an obvious distinction between texts that are merely created by women and ‘female literature’, which displays ‘women’s experience’ and ‘autonomous self-expression’ (Shw, 4). Many popular female authors enclosed their issues within their texts: they ‘have created submerged meanings, meanings hidden within or behind the more accessible, “public” content of their works, so that their literature could be read and appreciated even when its vital concern with female dispossession and disease was ignored’ (G&G, 72). This was an innovative strategy that made their literary work accessible to a wide range of readers. The second characteristic is that this ‘female literature’ appeared a bit strange compared to the works of the patriarchal predecessors. Numerous female authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth century did not conform to the patriarchal literary standards (G&G, 72). The reason for this deviation might be that their endeavours to overcome their ‘anxiety of authorship’ were not based on ‘female modesty’ or ‘male mimicry’, but on the modification of masculine genres, by covertly incorporating feminine experiences. This technique thus frequently made female fiction appear strange (G&G, 73). Female texts are thus ‘in some sense palimpsestic, works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning. Thus these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards’ (G&G, 73). Women writers hid those deeper meanings because they felt anxious about conveying thoughts that male authors (seemingly) never experienced. Consequently, they
developed strategies to conceal those thoughts (G&G, 75). This evolved into a tradition of female authors who concealed deeper meanings in their outwardly proper novels by producing autonomous female characters whose rebellious actions represent the female writer’s true emotions (G&G, 77-78).
4. The ‘Female Gothic’

In the previous chapter, I have illustrated the struggles and anxieties that female authors went through before establishing their own literary tradition, and I have also presented an image of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary patriarchy to which women were subjected. In order to examine Radcliffe’s representation of patriarchy and characterisation of the heroine and the villain, I first have to explore the literary conventions of the Female Gothic. First, the history of Gothic fiction will be depicted, then the Female Gothic will be discussed and finally, I will give a short account of the Male Gothic, which is the counterpart of the Female Gothic.

4.1. Gothic fiction

The new literary phenomenon of Gothic fiction arose in Great Britain in the eighteenth century. The term ‘Gothic’ originally concerned the Goths, a Germanic clan that raided the Eastern and Western Roman Empire. They settled across Italy, Spain and southern France. According to Heiland, those raids are what Gothic literature has in common with the Goths: ‘Gothic fiction at its core is about transgressions of all sorts: across national boundaries, social boundaries, sexual boundaries, the boundaries of one’s own identity’. The term ‘Gothic’ underwent a semantic change due to two authors: Vasari used it for a certain style of architecture with pointed arches, that was in fashion from the twelfth until the sixteenth century, while Horace Walpole used it in his famous novel The Castle of Otranto in a historical meaning to refer to the Middle Ages.

Around the time that Gothic fiction emerged, the genre of the novel came up. The first Gothic stories, however, were romances that contained ‘mystery’ and ‘emotional extremes’ and, with these characteristics, they ‘challenged the restraints of rationalism’, one of the main intentions of the romance. The genre of the romance was very popular in English literature from the fourteenth until the eighteenth century, when the romance

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16 Donna Heiland, Gothic and Gender: An Introduction, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), vii + 222 pp., p. 3.
17 Fanthorpe, p. 127.
and the novel slowly started to drift apart.\textsuperscript{19} These two genres differ clearly: whereas the novel is more realistic, the romance manifests dreams and wishes.\textsuperscript{20} The romance involves ‘the fulfilment of desires’, particularly those that cannot be manifested.\textsuperscript{21} Another important characteristic of the romance is ‘sensation’, which is an entertaining element for its literary audience and is related ‘to the grotesque, the sublime, and the supernatural’.\textsuperscript{22} Although early Gothic narratives were mostly written in the genre of the romance, they are often called novels, presumably as a general term for prose narratives.\textsuperscript{23}

The first Gothic novel is often said to be \textit{The Castle of Otranto}, anonymously published in 1764 by Horace Walpole.\textsuperscript{24} This novel’s characteristics set the example for later writers, thus creating a typical ‘Gothic’ form:

The ‘authenticating’ pretence that the author is merely the editor of a found manuscript; the setting in medieval and ‘superstitious’ Southern Catholic Europe; the expectation of the supernatural; the conflation of hero and villain; the decay of primogeniture and of feudal and aristocratic rights in general, and the rise of an ambitious bourgeoisie eager to exercise individual freedom in marriage and inheritance; the focus on the victimised, but often defiant, position of women; the use of confined spaces – castles, dungeons, monasteries and prisons, to symbolise extreme emotional states by labyrinthine incarceration.\textsuperscript{25}

Despite its predictability, the Gothic novel was extremely popular. The reason for this success is explained in \textit{Gothic & Gender} by Donna Heiland. According to her, ‘their accomplishment is double-edged, for they at once entertain and terrify us. They fill us with relief at our exemption from the dangers they represent, but force us to look at those dangers all the same. They feel like escapist fantasy’.\textsuperscript{26} The reason why the public needed this escapist fantasy is because of the unstable social and political systems that

\textsuperscript{19} Beer, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{20} Beer, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{22} Beer, pp. 55-56.
\textsuperscript{23} In this dissertation, the term ‘novel’ will be used occasionally, for the sake of convenience.
\textsuperscript{24} Victor Sage, ‘Gothic Novel’, in \textit{The Handbook of the Gothic}, ed. by Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 2nd edn (New York: New York University Press, 2009), pp. 146-54, p. 146. However, this statement can also be found in many other sources.
\textsuperscript{25} Sage, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{26} Heiland, p. 2.
marked this era. The eighteenth century in Britain knew many revolutions, but at the same time, this era was known for its ‘enlightenment’. Families changed greatly, as women stayed at home, while men went to work outside of the home, in the public realm. Together with this restructuring of families, gender roles changed and became an important part of eighteenth-century patriarchal society.27

After Walpole’s success, many other authors started publishing Gothic novels. In the 1790s, two famous Gothic writers were Ann Radcliffe with her most famous romance *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Lewis who wrote *The Monk* (1796). In 1818, two parodies were published: Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* and Thomas Love Peacock’s *Nightmare Abbey*.28 Other famous examples of Gothic literature are *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) by Charles Maturin, *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker.29

4.2. The Female Gothic

Smith and Wallace ascribe the first use of the term ‘Female Gothic’ to Ellen Moers, who used it in 1976 in her work *Literary Women*.30 Moers notes that with this term, she refers to Gothic fiction written by women.31 According to this use, the Female Gothic would merely denote the (female) gender of the writer. However, this is not the only meaning of the Female Gothic. Ellen Moers also implicitly considers it ‘as a coded expression of women’s fears of entrapment within the domestic and within the female body’, which became a very significant perspective.32 Women thus felt imprisoned in the household and in their own body, a feeling that they covertly tried to convey through Female Gothic literature. Smith and Wallace state that in Female Gothic fiction, women also expressed their discontent towards patriarchy and its suppression of ‘the maternal’.33 Different opinions have been formed about whether or not the Female Gothic can be called a genre on its own, distinct from the Gothic genre. Many different

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27 Heiland, p. 3.
28 Sage, p. 148.
29 Sage, pp. 148-152; Heiland, pp. 5-6, 114.
30 Smith and Wallace, p. 1.
33 Smith and Wallace, p. 1.
terms have been used: “women's Gothic”, “feminine Gothic”, “lesbian Gothic”, even “Gothic feminism”, which causes Smith and Wallace to claim that this indicates that the term of the 'Female Gothic', as it was used by Moers, is used too widely.34

As already mentioned, the ‘Female Gothic’ not only means that the text is written by a female author, but the literary genre also has its own conventions. Moers states that Radcliffe created a narrative with a female protagonist who is a heroine and a victim at the same time, which would become one of the typical characteristics of the Female Gothic.35 Hoeveler also emphasises the influence that Radcliffe had on the typical plotline of the Female Gothic, which she describes as follows: ‘a persecuted heroine trapped in a crumbling castle [...] assaulted by the forces of socioeconomic power (often disguised as religion) [...] the author manages to create a fictional world where disinherition is figured as the equivalent of incestuous rape’ (Hv, 1-2). The plot of the Female Gothic is similarly described by Milbank; however, she emphasises the villain, who is a male characterised by a certain level of authority, and he imprisons the heroine, attempts to kill or rape her and takes over her estates or wealth.36 Consequently, the actual source of danger threatening the heroine in Female Gothic texts is eighteenth-century patriarchal society, in which political, social and economic power lies with men. Hoeveler further analyses this ideology, which she calls ‘gothic feminism’. This was greatly influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft’s work, Vindication of the Rights of Woman, published in 1792, in which women’s poor education is criticised (Hv, 2). According to Hoeveler, Radcliffe’s literary works and, more specifically, her heroines enact many of the ideas that were expressed by Wollstonecraft, for example the consequences of a poor education. Therefore, the literary works of both Radcliffe and Wollstonecraft were at the basis of ‘gothic feminism’. Hoeveler argues that this ideology is connected to “‘victim feminism,” the contemporary antifeminist notion that women earn their superior social and moral rights in society by positioning themselves as innocent victims of a corrupt tyrant and an oppressive patriarchal society’ (Hv, 2). In ‘victim feminism’, women thus portray themselves as victims of patriarchy. She nuances this view however:

34 Smith and Wallace, p. 1.
35 Moers, p. 91.
The voices that dominate the discourse of British female gothic from the late 1780s to 1853 [...] have been recognized as adhering to the traditions of sensibility and sentimentality, melodrama and the hyperbolic staging of female suffering and victimization, and finally what is known as female gothic and vindication fiction. I contend, however, that white, bourgeois women writers have not simply been the passive victims of male-created constructions but rather have constructed themselves as victims in their own literature, and that they have frequently depicted themselves, as have men, as manipulative, passive-aggressive, masochist, and sadistic. In short, the female gothic novelist constructs female characters who masquerade as professional girl-women caught up in an elaborate game of playacting for the benefit of an obsessive and controlling male gaze. (Hv, 3-4)

In this passage, Hoeveler concludes that women were not just ‘passive victims’, but they actively presented themselves as victims or as ‘manipulative, passive-aggressive, masochist, and sadistic’, which is notable (Hv, 4). The Female Gothic novel does not depict its heroine as a defenceless, obedient victim, but rather as a woman who seemingly reflects the patriarchal standards, while secretly wishing to undermine the patriarch (Hv, 6). Her acceptable behaviour is all an act for the ‘male gaze’, as she does not want to be exposed. Hoeveler also mentions ‘the “separate spheres” ideology’, which is reversed in the Female Gothic genre: the home, which is the female realm, is placed above the male realm of the public, which the woman writer annihilates in her narrative. Women thus converted ‘the “separate spheres” ideology’ in their narratives for their own benefits, yet within limits (Hv, 5).

In the Female Gothic, the woman writer both constructs and questions female identity. Female identity was a relatively new concept, since by eighteenth-century law, husband and wife were seen as one person. When a woman got married, she legally stopped existing: her identity was integrated into the identity of her husband. Towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the perfect woman was always associated with a masculine authority figure, for example a husband or master; she could not exist on her own (Hv, 6). However, according to Hoeveler, the Female Gothic genre regarded female identity as ‘a legal and social construct that could be persistently attacked, deconstructed, and dissolved in the female gothic novel’ (Hv,
Those novels often involve an inherited estate or fortune whose lawful owner is the heroine, but she first has to defeat a villain, often her own uncle, before she can receive her possessions (Hv, 6-7). In the end, as an additional rebellion against patriarchy, the heroine constructs 'an alternative companionate family': she marries a 'feminised' husband whom she can control (Hv, 7). As already mentioned above, women writers thus reversed 'the separate spheres ideology' in their novels, so that women were in charge. However, Hoeveler states that this only applies up to the rise of 'the professionalization or masquerade of femininity': patriarchal society imposed new feminine roles upon bourgeois women, who were expected to consent (Hv, 5). According to Hoeveler, this ideology is omnipresent in the Female Gothic novel, especially as regards 'bourgeois femininity'; patriarchy very elaborately prescribed what proper behaviour for bourgeois ladies signifies (Hv, 5). In the Female Gothic, this ideology also serves to emphasise the heroine's innocence in order to arouse compassion in the audience (Hv, 14). Passivity in the victim seems to be the solution in these novels, but this is only appearance. The 'femininity' they present can now be regarded 'as a species of proto-"feminism"': these narratives encouraged women to secretly exploit or govern men, instead of relying on them (Hv, 33). Several novels from before the twentieth century, written by female authors, display the 'traditional "female" domestic values', but Hoeveler claims that Female Gothic authors only demonstrated those values in order to achieve 'a redefinition of sexuality and power in a gendered, patriarchal society' (Hv, 19).

A large part of the Gothic genre is thus written and read by women. The Female Gothic focuses on female identity in its novels, which mainly attracts a female audience. Milbank discusses the reciprocal relationship between female authors and audience:

Some of its earliest and most celebrated practitioners were women [...] and many Gothic tales first appeared in the pages of journals like The Lady's Magazine. Women's periodicals also encouraged submissions from their readers and in this way a reciprocity of female reading and writing of Gothic was established. Through the circulating libraries for the middle class, and the Gothic chapbooks
for the lower classes, a new generation of women readers was able to enjoy [...] the delights of narrative suspense.\textsuperscript{37}

Through periodicals and libraries, this ostensibly led to a great distribution of Gothic literature towards a female audience. But why were women so interested in reading and writing *Gothic* fiction? Hoeveler explains that the Female Gothic mainly appealed to female authors of the late eighteenth century because in this genre, they could imagine their subversion of the masculine world, and the establishment of a female world (Hv, 4). The Female Gothic thus articulates ‘the fantasy that the weak have power through carefully cultivating the appearance of their very powerlessness’ (Hv, 7). In other words, the Female Gothic heroine becomes powerful precisely because the author victimises her and emphasises her weakness. In conclusion, this opportunity to imagine the subversion of patriarchal society, without having to give up their female roles, would be the reason why Female Gothic novels were so popular with both female readers and writers (Hv, 4, 7).

\textsuperscript{37} Milbank, p. 120.
4.3. The Male Gothic

In contrast to the ‘Female Gothic’, the term ‘Male Gothic’ came into being. Many critics state that there are both Female and Male Gothic subgenres, ‘which differ in terms of narrative technique, plot, their assumptions about the supernatural, and their use of horror/terror’. However, these two different subgenres cannot be ascribed to male and female writers respectively, as the author’s gender is not a strict criterion to distinguish the Male and Female Gothic from each other. Milbank gives some examples of female writers whose work can be classified as part of the Male Gothic subgenre and vice versa: the female authors Clara Reeve, Charlotte Dacre and Mary Shelley published Male Gothic novels and J. Sheridan Le Fanu wrote in the Female Gothic subgenre. A special case was the literary work of Charles Maturin, who combined both the Male and the Female Gothic subgenres in his novel Melmoth the Wanderer. As mentioned above, the Male and Female Gothic are very different as regards the content. The Male Gothic is often regarded as ‘the true Gothic’. It is considered ‘more “Gothic”’ on many grounds: firstly, the ‘supernatural’ is not clarified by an ordinary or natural cause, which causes the novels to end mysteriously. Secondly, in the Male Gothic, rape is shown more directly than in the Female Gothic. And thirdly, the story often takes place in a merciless universe and involves an insubordinate protagonist. The belief that the Male Gothic subgenre is ‘the true Gothic’ has caused critics to view Female Gothic novelists as shy. Ann Radcliffe was thought to be just embellishing the ‘old-fashioned eighteenth century sentimental novel with genteel terror tactics’ such as ‘her unscathed heroines, explained mysteries and behind-the-times Burkean terror’, while Horace Walpole’s work was seen as more innovative. Another characteristic of the Male Gothic is denoted by Robert Miles. He describes the Male Gothic’s negative representation of women:

In the male Gothic, woman is always on the verge [...] of appearing unnatural, a monster of artifice. Or rather, for the male observer prone to [...] lust, the fault is habitually projected onto woman, an accusation usually couched in terms of her lack of ‘nature’ [...] In male Gothic what one might call the ‘deconstructive tendency of the carnivalesque’ is kept in bounds by a psycho-sexual force, by a

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38 Smith and Wallace (p. 2) refer to Anne Williams’s work, Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic.
39 Milbank, p. 121.
41 Miles, ‘Radcliffe, Ann (1764-1823)’, p. 78.
42 Miles, ‘Radcliffe, Ann (1764-1823)’, p. 78.
misogyny generally expressed as woman’s monstrous otherness, her ‘artificiality’. But in female Gothic the educative issues identified by Wollstonecraft, where woman’s true self is thrown into question, exist usually as an implicit, but sometimes explicit, tension.\textsuperscript{43}

From this statement can be deduced that in Male Gothic fiction, women are seen as ‘unnatural’ and ‘artificial’. Consequently, women are always presented in a negative way. This is of course in contrast with Female Gothic fiction, that mostly presents women as victims and questions their identity.

\textsuperscript{43}Robert Miles, \textit{Gothic writing 1750-1820: A Genealogy}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edn. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), xii + 244 pp., pp. 81-82.
5. Textual analyses of Radcliffe’s romances

In this chapter, Radcliffe’s three most famous romances *The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*, will be analysed with respect to the characteristics of the Female Gothic. In the previous chapter, this subgenre was further explained. To recapitulate, the Female Gothic has a typical plotline: the protagonist is a heroine who is imprisoned in a Gothic building, such as a castle or ruin, by a ruthless villain who often attempts to kill or rape his victim and steals her inherited properties. As already mentioned, the underlying source of danger threatening the heroine is said to be the eighteenth-century patriarchal society (Hv, 1-2). In this dissertation, I intend to examine how those characteristics appear in Radcliffe’s romances. I will also examine whether Radcliffe subverts patriarchy in her novels and, if so, in what way. Also, I aim to focus on the gendered characterisation of the heroine and the villain: how are the heroine and the villain represented and how are their characters influenced by a particular view on gender roles in patriarchal society? The answers to those questions will follow in the textual analyses below.

5.1. The characterisation of the heroine

The heroine is the protagonist of the Female Gothic novel. She is usually a vulnerable young lady who lost her parents before or early in the narrative. If she is in love with a gentleman, he is separated from her. Then she is kidnapped or persecuted by a dishonest ‘guardian’, a villain who wishes to imprison her, murder her, rape her or steal her fortune, or a combination of those crimes. The heroine has to protect herself and defeat the villain. Avril Horner notes that while she is ‘portrayed usually in relation to contemporary notions of the proper lady, the heroine demonstrates a passive courage in the face of such danger, and her behaviour sometimes offers a clear contrast to the more energetic machinations of other women in the text’. As already stated above, Hoeveler asserts that the female protagonist is not a defenceless victim, but a woman who is a paragon of the standards of ‘femininity’ that patriarchy prescribes, while

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44 Hoeveler, p. 1; Milbank, p. 121.
secretly trying to undermine the patriarch (Hv, 6). As regards the heroine’s wish for subversion, Horner presents the arguments that have been made by Kate Ferguson Ellis:47

The heroine’s attempts to escape [...] indicate a desire to subvert a domestic ideology which was beginning to tyrannise the lives of middle-class women within a capitalist, newly-industrialised society; [...] the bourgeois home was becoming uncomfortably like the castle or prison of the Gothic text in the way it constrained its female inhabitants.48

The heroine’s longing for subversion can thus be recognised in her efforts to run away. The reason behind this, according to Ellis, is the fact that the ‘domestic ideology’ was increasingly suppressing women in such a way that even their home started to feel restrictive. Those women hide their secret attempts at subversion behind their proper feminine behaviour, which is an act to deceive men, as they do not want to be exposed. As already stated above, by constructing this image of a proper ‘feminine’ heroine, the author of the Female Gothic wants to achieve ‘a redefinition of sexuality and power in a gendered, patriarchal society’ (Hv, 19). These heroines are brave; they do not hide in their chambers, but confront their dangers and try to find out how to eliminate them.49

As mentioned earlier, the heroine in Female Gothic fiction appears to behave according to the traditional ‘femininity’ standards. According to Horner, the Female Gothic often produces heroines whose characters are influenced by their time period:

Their heroines are often a response to the cultural anxieties and dominant discourses of the time [...]. For example, in Ann Radcliffe’s fiction, [...] the beautiful, sensitive and vulnerable heroines [...] are complex products of romanticism and the cult of sensibility. [...] The way in which they react to moments of crisis (for example, by fainting, blushing or falling into silence) derives, as Daniel Cottom has pointed out, from a body language specific to notions of femininity and sensibility current from the mid-eighteenth century.50

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48 Horner, p. 181.
49 Tracy, p. 170.
Horner explains that their emotional conduct has evolved from ‘sensibility’ and ‘femininity’, two codes of behaviour that came into fashion in the second half of the eighteenth century. ‘Sensibility’ encouraged sensitive reactions to anything that was emotionally moving.\(^{51}\) This term concerned ‘a capacity for strong and generally sympathetic feeling’, unlike the contrasting term ‘sense’, that denoted ‘common sense’ or ‘rational thought’.\(^{52}\) The external demonstration of emotions became highly fashionable, as they indicated compassion and empathy.\(^{53}\) ‘Sensibility’ was especially popular with women, so when Gothic literature started to be published by female authors as well, those texts frequently contained sentimental features. However, around the end of the eighteenth century, this behaviour was more and more often considered ‘self-indulgent’. In her romances, Radcliffe included both ‘sensitive’ and ‘sentimental’ features as well as warnings against an immoderate level of ‘sensibility’, as came into fashion.\(^{54}\) The second eighteenth-century code of behaviour was the constructed ideal of ‘femininity’, which is already described in the chapter on female authorship in the long nineteenth century. The feminine ideal was connected to ‘domesticity’ and ‘the private sphere’, the female realm, while men resided in the public, male realm.\(^{55}\) In this ideology, the realm of the ideal woman was the home. Since the eighteenth century, conduct books were published, which advocated the typical ‘feminine virtues’: ‘modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, civility, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability, politeness’ (G&G, 23). Young girls were raised to be obedient and humble, to become well-educated ladies and please their husbands later in life. Those socially constructed female roles were dictated by patriarchal society. Female Gothic authors thus created heroines who possessed many features of the two concepts of ‘sensibility’ and ‘femininity’. In the following textual analyses, the three heroines of the three earlier mentioned romances, Adeline, Emily and Ellena, will be studied and compared as regards the stereotypical characteristics of the Female Gothic heroine, ‘femininity’, ‘sensibility’ and their insubordinate behaviour towards patriarchal authority.\(^ {56}\)

\(^{52}\) Heiland, p. 11.
\(^{53}\) Todd, p. 233.
\(^{54}\) Todd, p. 234.
\(^{55}\) Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity, ed. by Vivien Jones, p. 4.
\(^{56}\) In the rest of this dissertation, I will drop the quotation marks around ‘sensibility’ and ‘femininity’, as I will continue to use these terms very frequently, and in the same sense as in this section, based on the following sources: Heiland, Todd, Gilbert and Gubar, Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of
5.1.1. *The Romance of the Forest*: Adeline

The first narrative that will be examined is *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), which is set in France during the seventeenth century. The protagonist is Adeline, a beautiful young girl without parents, who, already at the beginning of the story, is imprisoned by a man, d'Aunoy, who pretends to be her father. One night, Monsieur Pierre de la Motte and his wife are commanded to bring Adeline to a far place. Their carriage breaks down at a ruined abbey, where La Motte and his company take refuge. After a while, they notice that there is something sinister about the abbey: La Motte finds a skeleton in a chest and Adeline discovers a dagger and a manuscript, which is the diary of a prisoner who was murdered at the abbey. Then the owner of the abbey appears, the Marquis de Montalt. He wants to marry Adeline, who is forced by La Motte to accept the Marquis's proposal. As she does not want to marry him, she decides to flee, but is captured and imprisoned by the Marquis. She escapes again, this time with the help of Theodore, one of the Marquis’s riders, with whom she is in love. They are discovered by the Marquis and Adeline is brought back to the abbey. Shortly after, the Marquis orders La Motte to kill Adeline, but instead, La Motte helps her escape. After the successful escape, Adeline ends up with a family called La Luc: she is adopted by Monsieur La Luc and gains a sister, Clara. Later, she receives the news that Theodore is sentenced to death because he wounded the Marquis, his general officer. She discovers that Theodore is actually the son of Monsieur La Luc, her adoptive father. Meanwhile, La Motte is also arrested. In the end, all charges are dropped against Theodore and La Motte, and the Marquis is defeated: he confesses that he was behind the murder at the abbey, the victim being Adeline’s real father, who was the Marquis’s half-brother. Afterwards, the Marquis poisons himself. This results in a happy ending: Adeline receives a large inheritance, as her real father was the late Marquis, and she marries Theodore.

As already mentioned, the heroine of the story is called Adeline, who is introduced on the sixth page of the story:

La Motte now turned his eyes upon his unfortunate companion, who, pale and exhausted, leaned for support against the wall. Her features, which were

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*Femininity*, ed. by Vivien Jones, and also Ann Radcliffe herself, as she sometimes uses the term of ‘sensibility’ in her novels.
delicately beautiful, had gained from distress an expression of captivating sweetness: she had ‘An eye / As when the blue sky trembles thro’ a cloud / Of purest white’. A habit of grey camlet, with short slashed sleeves, shewed, but did not adorn, her figure [...] Such elegance and apparent refinement, contrasted with the desolation of the house, and the savage manners of its inhabitants, seemed to him like a romance of imagination, rather than an occurrence of real life.57

From this passage, we see that Adeline is a delicate, beautiful and elegant young woman, who is exhausted by her imprisonment. She is already presented as a victim from the beginning of the narrative, characterised by her feelings of fear and emotional pain.58 She has no parents, although she thinks that the person who holds her hostage is her father. Thus far, Adeline is a typical Gothic heroine: a young, beautiful and vulnerable woman who lost her parents and is kidnapped by a villain. At this time, the reader does not know who the villain really is, but at the end of the story, it appears that the Marquis de Montalt hired men to keep Adeline hostage. The Marquis is also her (unofficial) guardian, since he is actually Adeline’s (half-)uncle, but this will be examined below. Although Adeline did not receive a proper education, as she lost her parents and was oppressed by her uncle a great part of her life, she is an elegant, refined, tender and sensitive young lady, thereby possessing many of the feminine virtues that were advocated during the eighteenth century.

From the previous paragraph, it becomes clear that Radcliffe created her female protagonist in conformity with the concepts of femininity and sensibility. Adeline is a proper young lady who contains many feminine virtues that were praised that time: she is modest, graceful, pure, polite, chaste and agreeable. Although she has mastered this proper behaviour, she did not receive a real education, as she lost her parents and was brought up by a man, d’Aunoy, who pretended to be her father. He put her in a convent until she was twelve and then he brought her to a house in the woods, where she was locked inside a chamber until Monsieur de la Motte was forced to take her with him. Those circumstances prevented Adeline from being educated properly. She had not read novels, she did not know how to play an instrument and she could neither draw nor sew.

57 Ann Radcliffe, The Romance of the Forest, pp. 6-7. Henceforth, further references to this source will be given after quotations in the text.
58 Ann Radcliffe, The Romance of the Forest, p. xvii. (Introduction by Chloe Chard)
However, she attempts to catch up on literature. When she is at the abbey, she loves reading La Motte’s books, for she had learned English at the convent:

From books, indeed, she had constantly derived her chief information and amusement: those belonging to La Motte were few, but well chosen; and Adeline could find pleasure in reading them more than once. [...] La Motte had several of the best English poets, a language which Adeline had learned in the convent; their beauties, therefore, she was capable of tasting, and they often inspired her with enthusiastic delight. (82-83)

She also composes poetry when she is wandering on her own, often in sonnet form. Apart from being a proper lady according to femininity prescriptions, Adeline's character is also greatly influenced by the concept of sensibility, without it being really reproved by Radcliffe. The level of sensibility in Adeline's character is so high that it can be wondered if Radcliffe was writing ironically. Adeline bears strong resemblances to Marianne from Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), who is the ultimate stereotype of sensibility. Adeline reacts to certain circumstances mostly by ‘fainting, “sinking with terror”, tottering, trembling, and shuddering’.

For example, during the dispute between Theodore and the Marquis, ‘she had fainted almost at the beginning’, and she ‘remained insensible, and by breathing alone gave signs of her existence’ (176). Later, when Theodore is wounded and the surgeon reports that the wound could be fatal, she ‘could with difficulty conceal the anguish of her heart: she roused all her fortitude to suppress the tears that struggled in her eyes’ (177). Her emotions often restrain rationality, as is also the case when she starts hearing sighs and voices in her chamber. At first, she believes it is a product of her imagination or just the sound of the wind, but when she dreams about the murder victim and hears voices after she found the manuscript, she starts believing in a supernatural power:

Such a combination of circumstances she believed could only be produced by some supernatural power [...]. She had never been superstitious, but circumstances so uncommon had hitherto conspired in this affair, that she could not believe them accidental. Her imagination [...] again became sensible to every impression, she feared to look round, lest she should again see some dreadful phantom, and she almost fancied she heard voices swell in the storm. (141)

Adeline thus loses her sense of rationality and becomes superstitious, which is connected to sensibility, as will be explained later. She always has difficulty in restraining her emotions, which often results in fainting or weeping, as was fashionable for ladies of the eighteenth century.

Thus far, Adeline’s character follows the stereotype of a proper young lady, whose character is based on the concepts of femininity and sensibility. Nevertheless, different critics have stated that the Female Gothic involves a courageous heroine, who is not a passive victim, but whose feminine behaviour is an act and who tries to subvert the ideology of patriarchy. In Adeline’s case, however, this view would not be entirely correct. Adeline’s character is mostly ‘flat’, not deeply developed. The reader does not know her thoughts that well – or else her thoughts are not that differentiated – and she does not undergo a substantial growth or change. Calling her a brave heroine who takes her fate into her own hands and intentionally tries to subvert the patriarchal ideology would be exaggerating. Her character is highly affected by the concepts of femininity and sensibility, so her fears are often shown by trembling and weeping, which makes her seem weak. Her feminine behaviour does not seem like an act to avoid exposure. She is also afraid to really speak her mind and she is always very cautious when saying something that does not conform to the Marquis’s wishes. However, she is not only timid and cautious, but she also shows a braver side. For example, she dares to continually refuse the Marquis’s proposal. Even when her first attempt at escaping failed and the Marquis brought her to his villa, she refuses to accept his proposal and interrupts him with the following answer:

‘Deserve my esteem, Sir, and then you will obtain it: as a first step towards which, liberate me from a confinement that obliges me to look on you only with terror and aversion. How can I believe your professions of love, while you shew that you have no interest in my happiness?’ (160)

This statement shows a substantial amount of courage. She protects herself against his tyranny. However, her second speech shows more caution and less resolution:

‘[...] I conjure you, my Lord, no longer to detain me. I am a friendless and wretched orphan, exposed to many evils, and, I fear, abandoned to misfortune: I

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60 See section 4.2 and section 5.1. Main secondary sources are Hoeveler (pp. 5-6), Milbank (pp. 121-123), Tracy (p. 170) and Horner (pp. 180-181).
do not wish to be rude; but allow me to say, that no misery can exceed that I shall feel in remaining here, or, indeed, in being any where pursued by the offers you make me!’ (160)\(^{61}\)

Although Adeline shows courage in continually refusing the Marquis’s proposals, she still remains very cautious and submissive to him. However, she also undertakes actions instead of passively enduring her fate, which demonstrates her courage in the face of danger: for example by going into the hidden chamber where she finds the dagger and the manuscript, refusing the Marquis’s proposal, fleeing from the abbey when the Marquis comes to get her and then waiting for Peter at a ruin nearby in complete darkness, although she ‘trembled violently’ with fear (154). When her first attempt at escaping fails and she is brought to the Marquis’s villa, she does not hesitate to try again: ‘she perceived that the window, which descended to the floor, was so near the ground, that she might jump from it with ease: almost in the moment she perceived this, she sprang forward and alighted safely in an extensive garden’ (164). She immediately jumps out of the window of the villa, without any prospects of help, and runs into Theodore, who helps her escape. She attempts to escape up to three times. Adeline appears to be braver in actions than in words. Although she might not be intentionally trying to subvert patriarchy, those brave actions implicate that she does not want to yield to patriarchy, but she wants to make her own choices and decisions, such as marrying Theodore, whom she loves, instead of the Marquis, who would economically be a better choice because of his fortune.

5.1.2. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: Emily

The second romance that will be studied in this dissertation is *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), which was Radcliffe’s fourth and most popular narrative. The story is set in 1584 in southern France and northern Italy. The protagonist is Emily St. Aubert, who loses both of her parents quite early in the story. Her mother dies from a severe illness, and her father becomes ill as well. They go on a journey for Monsieur St. Aubert’s health and on their way they meet Valancourt, a handsome gentleman who insists on helping them. Emily and Valancourt fall in love, but they are separated. Later, St. Aubert dies on their journey. After her father’s death, Emily is left to the care of Madame

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\(^{61}\) See Appendix A for the whole conversation.
De Ridder 37

Cheron, her aunt, who shows little interest in Emily. However, she does consent to a marriage between Valancourt and Emily, but when Madame Cheron marries Montoni, an Italian nobleman, the marriage is cancelled and Madame Cheron, Montoni and Emily depart for Italy. When they arrive in Venice, Montoni tries to force Emily to marry Count Morano. The evening before their nuptials, however, Montoni suddenly wants to leave Venice, so they depart for his castle in Udolpho. This Gothic castle is situated in the mountains, remote and far from any villages. Here, Emily is subjected to Montoni’s power. He appears to be a relentless villain and tries to force his wife to give him her estates. He imprisons her and consequently causes her to become ill and die, so the estates go to her heir, Emily. Montoni then threatens Emily with imprisonment or worse, if she will not give him her estates. In the castle, Emily also discovers other horrific events, such as the imprisonment of Monsieur Du Pont. Together they escape from Udolpho and return to France. Montoni dies and Emily is now entirely released from his power, regaining her inherited properties at Toulouse and La Vallée. In France, she is helped by Count De Villefort and his children Blanche and Henri, who live at Chateau-le-Blanc, a chateau near the place where Emily’s father died. The Count acts as a father towards Emily and warns her against Valancourt, who lost his wealth and virtue by gambling. In the chateau, some mysterious events occur, but in the end, all is explained: pirates caused the ‘supernatural’ events. Valancourt also appears to still be virtuous, so he and Emily get married.

As already mentioned, the heroine of the narrative is Emily St. Aubert. Her appearance is described as follows: ‘In person, Emily resembled her mother; having the same elegant symmetry of form, the same delicacy of features, and the same blue eyes, full of tender sweetness’. Emily is a beautiful young lady, but she has a lovely personality as well:

She had discovered in her early years uncommon delicacy of mind, warm affections, and ready benevolence […] As she advanced in youth, this sensibility gave a pensive tone to her spirits, and a softness to her manner, which added grace to beauty. (5)

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62 Ann Radcliffe, The Mysteries of Udolpho, p. 5. Henceforth further references to this source will be given after quotations in the text.
Unlike Adeline, Emily received a good education. To her father, St. Aubert, it was very important that Emily was not only pretty and full of sensibility, but he wanted her to be virtuous and smart as well:

St. Aubert cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care. He gave her a general view of the sciences, and an exact acquaintance with every part of elegant literature. He taught her Latin and English, chiefly that she might understand the sublimity of their best poets. (6)

Apart from being beautiful, graceful, sweet and innocent, which are all stereotypical characteristics of the Gothic heroine, Emily also has another stereotypical characteristic: she becomes an orphan when her parents die and her cold-hearted aunt, Madame Cheron, becomes her guardian. She is subjected to Madame Cheron’s will, and to the will of Montoni, who becomes her new guardian by marriage. She is not really kidnapped, but taken to a remote castle in another country. Here, she is not really imprisoned either – she can wander through the castle –, but Montoni denies her wish to stay in France, or to return to France after her aunt dies, and she is threatened to be imprisoned when she does not want to give her inherited estates to Montoni. On the whole, we can conclude that, though she is not literally imprisoned, Emily has many of the stereotypical characteristics of the Gothic heroine, being a beautiful, innocent, sensitive young lady who lost her parents and is subjected to the power of a ruthless villain, who wants to steal her fortune.

Emily’s character, like Adeline’s, is based on the concepts of femininity and sensibility. Emily is a paragon of femininity, as she received a good education in feminine activities, virtues and knowledge. For example, her room is dedicated to the exercise of feminine activities:

[...] which contained her books, her drawings, her musical instruments, with some favourite birds and plants. Here she usually exercised herself in elegant arts, cultivated only because they were congenial to her taste, and in which native genius, assisted by the instructions of Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert, made her an early proficient. (3)

This passage clarifies that Emily has a natural talent for those activities. Even in horrifying circumstances in the castle of Udolpho, she keeps reading and playing music:
'She now put aside the book, and took her lute, for it was seldom that her sufferings refused to yield to the magic of sweet sounds' (284). Emily also received a good education: she studied sciences and literature, and she is proficient in Latin and English, apart from French, her native language. She also composes poetry throughout the narrative, which is written in English by Radcliffe, but we can wonder whether this is meant as a translation or as the original version, which would mean that Emily wrote poetry in another language than her own. In addition to being a very accomplished girl, Emily is very virtuous, as she has many feminine virtues that were praised during the eighteenth century. She is polite, agreeable, chaste, modest and pure. She knows how to behave properly according to the eighteenth-century standards – even though the narrative is set in the sixteenth century. Like Adeline, Emily’s character is influenced by the concept of sensibility. She often faints, trembles with fear, weeps or gets carried away by her emotions. For example, when she saw a black veil in one of the chambers of the castle, it attracted her curiosity, so she returns to the chamber to look behind it. However, it was no picture that it concealed, but a human corpse whose ‘face appeared partly decayed and disfigured by worms’ (662). On perceiving this, ‘she dropped senseless on the floor’ (249), yet if she had looked better, she would have noticed that it was not a real corpse: ‘Had she dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together, and she would have perceived, that the figure before her was not human, but formed of wax’. (662) She often gets so carried away that she becomes superstitious, which is caused by sensibility, as Radcliffe explains in her romance: ‘the mystery attending Ludovico, by exciting awe and curiosity, reduced the mind to a state of sensibility, which rendered it more liable to the influence of superstition in general’ (562). For example, when Emily is back at Languedoc in France and she hears the music that returns every night around midnight, she is struck with superstition:

Emily, as the sounds drew nearer, knew them to be the same she had formerly heard at the time of her father’s death, and, whether it was the remembrance they now revived of that melancholy event, or that she was struck with superstitious awe, it is certain she was so much affected, that she had nearly fainted. (525)

Although Emily possesses a high level of sensibility, the narrative also warns against it, unlike The Romance of the Forest. Already from the beginning of the story, Radcliffe
emphasises the dangerous nature of too much sensibility through the character of St. Aubert and the education he gives to Emily:

But St. Aubert had too much good sense to prefer a charm to a virtue; [...] this charm was too dangerous to its possessor to be allowed the character of a blessing. He endeavoured, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look, with cool examination, upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way. (5)

With the ‘charm’ mentioned in this passage, St. Aubert refers to the sensibility in Emily’s character, as already mentioned above. He realises that sensibility can be dangerous and therefore, he teaches Emily ‘self-command’ (5) (Hv, 89). When he is dying, he calls Emily to him. In their conversation, he again warns her against sensibility:

‘Above all, my dear Emily,’ said he, ‘do not indulge in the pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds. Those, who really possess sensibility, ought early to be taught, that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight, from every surrounding circumstance [...]’. (79-80)

St. Aubert teaches Emily to have common sense and ‘self-command’ over her feelings, and not to ‘indulge’ in her feelings too much. Her character is still highly influenced by sensibility, but throughout the story, we can see her struggling against her feelings, trying to control them. For example, one night at Udolpho, Emily sits at the window and she sees something moving outside on the rampart, without making any sound. She thinks it is a supernatural appearance, but she ‘looked round for some other explanation’ (356). With other strange events, she also keeps thinking about other, logical explanations, instead of instantly believing the superstitious stories she hears from Annette or Dorothée, two very superstitious maids. Another example of Emily fighting against sensibility is when Count De Villefort has explained Valancourt’s loss of virtue and wealth. After this conversation, she is thinking about Valancourt. She struggles against her feelings, trying to convince herself that she must forget him, as he is no longer a proper gentleman for her to marry:
The more she suffered her memory to dwell on the late scenes with Valancourt, the more her resolution declined, and she was obliged to recollect all the arguments, which the Count had made use of to strengthen it, and all the precepts, which she had received from her deceived father, on the subject of self-command, to enable her to act, with prudence and dignity. (518)

Emily consciously thinks about ‘self-command’ and behaving properly, instead of indulging in her feelings towards Valancourt. She knows that in this situation, she has to prefer sense and rationality over sensibility. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe thus created a heroine with many features of femininity and sensibility, but her narrator and St. Aubert also warn against the perils of too much sensibility, as Todd also states.63

Apart from being a paragon of femininity and sensibility, while also possessing a degree of rationality and ‘self-command’, which are stereotypical characteristics of a proper lady, Emily also has other features typical of a Female Gothic heroine: she is a courageous young lady, not a passive victim. Emily’s character is more developed than Adeline’s, as she becomes more mature and more rational throughout the narrative. She learns the value of ‘self-command’ and the ridiculousness of superstition and she learns how to stand up for herself. Whereas in the beginning of the story, she still seems like a girl who relies heavily on her parents, she appears to become a mature young woman with more experience, who knows how to act and think for herself. While Adeline, though also brave, is still a very cautious and fearful female character, Emily is more outspoken and daring. She displays a substantial amount of courage as well, for example when undergoing horrific events at Udolpho while wandering about the castle at night searching for her aunt and also when she refuses to yield to Montoni’s authority. Although she still trembles and weeps due to the sensibility in her character, she is less afraid to speak her mind than Adeline. When her aunt dies, she tries to persuade Montoni to let her return to France. He says he will let her return, if she signs over her estates to him. He keeps trying to persuade her to sign over her estates, as is shown in the following passage:

There he told her, that he had been willing to spare himself and her the trouble of useless contest, in an affair, where his will was justice, and where she should find

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63 Todd, p. 234. See section 5.1.
it law; and had, therefore, endeavoured to persuade, rather than to compel, her to the practice of her duty.

‘I, as the husband of the late Signora Montoni, [...] am the heir of all she possessed; the estates, therefore, which she refused to me in her life-time, can no longer be withheld, and, for your own sake, I would undeceive you, respecting a foolish assertion she once made to you in my hearing – that these estates would be yours, if she died without resigning them to me. She knew at that moment, she had no power to withhold them from me, after her decease [...]’. (380)

However, Emily calmly answers the following:

‘I am not so ignorant, Signor, of the laws on this subject, as to be misled by the assertion of any person. The law, in the present instance, gives me the estates in question, and my own hand shall never betray my right’. (380-381)

Emily thus refuses to sign; she is not afraid to stand up for herself. After their conversation, Emily felt proud of her resistance to his power:

To her own solitary chamber she once more returned, and there thought again of the late conversation with Montoni, and of the evil she might expect from opposition to his will. But his power did not appear so terrible to her imagination, as it was wont to do: a sacred pride was in her heart, that taught it to swell against the pressure of injustice, and almost to glory in the quiet sufferance of ills, in a cause, which had also the interest of Valancourt for its object. For the first time, she felt the full extent of her own superiority to Montoni, and despised the authority, which, till now, she had only feared. (381-382)

Montoni’s authority and power is distinctly emphasised in these passages. He often literally expresses that he has authority over Emily and that she has to listen to his commands, but Emily refuses to obey. Another example of her disobedience is when Montoni wants her to marry Count Morano. Although she keeps refusing the proposal, Montoni arranges the marriage, and she is to get married the next day. Emily is not planning on yielding and she ‘endeavoured to support herself by the belief, that the marriage could not be valid, so long as she refused before the priest to repeat any part of the ceremony’ (218). Fortunately for her, Montoni decides to depart for Udolpho and

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64 See Appendix B for the whole conversation.
consequently, the marriage arrangement is cancelled. Another way in which Emily rebels against her authority figures is by refusing to answer when she is reproved. Instead of speaking her mind, she does the opposite and stays silent, as in the following passage:

‘[...] but, before you undertake to regulate the morals of other persons, you should learn and practise the virtues, which are indispensable to a woman – sincerity, uniformity of conduct and obedience.’

Emily, who had always endeavoured to regulate her conduct by the nicest laws, and whose mind was finely sensible, not only of what is just in morals, but of whatever is beautiful in the female character, was shocked by these words; yet, in the next moment, her heart swelled with the consciousness of having deserved praise, instead of censure, and she was proudly silent. (270)

In the first three lines, Montoni is reproving her behaviour, but Emily knows that she always behaves properly according to the standards of femininity and therefore, she remains silent. Although she stands up for herself, Emily is not a highly courageous and rebellious character. In some ways, Adeline is even more courageous than Emily: Adeline tries to escape up to three times, once even completely alone, while Emily waits for someone else to push her. The escape from the castle of Udolpho is all planned by Annette, Ludovico and Monsieur Du Pont, and Emily only has to follow their lead. She eventually even yields to Montoni’s threats and signs over her estates to him, in order to recover her freedom, but Montoni breaks his promise. While Adeline undertakes actions to regain her liberty, Emily is a more passive victim, although she is more outspoken than Adeline. Whereas Adeline lacks the words, Emily fails to act. Although at first, she seems strong and unwilling to yield to patriarchy, she eventually succumbs to Montoni’s authority. However, she does manage to escape and regain her liberty and wealth. In conclusion, Emily is not really the typical Female Gothic heroine who is described by critics as a courageous woman who actively takes her fate into her own hands, trying to subvert the ideology of patriarchy. Her feminine behaviour seems sincere, rather than an act to convince men of her adjustment to the patriarchal feminine ideal and to avoid the exposure of her secret rebellion. She is also rather passive about her own fate, but she does defy Montoni’s authority, and by the same token, patriarchal society, and she manages to escape and marry the man she loves.
5.1.3. *The Italian*: Ellena

The third romance studied in this dissertation is *The Italian* (1797), which is very different from the previous two romances. This narrative is set in Italy in 1758 and the protagonists are Ellena di Rosalba and Vincentio di Vivaldi. Vivaldi sees Ellena in a church in Naples and is struck with her beauty. He falls in love and wants to marry her, but his mother, the Marchesa, is against it. She calls for her confessor, father Schedoni, a monk of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo at Naples, who will help the Marchesa to prevent the marriage. Ellena’s aunt (and guardian) Signora Bianchi consents to the marriage and after giving them her blessing, Bianchi suddenly dies. Shortly after, Ellena is kidnapped and brought to the remote convent of San Stefano. With the help of Sister Olivia, Ellena can escape from the convent and flee together with Vivaldi and his servant Paulo. After the escape, they want to get married, but Vivaldi is arrested by the Inquisition on the charge of abducting a nun from a convent. He and Paulo are taken to the Inquisition in Rome, where they are imprisoned. Ellena is sent to a house on the seashore, inhabited by Spalatro, Schedoni’s accomplice, who has been ordered to kill Ellena. When Schedoni arrives, he realises that Ellena is his daughter. He decides to change his plan, and instead of killing her, he wants to convince the Marchesa that Ellena is a good candidate for marrying Vivaldi. He then tries to free Vivaldi from the Inquisition, but is imprisoned himself and is sentenced to death for past crimes: Schedoni’s real identity is the Count di Marinella and he murdered his own brother and married his brother’s wife, whom he killed as well. Later, he poisons himself. Vivaldi is released and returns to Naples. While he was imprisoned, his mother died. In the mean time, Ellena discovers that Sister Olivia of the convent of San Stefano is her mother, the Countess di Bruno, who was stabbed by Schedoni but did not die, as was assumed. Schedoni also appears to be Ellena’s uncle instead of her father. Ellena now learns that she is from a noble family, so the Marchese, Vivaldi’s father, has no objection to her marrying Vivaldi and the romance ends with their marriage.

The heroine of *The Italian* is Ellena di Rosalba, again a beautiful and poor orphan. The narrator describes the first time that Vivaldi sees Ellena as follows: 'The sweetness and fine expression of her voice attracted his attention to her figure, which had a
distinguished air of delicacy and grace; but her face was concealed in her veil.\textsuperscript{65} When the veil is blown aside, Vivaldi is struck by Ellena’s beauty:

The breeze from the water caught the veil, [...] wafting it partially aside, disclosed to him a countenance more touchingly beautiful than he had dared to image. Her features were of the Grecian outline, and, though they expressed the tranquillity of an elegant mind, her dark blue eyes sparkled with intelligence. (6)

Ellena is elegant, beautiful and intelligent. About her education, nothing is mentioned. She presumably did not receive a proper education, since her parents died before she was even two years old, and she grew up rather poor, as her aunt Bianchi did not have much fortune. They lived in Villa Altieri, her aunt’s only estate, and they supported themselves by ‘embroidering silks’ and decorating furniture (9). Not far in the story, Ellena also loses her aunt, the only mother figure she had, as she dies mysteriously. She now has no family left to protect her against the evil plans of the Marchesa and as a result, she is kidnapped not long after Bianchi’s death. They bring her to the convent of San Stefano, where she is subjected to the authority of the cruel abbess. After her escape, she is captured again and taken to a house on the seashore, where she would be murdered on Schedoni’s orders. Thus far, Ellena is a typical Gothic heroine: a young, beautiful and vulnerable woman who lost her parents and is kidnapped and almost murdered by a malicious villain.

As Ellena is a typical Gothic heroine in beauty, elegance and vulnerability, her character presumably also includes influences from the femininity and sensibility ideologies of the eighteenth century. Although she did not receive a proper education, she did learn some feminine activities: she sings and plays the lute, reads books and poetry and she knows how to embroider. She does not, however, compose poetry herself, as Emily and Adeline did; The Italian only contains poetry as an epigraph to each chapter, but not throughout the text, as was the case in Radcliffe’s earlier romances. In addition to being quite proficient at several feminine activities, Ellena has many feminine virtues. She possesses ‘sense of dignity’, ‘delicacy’, ‘moderated affection’ and ‘circumspection’ (181). She is also chaste, polite, modest and pure and knows how to behave properly according to the femininity ideology of the eighteenth century. As

\textsuperscript{65} Ann Radcliffe, The Italian, p. 5. Henceforth, further references to this source will be given after quotations in the text.
regards the influence of sensibility, Ellena is different from Adeline and Emily. While Adeline and Emily were highly influenced by sensibility, Ellena is less influenced by it. The narrative generally focuses less on sensibility in the heroine’s character than the other two novels. However, the sensibility of Ellena’s character is still mentioned, for example when Vivaldi sees her for the first time: ‘So much indeed was he fascinated by the voice, that a most painful curiosity was excited as to her countenance, which he fancied must express all the sensibility of character that the modulation of her tones indicated’ (5). Ellena also weeps a few times, for example in the passage in which Signora Bianchi gives her blessing to the engagement of Ellena and Vivaldi, or in the passage on Ellena’s escape from the convent of San Stefano, when she has to say goodbye to Olivia. However, in horrific situations, Ellena is visibly cooler than Adeline and Emily. When she is kidnapped, for instance, though she faints, it is described differently: ‘All consciousness had now forsaken her’ (61). Also when she is taken to the house of Spalatro, she faints, but the words in the narrative say that ‘horror chilled all her frame, and her senses forsook her’ (211). Radcliffe seems to have stopped using the verb ‘faint’ as much as in her previous romances, and she now uses new phrases to express the fainting of Ellena. Ellena also does not often tremble with fear and does not weep at every misfortune. Of course, she is not without fear and she frequently shows her emotions, but she is much more rational and calmer than her predecessors. For example, when she arrives at her cell at the convent of San Stefano, she becomes emotional:

Ellena [...] suppressed a rising sigh, but she could not remain unaffected by recollections, which, on this view of her altered state, crowded on her mind; nor think of Vivaldi far away, perhaps for ever, and probably, even ignorant of her destination, without bitter tears. But she dried them, as the idea of the Marchesa obtruded on her thoughts, for other emotions than those of grief possessed her. (68-69)

In this example, Ellena is clearly affected by her misfortunes and she shows her emotions, as she cannot suppress her tears when thinking about Vivaldi. However, she quickly dries them when she thinks about the Marchesa. Here we can see that Ellena does not indulge in her emotions, but tries to control them and remains calm. There are also many examples of her rationality: her rather calm behaviour when she is
imprisoned at Spalatro’s house and she realises they want to murder her (213), or when Vivaldi wants to marry her, but Ellena keeps refusing because of the disapproval of his parents: ‘Ellena, had she obeyed the dictates of her heart, would have rewarded his attachment [...], by a frank approbation of his proposal; but the objections which reason exhibited against such a concession, she could neither overcome or disregard’ (179). She is still able to think with reason about the marriage, even though she loves Vivaldi. In conclusion, Ellena’s character is also influenced by the concepts of femininity and sensibility, but she has a lower level of sensibility than the other two heroines. In The Italian, Ann Radcliffe thus focuses less on sensibility than in her previous romances, which results in a more rational and calm heroine.

As noted earlier, in the Female Gothic, the heroine is an active, courageous young woman who confronts her dangers and subverts the patriarch’s authority, which has already been demonstrated for Adeline and Emily. Ellena differs from Adeline and Emily, because the plotline of The Italian is quite different from the previous two novels. In this romance, Ellena is first imprisoned in a remote convent and afterwards in a house on the seashore. Those could have the same potential for creating horror and terror as the Gothic buildings of the previous two romances, but unfortunately, Ellena is not confronted with supernatural events – perhaps because Radcliffe did not want to make Ellena a superstitious character, as she is quite rational. No terrifying whispers or shadows and no unexplainable music haunt her. The narrative is not completely devoid of the supernatural element, however, as Vivaldi is haunted by a monk who seems like a ghost, because he appears and disappears in unintelligible ways, as if he can walk through walls. Although Ellena’s courage is not displayed in confronting ghosts or other supernatural aspects, she shows courage in defying the authority of her oppressors. When she arrives at the convent of San Stefano, she is imprisoned for several days. On the fourth day, she is summoned to the cruel abbess who gives her two choices: she must take the veil in the convent or marry a man whom the Marchesa had chosen for Ellena, as a punishment for the offence she committed against a house of noble rank by trying to marry Vivaldi. Ellena, after ‘a disdainful silence’ (83), answers the following:

‘It is unnecessary,’ said Ellena, with an air of dignified tranquillity, ‘that I should withdraw for the purposes of considering and deciding. My resolution is already taken, and I reject each of the offered alternatives. I will neither condemn myself
Ellena rejects the two choices that the abbess gives her, by which the abbess is appalled, and the conversation continues as follows:

‘[...] the boldness which enables you to insult your Superior, a priestess of your holy religion, even in her sanctuary!’

‘The sanctuary is profaned,’ said Ellena, mildly, but with dignity: ‘it is become a prison. It is only when the Superior ceases to respect the precepts of that holy religion, the precepts which teach her justice and benevolence, that she herself is no longer respected. [...]’ (84)

Ellena stands up to the abbess and courageously defends her own opinion. Afterwards, she has no regrets, as ‘her judgment approved of the frankness, with which she had asserted her rights, and of the firmness, with which she had reproved a woman, who had dared to demand respect from the very victim of her cruelty and oppression’ (85). She is proud of herself, even more because she had never ‘forgotten her own dignity so far, as to degenerate into the vehemence of passion, or to faulter with the weakness of fear’ (85).

In these passages, Ellena does not stand up to a male authority figure, but to a female authority figure. Ellena was taken to the convent of San Stefano because of her ‘crime’: she is accused of ‘[having] sought clandestinely to unite herself with the noble house of Vivaldi’, thereby offending the dignity of the family (67). The abbess was asked to punish the offender, Ellena, and preserve the dignity of the house of Vivaldi. Her authority is based upon the Catholic Church, which makes The Italian again different from the previous narratives, in which religion was not emphasised. The Italian also contains a male authority figure, Schedoni, whose authority relies on the Catholic Church as well, as he is a catholic monk.67 Like the other two heroines, Ellena shows her courage in escaping from the convent. Vivaldi and Paulo have found her and they design a plan to help her escape. Like Emily, Ellena does not need to take the initiative to escape, but she is more active in it than Emily. She has to go to the music room, masked with Olivia’s veil, so she would not be recognised by the abbess. She then has to go to the

66 See Appendix C for the whole conversation.
67 See section 5.2.3.
grate, where Vivaldi, dressed as a pilgrim, hands her a note with the details of the plan. The note is almost discovered by another nun, but Ellena manages to pick it up in time. Then she has to go to the nun's garden with Sister Olivia, where behind the gate, brother Jeronimo and Vivaldi are waiting for her, and they escape. From this escape can be concluded that Ellena more actively takes action to regain her liberty than Emily, though more passively than Adeline. Like Adeline and Emily, Ellena is not as strong, courageous and independent as a typical Female Gothic heroine is supposed to be, but she does defy authority and regains her liberty. The authority that Ellena defies in this novel is evidently different from that in the other two romances, but this will be discussed later on.\(^6^8\)

5.1.4. Comparison and concluding remarks

Ann Radcliffe's heroines are all characterised by a certain delicateness, although they are unconquerable at the same time (Cl, vii). The three heroines Adeline, Emily and Ellena could be sisters, or even one and the same person, but somewhat transformed in each narrative.\(^6^9\) Their characters are based on the same standards, which results in very similar features. Radcliffe seems to have created heroines who perfectly fit the typical Gothic heroine protocol: all three are innocent and beautiful young ladies who have lost their parents, are separated from their lover and constricted or kidnapped by an evil villain who wants to kill them, rape them or steal their fortune. However, Radcliffe's heroines are never really physically assaulted or raped; they are only frightened and 'continually threatened with attack' (Hv, 54). They are also products of the two eighteenth-century concepts of femininity and sensibility, as they behave properly according to those standards. They all exercise feminine activities, such as reading books, playing the lute, singing, sewing, drawing or composing poetry, and they are all highly virtuous. All of their characters are influenced by the concept of sensibility, however not in the same degree. Although their characters contain many similarities, there are also some differences between the heroines. An evolution can be found as regards the degree of sensibility in their characters. The first heroine is Adeline, who is a stereotypical example of sensibility. Throughout the story, she constantly faints, weeps

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\(^6^8\) See section 5.2.3.

\(^6^9\) This idea can also be found in Hoeveler, p. 55.
and trembles. She relies more on her emotions than on rationality and she often gets superstitious, believing in the supernatural. In Emily, on the other hand, a change can be noticed. She still contains features of sensibility: she is often seen weeping, trembling and fainting and she also gets superstitious sometimes. However, Radcliffe’s narrator also expresses a warning against sensibility in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which is not the case in *The Romance of the Forest*. St. Aubert warns Emily to not indulge too much in her emotions and he teaches her the value of ‘self-command’. He also advises her to prefer sense and rationality over sensibility and superstition. We see Emily trying to control her emotions and rely on rationality instead of believing superstitious stories. Ellena’s character is even a step further in this evolution from a high degree of sensibility towards more rationality. She possesses the lowest degree of sensibility and the highest level of sense and rationality of all three heroines. She still weeps sometimes, but not at every misfortune, and she seldom trembles with fear. She is visibly calmer in the face of danger than her two ‘sisters’, has more ‘self-command’ over her emotions and is not superstitious. Radcliffe’s heroines are thus beautiful, innocent young ladies, who behave properly according to the femininity standards of that time, but they go through an evolution as regards sensibility, as it was increasingly criticised towards the end of the eighteenth century.70

Thus far, Radcliffe’s heroines are perfectly stereotypical Gothic heroines. However, in the Female Gothic subgenre, the heroine also displays another important aspect that is yet to be compared in the three Radcliffean heroines: their rebellion against the patriarchal villain who oppresses them. As already stated in the section on the heroine, Horner notes that ‘the heroine demonstrates a passive courage in the face of […] danger’.71 Hoeveler also states that in the Female Gothic, the heroine is not portrayed as a defenceless victim, but rather as a woman who outwardly reflects the prescribed conduct for women, but who secretly wishes to undermine the patriarch (Hv, 6). In Adeline’s case, as mentioned above, this would be slightly exaggerated. Due to her sensibility, she is always weeping and trembling, which makes her seem weak. She also speaks very cautiously; she is afraid to speak bluntly to the Marquis. However, she does dare to continually refuse the Marquis’s proposal and she tries to escape up to three times, once even without any prospect of help. We can see that Adeline tries to protect

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70 Todd, p. 234.
71 Horner, p. 180. See section 5.1.
her freedom and takes actions instead of passively enduring her fate. She shows courage in the face of danger and by running away, she demonstrates that she does not want to yield to the patriarchal authority of the Marquis. In the end, she is quite brave, and she tries to make her own decisions. Emily is quite different in this aspect. Although she also weeps, faints and trembles a lot because of the influence of sensibility, she has more ‘self-command’ and is more rational than Adeline, which makes her appear stronger. She is a more outspoken character than Adeline, she is less afraid to speak her mind and she has her own opinion. She stands up for herself and defies Montoni’s authority by refusing to sign over her estates. Another way in which she rebels against his authority is by refusing to answer, remaining silent. These ways indicate Emily’s unwillingness to yield to patriarchy. However, Emily is not that courageous and rebellious in all aspects: she eventually succumbs to Montoni’s authority and she does not take actions to try to escape, as opposed to Adeline. The escape is planned out for her, so Emily only has to follow the others. Emily thus fails to persevere and to act, whereas Adeline lacks in words. At last, Ellena seems like a combination of Adeline and Emily, although she is not more rebellious. As her level of sensibility is lower than that of her predecessors, she does not weep and tremble constantly and she appears stronger and more rational. She also defies the authority of her oppressors by refusing the decision that they try to dictate and by speaking her mind very frankly. Like Emily, she is a very outspoken character, but she also participates more in the plan of her escape. Although it is already planned out for her, she has to act in order to succeed: disguised by Olivia’s veil, she has to obtain Vivaldi’s note and afterwards she has to reach the gates. She is more active in preparing her escape than Emily, which makes her more like Adeline. Therefore, Ellena seems like a combination of Adeline and Emily: she is both outspoken and active in her escape.

From those analyses of the Radcliffean heroines, we can conclude that Radcliffe indeed created Female Gothic heroines, although she is still quite conservative and cautious. As Radcliffe stood at the beginning of the Female Gothic genre, her female characters are not so far developed as being extremely rebellious women deliberately trying to subvert the domestic ideology of patriarchy. However, their disobedience and escape do indicate their desire to break free from patriarchy and be their own master. Adeline, Emily and Ellena clearly want to make their own decisions. In the end, they succeed in this purpose: the villain that constricted them is dead and they receive an
inheritance which enables them to live in a large estate where they are their own mistress. They bravely confront their dangers instead of hiding in their chambers and thereby they eventually defeat their oppressors. As already noted above, Hoöveler also argues that the heroine's proper feminine conduct is an act to deceive men, as she does not want her rebellion to be discovered (Hv, 6). However, this does not appear to be the case in Radcliffe's work. The heroines defy the patriarch's authority openly, without hiding their desire to make their own decisions. Using their feminine conduct as an act seems slightly far-fetched in this case, as even Ellena, who did not have a male authority figure when she grew up, since she has no parents and lives with her aunt, behaves properly and possesses many feminine virtues.

5.2. The characterisation of the villain

In Gothic fiction, the heroine is always opposed by a cruel villain, who will be studied in the following chapter. The villain is a male adult who oppresses his victim, the heroine, often by persecuting her or by locking her up in a room or tower in a dark and sinister building. He is usually handsome and gloomy, but there is also something evil or wicked about him, for example 'piercing eyes'. He is typically characterised by emotions of 'lust and cruelty', and he is completely focused on satisfying his desires. A recurrent theme in Radcliffe's work is 'the theme of unrestraint', which is represented by the villain. This theme causes him to commit two crimes: murder and incest. Incest was frequently displayed as rape and both crimes are 'extreme forms of transgression by the family relationship which exists between the oppressor and the victim', so not just incest, but also murder is committed within the family. However, Radcliffe never lets incest between blood relatives be fulfilled in her romances; it stops with the villain's designs.

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73 Ann Radcliffe, The Romance of the Forest, p. xi.
74 Ann Radcliffe, The Romance of the Forest, pp. x-xi.
75 Ann Radcliffe, The Romance of the Forest, p. xi-xii.
The Gothic villain has often been analysed as a ‘hero-villain’, a fusion of both figures. Stoddart notes how the figure of the ‘hero-villain’ is not a purely Gothic character:

The hero-villain necessarily bears the dual markings of both villain and victim, but, in doing so, he represents not so much a pure invention as his connection and indebtedness to a number of similar male figures including Milton’s Satan, the eighteenth-century ‘man of feeling’, and above all, the Byronic Hero.

Consequently, the figure of the ‘hero-villain’ is not entirely new, but he is connected to the continuous literary tradition of a male dual protagonist, as for instance Emily Brontë’s Heathcliff or Goethe’s Faust. The bipartite character of the ‘hero-villain’ consists of both frightening, aggressive and often diabolical features, as well as more pitiful features, as he often emotionally suffers because he feels misunderstood and excluded and he is being pursued as well. As a result, he has a characteristic that arouses feelings of admiration or compassion in the reader.

The ‘hero-villain’ is not really regarded as the origin of evil, but his character is often used to voice social criticism within the narrative. Fred Botting points out that actual evil is associated with corruption and oppression, which is often represented by persons or institutions:

The villain [...] is not the cause of evil and terror [...]. It is a position which calls for respect and understanding. Real evil is identified among embodiments of tyranny, corruption and prejudice, identified with certain, often aristocratic, figures and, more frequently, with institutions of power manifested in government hierarchies, social norms and religious superstition.

This can be connected to the Female Gothic, that wants to subvert patriarchy: the villain can be considered as the embodiment of patriarchy and a symbol of its authority. By opposing the heroine to this symbol of patriarchal authority, the Female Gothic author demonstrates her negative sentiments towards patriarchal society and her desire to subvert it. Many (often feminist) critics have studied the ‘hero-villain’ because he was

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76 Stoddart, p. 176.
77 Stoddart, p. 176.
78 Stoddart, pp. 177-178.
79 Stoddart, p. 178.
frequently produced by female authors. Such a study was also made by Showalter: she called those male figures, who symbolise the author’s wish for subversion, ‘brutes’ or ‘brute hero’ (Shw, 139-143). She argues that these characters demonstrate the female author’s sexuality and power, as it was very difficult for women to express those qualities through their heroines, due to the dominant femininity standards of that time (Shw, 143). This idea is also voiced by Stoddart, who notes that female authors of that era were constrained by patriarchal standards and were thus ‘forced to project power, aggression and transgressive desire through male figures’. However, she also states that this interpretation would regard every image of desire in Female Gothic fiction as female desire, even those that are presented by male characters, which jeopardises ‘the issue of gender difference and desire’ in literature. Stoddart observes that this would endanger studies of how those ‘hero-villains’ serve as an instrument to criticise patriarchy, an issue that is also part of the focus of this dissertation. Therefore, the function of the Female Gothic villain should not be considered only as a means to express certain emotions and qualities of the female author, but also as an embodiment of patriarchy and in this way, an instrument used by the woman novelist to criticise patriarchal society and its ideologies.

5.2.1. The Romance of the Forest: Marquis de Montalt

The villain of The Romance of the Forest is the Marquis de Montalt. His physical appearance is not described in the novel, but Radcliffe does give an account of his character:

The Marquis was polite, affable, and attentive: to manners the most easy and elegant, was added the last refinement of polished life. His conversation was lively, amusing, sometimes even witty; and discovered great knowledge of the world; or, what is often mistaken for it, an acquaintance with the higher circles, and with the topics of the day. (99)

La Motte also praises the Marquis’s ‘generosity and nobleness of soul’ (98). These passages indicate that the Marquis seems like an elegant nobleman with good manners.

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81 Stoddart, p. 179.
82 Stoddart, p. 179.
83 Stoddart, p. 179.
He presents himself as trustworthy, polite and kind and consequently persuades La Motte to obey his commands. However, this is only appearance. He mainly acts upon his passions, which are distinguished by ‘violence and criminality’. He insists on marrying Adeline, even though it is against her will and even though he is already married to the Marchioness. After she continually refused his proposal, he even abducts her to his villa and tries to force her into the marriage:

‘Why thus obstinately persist in refusing to be happy?’ said he; ‘recollect the proposal I have made you, and accept it, while it is yet in your power. Tomorrow a priest shall join our hands – Surely, being, as you are, in my power, it must be your interest to consent to this?’ (161)

Later in the novel, Adeline attempts to escape, but is intercepted and taken back to the abbey. The Marquis then suddenly changes his intentions and orders La Motte to kill her. Fortunately, La Motte is not capable of murdering Adeline and he helps her to escape again, which is successful this (third) time. Just like Adeline, the Marquis is a ‘flat’ character. He is not deeply developed by Radcliffe and he does not undergo a substantial growth or change.

As Chloe Chard explains in the introduction to the Oxford edition of *The Romance of the Forest*, ‘the theme of unrestraint’ is frequently present in Radcliffe’s romances. This theme is exemplified by the Marquis, as he always acts upon his passions. As already mentioned above, the Marquis (almost) commits two crimes: incest and murder. Chard notes that in *The Romance of the Forest*, those two crimes are closely connected. The Marquis unconsciously feels an ‘incestuous’ desire for Adeline: he does not realise that she is his niece whom he put in a convent when she was young. Once he realises that they are related, he abandons his plan to marry her, and changes it to a murder plan, which La Motte has to execute:

‘Remember, then, my Lord, that tonight’ - ‘Adeline dies!’ interrupted the Marquis, in a low voice scarcely human. ‘Do you understand me now?’ – La Motte shrunk aghast [...] ‘Make no inquiries for my motive,’ said the Marquis; ‘but it is as certain

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as that I live that she you name must die. [...] I also wish it over – it must be done quickly – this night. (226)

La Motte consents, because the Marquis has power over him by knowing of former crimes of La Motte. Fortunately, La Motte does not execute the plan and instead, he helps Adeline flee. The reason why the Marquis wants Adeline dead becomes clear in the end of the narrative. It would not be his first murder: in the past, he had also ordered to kill Adeline’s father, who was Henry Marquis de Montalt, the former Marquis and his own half-brother. In the end, his crimes are revealed and he is to be tried, but on the day of the trial, he poisons himself. Afterwards, his motives for the murder on his half-brother are explained in the story:

The passions which had stimulated him to so monstrous a deed were ambition, and the love of pleasure. The first was more immediately gratified by the title of his brother; the latter by the riches which would enable him to indulge his voluptuous inclinations. (342-343)

Driven by greed, the Marquis thus killed his own half-brother to gain his title and fortune. This is presumably also the reason why he wanted to kill Adeline, who is the closest heir of Henry de Montalt: so his fortune and title would remain safe.

As mentioned above, many Gothic villains were considered to have a dual personality, thus resulting in the term ‘hero-villain’. The ‘hero-villain’ has aggressive and diabolical features, but is also ‘in a state of suffering’. This, however, does not seem the case with the Marquis de Montalt. At first sight, his character only appears to contain violent and immoral intentions; he is focused on his passions and acts ruthlessly and aggressively. Although the main part of the story is seen through Adeline’s eyes, there are some places in the novel where the Marquis’s thoughts are displayed. In those passages, no ‘good’ side immediately appears. For example, when he is wounded after the fight with Theodore, he is focused on revenge:

The anguish of his wound was almost forgotten in that of his mind, and every pang he felt seemed to increase his thirst of revenge, and to recoil with new torture upon his heart. While he was in this state, he heard the voice of the

87 Stoddart, pp. 176-178.
88 Stoddart, pp. 177-178.
innocent Adeline imploring protection, but her cries excited in him neither pity or remorse; and when, soon after, the carriage drove away, and he was certain both that she was secured, and Theodore was wretched, he seemed to feel some cessation of mental pain. (201)

Even the agony of his beloved Adeline does not stimulate feelings of pity or remorse in him. He is indifferent about her happiness and only cares about marrying her, even though she does not want that. Although he is indifferent to her wishes, he calls his feelings for Adeline ‘love’: ‘He was for some time silent, and appeared softened by her anguish. But again approaching, and addressing her in a gentle voice, he entreated her pardon for the step, which despair, and, as he called it, love had prompted’ (158). In this passage, the Marquis seems to change his conduct towards her, as he tries to act with tenderness. He also sees ‘in her looks the contempt which he was conscious he deserved’ (159); he is aware that his conduct towards her is not how a lover usually behaves. His love towards Adeline seems to indicate a better and softer side of the Marquis’s character. His behaviour is not gentle or tender, but he does seem to believe that his feelings for her are sincere, which might arouse feelings of sympathy in the reader. However, the reader would not believe this to be true love, as the narrator also emphasises by using the words ‘as he called it’ (158): the Marquis might think that he feels love, while he is actually incapable of feeling true love for another person, since he is too egocentric and selfish. We can conclude that the character of the Marquis is mostly based on aggressive and diabolical features, but there are some instances in which his behaviour and intentions towards Adeline appear softened and good, until he changes his marriage plans and designs to murder her.

In the Female Gothic, the villain is the embodiment of patriarchy and authority. By representing a heroine who tries to escape from the villain, the Female Gothic author expresses her wish to subvert patriarchal society. This is also the case in The Romance of the Forest, in which Adeline tries to escape from the Marquis several times. She does not want to obey his authority: when she was young, she did not want to ‘take the veil’ in the convent and later, she does not want to marry him. She wants to make her own decisions instead of letting the Marquis make them for her. The Marquis is often connected to power and authority, which he exerts over several persons in the story.

89 Horner, p. 181.
Firstly, he has power over Adeline: after he killed Adeline’s father, he paid d’Aunoy to raise her as his own child and he put her in a convent against her will. Later, when he kidnaps her and tries to force her to marry him, he tries to control her: ‘Surely, being, as you are, in my power, it must be your interest to consent to this?’ (161). However, it does not work, as Adeline keeps rebelling against him. Secondly, the Marquis also has power over La Motte, who admits this himself: ‘He knew himself to be in the power of the Marquis, and he dreaded that power more than the sure, though distant punishment that awaits upon guilt’ (209). The Marquis knows about La Motte’s crimes (such as fraud and theft) and debts, so he blackmails him. That is why La Motte obeys the Marquis’s commands, although in the end, he does not kill Adeline, but helps her to escape. Like Adeline, he rebels against the Marquis’s power. Thirdly, the Marquis also has power over Theodore, since he is Theodore’s general officer, so Theodore has to obey his commands. The Marquis sends him off to his regiment when he feels that Theodore is getting too close to Adeline, but after a while, Theodore comes back and helps Adeline to escape. When the Marquis intercepts them, Theodore stands up to the Marquis and wounds him in a fight. The Marquis then orders his servants to imprison Theodore and he makes sure that Theodore is sentenced to death. Towards the end of the narrative, however, the authority and power of the Marquis is continually undermined by each of those three characters. Adeline tries to escape three times, and succeeds the third time. In the end, when the truth about Adeline’s parents comes out, she triumphs over the Marquis by inheriting the estates and receiving the title of Marchioness. La Motte and Theodore also rebel against the Marquis. They stop listening to his commands and help Adeline to escape. Both end up in prison by the Marquis’s influence, but eventually, Adeline gets them discharged thanks to her new title as Marchioness. The Marquis is imprisoned and tried for his crimes, but when the day of the trial arrives, he poisons himself and dies in his cell. As the embodiment of patriarchy is destroyed, this symbolises subversion. Adeline has succeeded at breaking free from the patriarch’s power and she can now make her own decisions.

5.2.2. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: Montoni

The villain who opposes Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is Signor Montoni. He already appears in the beginning of the narrative, when the reader does not suspect him
to be a villain yet. He is described as follows: ‘a man about forty, of an uncommonly handsome person, with features manly and expressive, but whose countenance exhibited, upon the whole, more of the haughtiness of command, and the quickness of discernment, than of any other character’ (23). Here, Montoni is not an important character yet. Later in the story, he is described further:

This Signor Montoni had an air of conscious superiority, animated by spirit, and strengthened by talents, to which every person seemed involuntarily to yield. The quickness of his perceptions was strikingly expressed on his countenance, yet that countenance could submit implicitly to occasion [...] His visage was long, and rather narrow, yet he was called handsome; and it was, perhaps, the spirit and vigour of his soul, sparkling through his features, that triumphed for him. Emily felt admiration, but not the admiration that leads to esteem; for it was mixed with a degree of fear she knew not exactly wherefore. (122)

As already explained above, the typical Gothic villain is usually dark and handsome, but he has something evil or wicked about him. This is also the case with Montoni: he is described as handsome, with manly features, and his appearance exhibits spirit and vigour. However, his looks also indicate something evil: he looks conscious of superiority. He also knows how to change his ‘countenance’ to different situations. This indicates a talent for manipulation. Emily feels a hint of fear when she meets him, which announces this character’s wickedness, as will appear in the rest of the story.

Montoni’s crimes are slightly different from those of the Marquis, the villain of *The Romance of the Forest*. Whereas the Marquis nearly commits incest when trying to force Adeline, his niece, into marrying him, Montoni is not lust-driven, so incest is not a theme in this narrative. The principal motive for Montoni’s crimes is money.90 In the beginning, he seems like a wealthy Italian nobleman with estates in Venice and Udolpho, but later it appears that he is financially ruined, as Valancourt already tried to tell Emily. His estate in Venice is not his own and the castle at Udolpho he obtained in an illegal manner, as it is technically not his property, and he also has many debts and he gambles. His actions are all driven by his greed. He marries Madame Cheron because of her estates in Toulouse, tries to force Emily into marrying Count Morano for his wealth, threatens his wife so she would sign over her estates to him, and when his efforts fail

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90 Castle, p. x.
and Madame Montoni (Madame Cheron) dies, he starts threatening Emily. He is a very cruel and unscrupulous character, as appears from Emily's perspective:

His character also, unprincipled, dauntless, cruel and enterprising [...] he was equally a stranger to pity and to fear; his very courage was a sort of animal ferocity [...] but a constitutional hardiness of nerve, that cannot feel, and that, therefore, cannot fear. (358)

In this passage, Montoni is depicted as a merciless oppressor who cannot feel emotions. He is believed to be a murderer, not just by Emily, but by many people who have heard and spread the rumours about the previous owner of the castle, Signora Laurentini. Annette tells Emily the tale that, one evening, Signora Laurentini walked into the woods near the castle and disappeared. Since that evening, she was seen several times, walking in the woods and about the castle at night, but as a ghost (237-238). This story led to the rumour that Montoni killed Signora Laurentini to gain possession of the castle of Udolpho. Emily even thinks that she saw Signora Laurentini's corpse behind the black veil. Emily also thinks that he killed Madame Montoni, Emily's aunt, but this quickly appears to be false, as she is imprisoned in a tower, still alive. However, Madame Montoni becomes ill and dies, so indirectly Montoni did kill her. Not long after Emily's escape, Montoni dies. He had been tried together with Orsino, because he was suspected to be his accomplice in the murder that Orsino committed in Venice (569). Yet, no reason could be found to incriminate Montoni, but the senate regarded him 'as a very dangerous person', so he was still imprisoned. There, he 'died in a doubtful and mysterious manner, and not without suspicion of having been poisoned' (569). Even though the senate did not have proof of Montoni's crimes, they imprisoned him and Montoni got punished for his cruelty and assumed criminality.

Although Montoni is a cruel and merciless criminal, he also has a softer side. Consequently, he can be considered as a 'hero-villain' with a dual personality. In the previous paragraph, Montoni's criminal nature was examined: his actions are driven by greed and he is believed to be a murderer. However, he does not actually kill anyone – except indirectly Madame Montoni – and he also does not physically harm Emily. As Castle writes, '[her] physical safety, paradoxically, is never really in question'.91 Although he makes decisions in her place, takes her to Venice and Udolpho against her will and

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91 Castle, p. x.
threatens her so as to make her sign over her estates, he does not physically hurt her. When a war breaks out at the castle, he even sends her away to a safe cottage to protect her.\textsuperscript{92} She is also not really imprisoned: the doors of her apartment are never locked and she can wander about the castle freely. Montoni can be considered a father figure for Emily, not only by marrying her legal guardian and aunt, but also because he seems to protect her and treats her better than he treats others. In the beginning, Emily even believes that he is not the man about whom Valancourt had heard bad things and that he is still her ‘protector’, even though he tried to force her into a marriage and she is afraid of him. Apart from Emily's dual perspective on him, Montoni sometimes shows a softer side of himself. He once speaks to Emily ‘in accents somewhat softened from their usual harshness’ (351). Later, when Emily tries to persuade him to bring Madame Montoni down from the tower to her former apartment, because she is dying, he seems to show feelings:

For a considerable time he was proof against all she said, and all she looked; but at length the divinity of pity, beaming in Emily's eyes, seemed to touch his heart. He turned away, ashamed of his better feelings, half sullen and half relenting; but finally consented, that his wife should be removed to her own apartment, and that Emily should attend her. (366)

Here, Montoni is clearly touched by Emily's sensitivity. He is ashamed of his feelings, but he consents to Emily's request, although not much later, when Madame Montoni barely arrived in her own apartment, Montoni had already changed his mind and ordered her to stay in the tower, but it was too late. In these examples, Montoni proves to be a dual character or a 'hero-villain' in a greater degree than the Marquis. Montoni's character contains both aggressive and intimidating features as well as some 'good' features, for instance when he protects Emily and yields to her concern about her aunt, which can arouse admiration or sympathy in the reader.

As also in the case of the Marquis, Montoni can be considered the embodiment of patriarchal society. Once Emily's aunt and legal guardian Madame Cheron marries Montoni, Emily is subjected to his authority. He starts making decisions in her place: he breaks off her engagement to Valancourt, takes her away from France to Venice and Udolpho in Italy and tries to force her into a marriage with Count Morano for his own

\textsuperscript{92} Also found in Castle, pp. x-xi.
financial benefit. Emily tries to oppose those decisions, but ultimately, she has to obey, as her aunt agrees with Montoni’s decisions. Montoni often explicitly exhibits his authority, for example in a passage about Emily’s marriage with Count Morano:

Montoni [...] informed her, that he would no longer be trifled with, and that, since her marriage with the Count would be so highly advantageous to her, that folly only could object to it [...] 

Emily, who had hitherto tried remonstrance, had now recourse to supplication, for distress prevented her from foreseeing, that, with a man of Montoni’s disposition, supplication would be equally useless. She afterwards enquired by what right he exerted this unlimited authority over her? a question, which her better judgment would have with-held her, in a calmer moment, from making, since it could avail her nothing, and would afford Montoni another opportunity of triumphing over her defenceless condition.

‘By what right!’ cried Montoni, with a malicious smile, ‘by the right of my will; [...] if you compel me to become your enemy – I will venture to tell you, that the punishment shall exceed your expectation. You may know I am not to be trifled with.’ (216-217)

In this passage, we clearly see Montoni exhibiting his authority and Emily ineffectively trying to resist. Montoni not only has authority over Emily, but also over Madame Montoni. However, Madame Montoni rebels against his power until she dies. In the beginning of their marriage, she is easily persuaded by her husband: she agrees with him to break off the engagement between Emily and Valancourt, she agrees to visit his estates in northern Italy and she consents to a marriage between Emily and Count Morano. After their arrival at Udolpho, however, she starts realising that Montoni married her purely for financial reasons so as to get rid of his debts. From then on, Madame Montoni refuses to yield to his authority. He threatens her and shows his power by imprisoning her in the east tower, but she keeps resisting and eventually dies from illness. When her aunt is dead, Emily tries to defy Montoni’s power and refuses to give him her estates. Eventually, she succumbs, in exchange for freedom, but this promise of Montoni appears to be false. She then escapes and goes back to France, where he cannot pursue her; we afterwards find out that he had been arrested and thereupon died mysteriously in prison, presumably by poison. This symbolises the death
of patriarchy: the symbol of patriarchal authority is defied, as it has perished. Although
the heroine has not actively destroyed patriarchy, since Montoni’s death is not her fault,
she has attained subversion: she has escaped and is released from the patriarch’s
influence, so she can now make her own choices.

5.2.3. The Italian: Schedoni

The villain of The Italian, to whom the title of this romance refers, is father
Schedoni, a monk of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo at Naples, who is quite
different from the previous two villains. His description lasts almost two pages, in which
a forecast is given on the future events in the narrative. The narrator emphasises his
gloomy figure and the mystery of his origins and family, which ‘was unknown, and from
some circumstances, it appeared, that he wished to throw an impenetrable veil over his
origin’ (34). In the following passage, his obscure character is described:

There were circumstances, however, which appeared to indicate him to be a man
of birth, and of fallen fortune; his spirit, as it had sometimes looked forth from
under the disguise of his manners, seemed lofty [...]. Some few persons in the
convent [...] believed that the peculiarities of his manners, his severe reserve and
unconquerable silence, his solitary habits and frequent penances, were the effect
of misfortunes preying upon a haughty and disordered spirit; while others
conjectured them the consequence of some hideous crime gnawing upon an
awakened conscience. (34)

In the end of this passage, his dark past is already suggested. His physical appearance is
also described, which indicates an element of evil in his character:

His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall, and, though extremely
thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapt in the black
garments of his order, there was something terrible in its air; something almost
super-human. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face,
encreased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye,
which approached to horror. [...] An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over
the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing that they seemed
to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts. (34-35)

Schedoni’s countenance is typical of a Gothic villain, except that he is not handsome. He is a tall, dark and extremely thin figure dressed in black, with an ‘almost super-human’ appearance and ‘piercing’ eyes. He is portrayed as the unmistakable villain of the narrative, whose character seemingly only consists of evil features. Like every other Radcliffian villain, Schedoni has a talent for manipulation. He can ‘adapt himself to the tempers and passions of persons, whom he wished to conciliate, with astonishing facility, and generally with complete triumph’ (35), as he does to the Marchesa di Vivaldi, who trusts him as her confessor. However, he does not seem like a man of fortune as the Marquis and Montoni seemed to be – although they both stole their fortune and Montoni was even in debt –, but a catholic monk. This results in a great difference between Schedoni and the former two villains. Protestants linked the Roman Catholic Church of Italy with ‘spiritual corruption’, which caused Radcliffe’s readers to expect ‘the dark influence of the Catholic priesthood’ in *The Italian* and in Schedoni’s character (Cl, xiii).

As mentioned above, Radcliffe’s Protestant audience associated Roman Catholicism with ‘spiritual corruption’, which causes Schedoni to be considered as spiritually corrupted as well (Cl, xiii). Already from the beginning of the narrative, he is represented as a stereotypical manipulating monk who collaborates with the Marchesa to prevent the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena; he is ‘a stock figure’ (Cl, xxii). At the end of the story, Schedoni appears to have committed horrific crimes in his past, before he became a monk. He only entered a convent afterwards, in order to cover up his crimes, which cancels the possibility that Schedoni’s ‘unnatural monastic existence’ gave rise to his criminal character (Cl, xxii). Because he committed his crimes before he became a monk, he appears to be more similar to the other two villains than we first thought. His former title was Count di Marinella, so he was a person of noble rank. He dissipated his small inheritance when he was young, and soon, he became envious of his brother, the Count di Bruno, who had a large estate and a beautiful wife. He commanded the murder on his own brother and forced the Count’s widow to marry him. After a while, he became jealous of a gentleman who visited his wife, and while trying to kill him, he accidently

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93 However, this changes in the end of the narrative, when his past is revealed.
stabbed his own wife. Therefore, Schedoni committed two murders in his past, and he is planning a third murder in the narrative: he manipulated the Marchesa and persuaded her that murdering Ellena is the only way to prevent the marriage. His motive is mostly the same as those of Montoni and the Marquis: money. He lost his fortune and killed his brother to regain it. His plan of murdering Ellena also emerges from ambition, as he wants to be promoted by the Marchesa and regain social status. He is corrupt and ambitious, as is common in 'Gothic monks'; due to his position as a confessor, he can get away with immoral or even criminal activities (Cl, xxii). Because of his religious function, he can disguise the crime as a just punishment and he persuades the Marchesa with his promise of absolution (173). Even when Schedoni thinks that Ellena is his daughter, he keeps thinking about how she can serve as a means to regain money and social status: he suddenly wants her to marry Vivaldi, because it would be a financially advantageous marriage for her and by extension also for himself. In the end, like the Marquis and Montoni, Schedoni is tried for his crimes and he is sentenced to death, but he dies by poison before he can be executed. He then even commits a last murder: together with poisoning himself, he also poisons the monk Nicola di Zampari, his former friend, who caused Schedoni to be arrested and tried for his crimes.

Although in the first part of the story, Schedoni is depicted as a corrupt and manipulative villain, from the moment that Ellena’s origins are revealed, he shows a different side of himself and thereby perfectly fits the term of ‘hero-villain’. As Clery argues, the audience has to reassess Schedoni’s character, since he becomes more human and demonstrates signs of suffering (Cl, xxii). His change happens when he finally meets Ellena in person. When Schedoni arrives at the house on the seashore, where Ellena is imprisoned, he deliberates with Spalatro about the plan. However, Spalatro does not want to kill her anymore, so Schedoni decides he will do it himself. He enters Ellena’s room with a dagger, ready to attack, but he refrains because of the ‘shuddering horror’ he feels and he becomes ‘astonished at his own feelings, and indignant at what he termed a dastardly weakness’ (234). Then he notices the miniature that hangs around her neck and he freezes with horror. He wakes Ellena and demands to know whose portrait it is, so she eventually answers that it was her father’s, whose name was Marinella (235-36). The villain Schedoni then becomes very emotional:
Ellena’s terror began to yield to astonishment [...] when, Schedoni approaching her, she perceived tears swell in his eyes, which were fixt on her’s, and his countenance soften from the wild disorder that had marked it. Still he could not speak. At length he yielded to the fulness of his heart, and Schedoni, the stern Schedoni, wept and sighed! He seated himself on the mattress beside Ellena, took her hand, which she affrighted attempted to withdraw, and when he could command his voice, said, ‘Unhappy child! — behold your more unhappy father!’ (236)

After this passage, the reader is confronted with Schedoni’s dual character. He shows a softer and emotional side, of which we did not know it existed. He realises that he has been pursuing his own child and is horrified by his own criminal nature, which arouses compassion in the reader, as is often the case with ‘hero-villain’ characters. Nevertheless, only seven pages after this reunification with his daughter, Schedoni is already plotting a new way of using Ellena as an instrument to attain social status and fortune:

In thus consenting to conspire against the innocent, he had in the event been only punishing the guilty, and preparing mortification for himself on the exact subject to which he had sacrificed his conscience. Every step that he had taken with a view of gratifying his ambition was retrograde, and while he had been wickedly intent to serve the Marchesa and himself, by preventing the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, he had been laboriously counteracting his own fortune. An alliance with the illustrious house of Vivaldi, was above his loftiest hope of advancement, and this event he had himself nearly prevented [...] Thus by a singular retribution, his own crimes had recoiled upon himself. (243)

He now hoped to convince the Marchesa of the advantages of a marriage between Ellena and Vivaldi, or else to marry them in secret. While at first, the reader might expect that Schedoni now wants the best for his daughter, he is dissatisfied when it appears that Schedoni still only thinks about himself. His plan of marrying Ellena and Vivaldi is not intended to bring Ellena happiness, but to fulfil his own ambitions and obtain a higher rank. Therefore, the degree of compassion for Schedoni in the reader has to be relativised. Although it is true that he possesses a dual character and that he can be called a ‘hero-villain’, the compassion we feel for him has often been overstated (Cl, xxii).
The reader still hopes that Schedoni is not really Ellena's father and that he will be sentenced to death so she will be released from his influence.

In the textual analyses of the previous two villains, the last paragraph contained an explanation of the villain as the embodiment of patriarchy. The plot of *The Italian*, however, differs from the plots of the preceding two narratives: patriarchal authority is not symbolised by one ruthless villain of (seeming) fortune, as is the case in the other two romances, but is here represented by religion. Radcliffe's romances have the reputation of being 'anti-Catholic', like several other early Gothic novels: Clery argues that Radcliffe 'exploits popular preconceptions about Catholicism from time to time to produce an instant atmosphere of enigma and foreboding' (Cl, xv). However, Clery also states that the way she deals with religion in *The Italian* is more complicated than that. The narrative contains three symbols of patriarchal authority, which are all based on religion: Schedoni, the abbess of San Stefano and the Inquisition. Firstly, Schedoni possesses authority as a religious monk, as he is the confessor of the Marchesa and he manipulates her into plotting the murder on Ellena. He also has power over Ellena when she is imprisoned and when he leads her back to Naples, but she never rebels against his authority because she believes him to be her father and her saviour. Although she is a woman, the second symbol of patriarchal authority is the abbess of the convent of San Stefano, where Ellena is imprisoned in the first part of the narrative. She clearly uses her leadership to exercise power over the nuns, which makes her a female authority figure. The abbess is not used to being opposed and is indignant when Ellena defies her authority, as already demonstrated above. She emphasises her superiority over Ellena: 'the boldness which enables you to insult your Superior, a priestess of your holy religion, even in her sanctuary!' (84). Radcliffe often uses 'the monastery as a plot element, [...] to dramat[ise] the subjection of women in society', as is also the case in *The Italian* (Cl, xix). Convents were frequently linked to patriarchy, for example because they offered a place to put the overabundance of women in society, or because they could be used as a warning to urge women to consent to a financially advantageous marriage (Cl, xix). In *The Italian*, instead of being a threat to persuade Ellena of a good marriage, the convent serves as an instrument to prevent the marriage, which would only be financially advantageous on her side, and as a punishment for Ellena's 'crime' of seeking an alliance

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94 See section 5.1.3.
95 This will be analysed further in section Fout! Verwijzingsbron niet gevonden.
with a noble family. The third symbol of authority in *The Italian* is the Inquisition, a Roman Catholic institution that discovered and punished heresy since it was established by the papacy in the thirteenth century until approximately the mid-nineteenth century, though in Rome it still exists, however to a lesser extent. It has been introduced ‘in Italy, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and the Spanish and Portuguese colonies’. In *The Italian*, the inquisitors are dressed in long black robes and have a horrific appearance. When Vivaldi and Ellena are about to get married, after Ellena escaped from the convent, they are interrupted by officers of the Inquisition. The Benedictine priest explains to Vivaldi that he is ‘summoned by that awful power, to answer to [his] crime’ (187). Vivaldi is arrested on the charge of abducting a nun from her convent, but later it appears that the real charge is heresy, because he had insulted Schedoni, ‘while he was performing an act of holy penance’ (314). He is interrogated more than once, and threatened with torture, to make him confess his crime: “Audacious heretic!” he [the inquisitor] said, “will you dispute, insult, and disobey, the commands of our most holy tribunal! You will be taught the consequence of your desperate impiety.–To the torture with him!” (203). In this passage, the authority of the Inquisition is accentuated in the words of the inquisitor that questions Vivaldi. They imprison him when he keeps denying the crime, and they keep questioning him and threatening him with torture, until Vivaldi accuses Schedoni of murder and the Inquisition starts investigating the accusation. In the end, Vivaldi is released and Schedoni is sentenced to death. The Inquisition thus evidently possesses the power and authority to pronounce punishments and to use torture in order to get confessions. *The Italian* clearly differs a great deal from the previous two romances as regards the symbolisation of patriarchal authority. Instead of using one villain as the embodiment of patriarchy, Radcliffe uses three symbols here. The subversion of patriarchy is represented differently as well. Only the authority of the cruel abbess is really defied by Ellena, who refuses to obey her. However, the convent is not destructed. Schedoni is not defied by Ellena, but the Marchesa stops trusting him as her confessor, and the Inquisition imprisons him for the murders he committed in his past. One authority symbol thereby annihilates the other, as Schedoni is sentenced to death by the Inquisition. The Inquisition itself is not

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destroyed, but Vivaldi does triumph over it by accusing Schedoni and getting the charges dropped against himself.

5.2.4. Comparison and concluding remarks

Radcliffe's tender heroines are obviously always opposed by a ruthless villain. The three villains of the romances studied above have many similarities, but also several differences. As with the sensibility in Radcliffe's heroines, an evolution can be found in the characterisation of the three villains, especially as regards the duality of their characters and the degree in which they fit the label of 'hero-villain'. Firstly, the Marquis de Montalt, Montoni and Schedoni have many features in common: all three of them are ruthless villains with a very clear criminal nature and a talent for manipulation. However, their first descriptions are not the same. At first, the Marquis is represented as a polite and elegant nobleman with good manners; Montoni is represented as a handsome man with an air of superiority and 'quickness of discernment' (23); and Schedoni, finally, is already in the beginning described as a dark, wicked man with mysterious origins and something terrible in his air, even 'almost super-human' (34-35). Their first appearance in the romance also indicates an evolution. While Radcliffe still hides the evil nature of the Marquis at the beginning of The Romance of the Forest, she already gives an indication of arrogance when first describing Montoni in The Mysteries of Udolpho, and she openly exhibits the horrific appearance of Schedoni in The Italian. The three villains are all driven by greed and ambition; money is their principal motive. The Marquis killed his own (half-)brother to gain his title and fortune, as did Schedoni. Montoni did not kill anyone directly, but he illegally gained the castle of Udolpho and he threatened and imprisoned Madame Montoni in order to obtain her estates, which caused her to become ill and die. Murder is the most common crime among the three villains, although Montoni never really murdered anyone directly, but many persons suspected him of murdering Signora Laurentini. Finally, all three are arrested for their crimes and they are sentenced to death, but die in their cell by poison, either by taking it themselves or by being poisoned by someone else (as is possibly the case with Montoni).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, an evolution can be found in the three villains as regards the duality of their characters and the degree in which they fit the label of 'hero-villain'. The villains evolve from being rather undeveloped and only having
violent and criminal intentions to containing more complexity in their character. In *The Romance of the Forest*, the Marquis de Montalt cannot be called a complete ‘hero-villain’ yet. At first sight, his character only seems to contain aggressive and ruthless features. He is focused on his passions and does everything to obtain satisfaction. He wants to marry Adeline, even though she does not want that. He is indifferent to her feelings and does not feel pity or remorse for her, even when she is in agony about Theodore. However, he calls his feelings for her ‘love’ and sometimes he also tries to act with tenderness towards her, which indicates that his character is not purely evil. Nevertheless, after realising that Adeline is his niece, his conduct changes again and he designs to murder her, thereby putting an end to his better side. The Marquis does not really have a dual personality yet; he is still at the beginning of the evolution of Radcliffe’s villains towards ‘hero-villains’ with a dual character. Montoni, on the other hand, is a step further in the evolution: his character manifests a softer side later in the narrative. Although he is driven by greed, he illegally obtains possession over the castle of Udolpho and many people suspect him to be a murderer, he never commits murder in the story. Indirectly, he does cause Madame Montoni to become ill and die, by imprisoning her in the east tower when she refuses to sign over her estates to him. Here, his cruelty is obvious. He then threatens to treat Emily as he treated Madame Montoni, but he never actually harms or imprisons Emily. He treats her better than he treats others: he consents to her request to bring Madame Montoni back to her own apartment, while seemingly touched by Emily’s sensitivity, and he even sends her away to protect her, when a war breaks out at the castle. Montoni’s character is clearly more complex than the Marquis’s character. He has a dual personality: on the one hand, he acts like a cruel villain and threatens Emily so she would give him her estates, while on the other hand, he protects her during the war at the castle. Then finally, Schedoni also fits the term ‘hero-villain’. In the beginning of the narrative, he is already represented as a cruel and evil villain: he manipulates the Marchesa and he helps to kidnap and imprison Ellena. Later, he even plots her murder and in the end, it appears that he already committed two murders in the past. However, when he discovers that Ellena is wearing a miniature with his portrait around her neck, he realises that she is his daughter and that he has been pursuing his own child. He is horrified by his own criminal nature and becomes emotional; he even starts weeping. He immediately changes his plans and he now wants Ellena and Vivaldi to get married. Nevertheless, his
desired to effectuate this marriage is purely egocentric, because of the financial benefits that would come with the alliance. Ellena thus only serves as an instrument to fulfil his ambitions. Consequently, the goodness in his character should not be exaggerated, because, even though he becomes emotional when he discovers that Ellena is his daughter (of which he never learns it is untrue), he still only desires to fulfil his ambitions. His character thus contains two extremes: on the one hand, he becomes very emotional and he feels self-loathing, but on the other hand, he almost murdered Ellena and afterwards, he still only thinks about gaining status and fortune. In the end, he even kills a third victim, the monk Nicola di Zampari. In conclusion, Radcliffe's villains have evolved as regards the complexity of their characters. The first villain, the Marquis, is the least complex character, but Montoni and Schedoni both have a dual personality and can be called 'hero-villains'. Schedoni is the most complex villain of all three. His thoughts are more accessible to the reader than those of the other two villains, he is described more extensively and he shows more emotions.

Another important feature that was analysed in the villains’ characters is the degree in which they are connected to power and authority, thus embodying patriarchy. In the first romance, the Marquis is a clear symbol of patriarchy, as his authority is often emphasised. He has power over Adeline, Theodore and La Motte, and in the end, they all rebel against his authority. Consequently, his authority is defied by the heroine, as Adeline escapes from him and inherits her family’s estates, thereby becoming Marchioness. The Marquis is imprisoned and dies in his cell, which symbolises the end of patriarchal society in the romance. Montoni is presented in a similar way as the Marquis. His authority is also frequently exhibited in the narrative, for instance when he arranges the marriage between Emily and Count Morano, or when Emily asks if she may return to France. His authority is defied by two female characters: Madame Montoni, his wife, and Emily both rebel against him. Emily eventually escapes from Udolpho and goes back to France, where she perceives that in the mean time, Montoni had been arrested and he died mysteriously in prison, which again symbolises the end of patriarchy. The Marquis and Montoni are thus similarly represented in this area, as they are both frequently connected to authority and they embody patriarchal society. The narrative of The Italian, however, is quite different. As mentioned in the section on Schedoni, in The Italian, patriarchy is not symbolised by one villain, but by religion. There are three religious symbols of patriarchal authority: Schedoni, the abbess of San Stefano and the
Inquisition. Schedoni is not really the embodiment of patriarchy in the same way that the previous two villains were. He does possess authority, but it is not emphasised as often as in the previous romances. His authority is based on his religious function as a monk and a confessor, which he uses to manipulate the Marchesa into plotting the abduction and the murder of Ellena. Schedoni is not defied by the heroine, but he is imprisoned and sentenced to death by the Inquisition, another symbol of patriarchal authority. Consequently, although *The Italian* represents patriarchy somewhat differently, in all three romances the villain serves as the embodiment of patriarchy, who is defied by the heroine – or, in the case of Schedoni, by another religious institution – and imprisoned. They all die in prison, (presumably) by poison, which symbolises the death of patriarchy.

5.3. Other themes connected to patriarchy

Thus far, I have examined the three heroines and three villains of *The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*, the three most famous Gothic romances written by Radcliffe. In those textual analyses, the focus lay on the typical characteristics of the Female Gothic in those characters, how their characterisation was influenced by the eighteenth-century patriarchal society and how they represented the subversion of patriarchy. In the next sections, two themes will be examined that contribute to the representation of patriarchy in Radcliffe's literary work. In the first section, I will look at the relation between the heroine and the villain, more specifically the family relation, and in the second section, I will address the theme of the convent and its link to patriarchy.

5.3.1. Family

A recurrent theme in Gothic fiction is the theme of family. The villain and the heroine are often related to each other, which makes the villain's crimes even worse transgressions. This is also the case in Radcliffe's romances. David Durant describes the pattern that Radcliffe uses as regards the family theme:

Every step of her heroine's progress is defined in terms of her evolving relationships with a series of explicitly labeled parental figures. Her novels all
begin by sketching the pastoral Eden of safe family life; move to the presentation of a fallen world where a father-villain betrays and persecutes the heroine; and end back in the haven of a new family which duplicates the virtues of the initial one. This pattern contrasts a safe, hierarchical, reasonable, loving world of the family with a chaotic, irrational, and perverse world of the isolated.97

The heroine encounters many parental figures in the romances, including the villain who constricts or imprisons her. The family relation with the ‘father-villain’, as Durant calls him, is present in each of Radcliffe’s narratives.98 In The Romance of the Forest, the Marquis appears to be the half-brother of Adeline’s late father, Henry Marquis de Montalt, which makes the Marquis Adeline’s (half-)uncle. In The Mysteries of Udolpho, the relation between Montoni and Emily is different from the relationship between Adeline and the Marquis: they do not have a blood-relationship. He marries Madame Cheron, who is Emily’s aunt and guardian, so he becomes Emily’s uncle by marriage.99 Finally, in The Italian, the villain and the heroine are again related to each other, in approximately the same way as the Marquis and Adeline are related. Later in the story, Schedoni thinks that Ellena is his daughter, but this is not true. He killed her father, the Count di Bruno, who was his own brother, so he appears to be Ellena’s uncle. These three villains are all in some way the evil uncle of the heroine and at the same time a father figure for her, as already noted by Durant’s term ‘father-villain’. The Marquis and Schedoni were both uncles of the heroine, although Schedoni was unconscious of the real relationship between him and Ellena. Firstly, the Marquis is Adeline’s only relative (so by extension her guardian) and he paid one of his accomplices to raise Adeline and put her in a convent. Therefore, Adeline is not aware of her family relationship with the Marquis, as she had never seen him before she met him at the abbey. Secondly, Montoni is Emily's uncle by marriage. He takes over Madame Montoni’s role as Emily's guardian, since he starts making every decision, thereby becoming a parental figure for Emily. And thirdly, Schedoni thinks he is Ellena’s father and he told her that, so for a while, Ellena believes this is true. In her literary work, Radcliffe demonstrates ‘the contrast between the true family and chaos’ through her ‘father-villain’.100 She indicates that outside of the

98 Durant, p. 524.
99 This idea is also found in Durant, p. 524.
100 Durant, p. 524.
family community only chaos and perversion exists. Murder and (suggestions of) incest are also repeatedly included in her work, crimes that are committed by the ‘false father’, by which the father-child relationship is distorted.\textsuperscript{101} The villain’s role as a father figure can be linked to patriarchy. The ‘father-villain’ is an authority figure to the heroine; he is an oppressive patriarch who demands female subordination. He makes decisions for her and tries to force her to submit. The heroine attempts to fight his power and escape from his control, in which she succeeds in the end. She breaks free from the patriarch’s influence and starts to make her own choices.

Apart from the family relation between the heroine and the villain, the theme of family also returns in other plot elements in Radcliffe’s romances. The heroine goes from a safe environment within the family to becoming an orphan who is persecuted by a ruthless villain. Nevertheless, the narrative always has a happy ending. The heroine prevails over the villain, who dies in the end. She receives an inheritance and social status, marries her lover and ends up in a new family. Durant explains how the heroine is rewarded for her virtue by entering this new family:

\begin{quote}
Rather, they stumble upon the lost family, whose powers are sufficient to erase all traces of the modern world. The family is capable of solving all the problems of the world: it gives the heroine an established place in a traditional hierarchy; overcomes her sense of loss of her initial family; provides her with a community which solves her isolation [...] The family provides a traditional world as the providential reward for the heroine’s goodness.\textsuperscript{102}
\end{quote}

The heroine’s longing for a home and a family is satisfied in the end. However, it is not always the lost family that is regained: the heroines can also end up in ‘surrogate families who duplicate all the good qualities of those they had lost’, as is the case in \textit{The Romance of the Forest} and \textit{The Mysteries of Udolpho}.\textsuperscript{103} In \textit{The Romance of the Forest}, Adeline escapes from the Marquis and encounters the family of La Luc, who adopted her as his own daughter. At the end of the story, she receives a large inheritance and the title of Marchioness, which enables her to free her lover Theodore from prison and marry him. She enters the family of La Luc, thereby gaining a sister, Clara, a father, La Luc, and a husband, Theodore. In the second narrative, Emily also gains a ‘surrogate famil[y]’.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{101} Durant, pp. 524–25.
\textsuperscript{102} Durant, p. 525.
\textsuperscript{103} Durant, p. 526.
\end{flushleft}
the beginning of the story, Emily still lives in harmony with her real mother and father. After they died, she is submitted to the care of Madame Cheron, but she also dies during the narrative, so Emily is again left as an orphan. Fortunately, when she escaped from Udolpho, she is helped by the Count de Villefort and his daughter Blanche, who feels like a sister to her. After Montoni’s death, she finds out that her father had another sister, the late Marchioness de Villeroi. Consequently, Emily also receives an inheritance which enables her to marry Valancourt and move back to her estate at La Vallee. Finally, the plot of the third romance is slightly different as regards the heroine’s new family. In The Italian, Ellena lost her parents when she was not yet two years old, so she was raised by her aunt, Signora Bianchi. Quite early in the novel, Signora Bianchi mysteriously dies. Later in the story, Ellena thinks she is reunited with her father, Schedoni, but he appears to be her uncle. However, her mother, who was assumed to be dead, reappears: Sister Olivia reveals her real identity as the Countess di Bruno. Ellena gains social status, so the heroine is again enabled to marry her lover, in this case Vivaldi. Her new family eventually consists of her mother Olivia, her father-in-law the Marchese, and her husband Vivaldi. Durant states that in Radcliffe’s opinion, being an adult does not mean being an individual, but being part of a safe and hierarchical family, which appears from the happy ending. The storyline would indicate that only the restoration of (conservative) traditional standards can ease the struggles of adult life. In his opinion, the heroine longs for a traditional hierarchy in the family, which means that she holds on to a patriarchal structure, in which the father has authority over his wife and children. While Durant emphasises Radcliffe’s conservatism, Hoeveler explains the happy ending as a more revolutionary plot element: ‘the heroine further triumphs over the patriarchy by creating an alternative companionate family, marrying a “feminized” man who promises, if not in word then through his sheer incompetence, to be completely malleable’ (Hv, 7). The heroine’s new family would be ‘alternative’ and ‘companionate’, instead of having a patriarchal structure. Hoeveler describes the hero with a quite radical formulation as ‘a “feminized” man’ who can easily be manipulated by the heroine. However, the hero can indeed be seen as such: he contains a high degree of sensibility, like the heroine. In the eighteenth century, ‘a new standard of sensitive masculinity’

104 Durant, p. 526.
105 Durant, p. 520.
arose, as the concept of femininity had caused ‘a general “feminisation” of culture’. As Vivien Jones notes, ‘the eighteenth-century new man [...] had to win his mistress through a matching display of refined sensibility’. Theodore, Valancourt and Vivaldi all behave according to the concept of sensibility, thereby winning over the corresponding heroine. The heroine indeed marries a ‘feminised’ gentleman, as the changing society allows her to do. She searches a man who is different from the oppressing patriarch, who will not try to control her, but lets her make her own decisions.

5.3.2. The convent

In Gothic fiction, a common theme is Roman Catholicism and its monasteries (Hv, 52). In The Italian, Ellena is imprisoned in the convent of San Stefano, as already mentioned above. The theme of the convent also returns in the other two romances. It has already been noted that Radcliffe’s romances have the reputation of being ‘anti-Catholic’, yet Clery states that her perspective on Catholicism is more complicated than that (Cl, xv). Radcliffe uses the convent ‘to dramatise] the subjection of women in society’ (Cl, xix). As already mentioned, convents were frequently connected to patriarchy, for example because they offered a place to put the overabundance of women in society, or because they could be used as a warning to urge women to consent to a financially advantageous marriage (Cl, xix). Nevertheless, the convent also offered some advantages, as mentioned in Aikin’s essay ‘On Monastic Institutions’: convents could provide a certain level of independence and also protection against male violence. Radcliffe also manifests this positive perspective on convents, as in her romances, women are often depicted as very content in the ‘all-female communities’ that convents offer (Hv, 53). Radcliffe’s romances thus represent both a positive and a negative view on the convent. In The Romance of the Forest, this theme is not predominantly present, as Adeline’s stay at the convent happened before the beginning of the narrative. However, a negative view is still expressed by Adeline: she did not want to take the veil, because according to her, nuns are exiled from the world (Cl, xix). She wants to leave the convent where the Marquis had put her. In Adeline’s case, the convent is an accomplice of patriarchy: the

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106 Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity, ed. by Vivien Jones, p. 11.
107 Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity, ed. by Vivien Jones, p. 11.
reason why the Marquis had entered her there was to get rid of her, because she is the
daughter of his murder victim (his half-brother) and therefore the real heiress of her
father’s fortune. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Blanche De Villefort discourages Emily
from entering the convent of St. Claire, thereby expressing the same perspective towards
convents as Adeline. Yet in this romance, the positive perspective on the convent is also
represented: ‘there emerges an alternative sentiment, idealizing the convent community
as a refuge for women, a place where they could escape crisis in the patriarchal family
and secure some autonomy’ (Cl, xix-xx). Emily went to stay at the convent of St. Claire
after her father’s death, as it was nearby the place he died and she did not want to leave
it yet. She was more peaceful there: she could process her father’s death and postpone
the event of going to her aunt Madame Cheron at Toulouse, in that way staying
independent for a while. The convent of St. Claire is described very positively:

> During her stay at the convent, the peace and sanctity that reigned within, the
> tranquil beauty of the scenery without, and the delicate attentions of the abbess
> and the nuns, were circumstances so soothing to her mind, that they almost
tempted her to leave a world, where she had lost her dearest friends, and devote
> herself to the cloister. (89)

After her experiences under the power of Montoni, Emily escapes and returns to France,
with the idea of going back to the convent of St. Claire, as she lost her estates. Emily thus
represents the positive view on the convent, while Blanche represents the negative view.
Finally, in *The Italian*, the theme of the convent is more distinctly present than in the
previous romances, as the narrative constantly refers to Roman Catholicism. Again, both
views on the convent are depicted in this romance. There are two convents in the
narrative: the convent of Santa Maria della Pieta, which represents the positive view,
and the convent of San Stefano, which represents the negative view. When Signora
Bianchi dies, Ellena decides to seek refuge in the convent of Santa Maria della Pieta, just
like Emily did: ‘Here she believed that she should sooner acquire resignation, and regain
tranquillity, than in a place less consecrated to religion’ (57). However, she is kidnapped
before she can enter the convent. After her experiences with Schedoni, in the end of the
narrative, she goes back to Santa Maria della Pieta, where she is treated with kindness:

> If the sootheings of sympathy and the delicate arts of benevolence could have
> restored the serenity of her mind, Ellena would now have been peaceful; for all
these were offered her by the abbess and the sisters of the *Santa della Piéta* [...] The society of *Our Lady of Pity*, was such as a convent does not often shroud; to the wisdom and virtue of the Superiour, the sisterhood was principally indebted for the harmony and happiness which distinguished them. This lady was a shining example to governesses of religious houses, and a striking instance of the influence, which a virtuous mind may acquire over others, as well as of the extensive good that it may thus diffuse. (299)

Ellena praises the abbess, an extremely virtuous and gentle woman whom the nuns loved as a mother. Radcliffe dedicates almost an entire chapter to the harmony and pleasantness of the convent of Santa Maria della Pieta and the kindness of the abbess.¹⁰⁹ Not only Ellena, but also Sister Olivia seeks refuge in a convent: she is saved from Schedoni, her husband who almost killed her, by entering the convent of San Stefano. However, she is miserable because of the strict regime of the abbess and she leaves to enter the more merciful convent of Santa Maria della Pieta, where she becomes happy again (Cl, xx). The other convent, San Stefano, represents a negative perspective on monasticism. Ellena is brought there when she is kidnapped, and she is imprisoned in a dark cell. Instead of persuading her of a financially advantageous marriage, her imprisonment in the convent is a threat in order to dissuade her of such a marriage. It is her punishment for the crime she committed by ‘[seeking] clandestinely to unite herself with the noble house of Vivaldi’ (67). As already mentioned above, the abbess of San Stefano is a cruel and severe woman, whose authority is defied by Ellena. She is described as ‘a stately lady, apparently occupied with opinions of her own importance, and prepared to receive her guest with rigour and supercilious haughtiness’ (67). She applies an extremely strict regime in the convent. When Ellena refuses to choose between the two options that the abbess gives her, Sister Olivia tells her that she perceived that Ellena will be punished by imprisonment in the stone chamber, which she describes as follows:

‘[...] Within the deepest recesses of our convent, is a stone chamber, secured by doors of iron, to which such of the sisterhood as have been guilty of any heinous offence have, from time to time, been consigned. This condemnation admits of no reprieve; the unfortunate captive is left to languish in chains and darkness,'

¹⁰⁹ This chapter can be found in volume III, chapter IV, pp. 299-303.
receiving only an allowance of bread and water just sufficient to prolong her sufferings, till nature, at length, sinking under their intolerable pressure, obtains refuge in death. Our records relate several instances of such horrible punishment, which has generally been inflicted upon nuns, who, weary of the life which they have chosen under the first delusions of the imagination, or which they have been compelled to accept by the rigour or avarice of parents, have been detected in escaping from the convent’. (126)

This severe punishment is a threat to the other nuns of what will happen if they disobey the abbess. Sister Olivia also feels oppressed by the strict rules of the convent and leaves. The two convents thus clearly serve other purposes in The Italian: the convent of Santa Maria della Pieta serves as a refuge from male violence and provides a considerable amount of independence for both Ellena and Sister Olivia, while the convent of San Stefano is connected to patriarchy and punishes women who allegedly committed a crime. Consequently, Radcliffe includes both positive and negative views upon the convent in her literary work. On the one hand, it is linked to patriarchy, serving as a threat for insubordinate women, and thereby demonstrates the oppression of women in patriarchal society, while on the other hand, the convent provides a safe refuge from male violence and a certain independence for women in difficult circumstances.
6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Ann Radcliffe was not the conservative and timid female author as she was often assumed to be, though also not outrageously revolutionary. In this dissertation, I have examined the features that cause Radcliffe’s literary work to be classified as Female Gothic literature. I focused on the gendered characterisation of the heroine and the villain and the representation of patriarchy in her three romances *The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*, to achieve a more thorough image of the entire range of Radcliffe’s literary work. From her biography we learned that Ann Radcliffe was a female author of the 1790s, whose writing was encouraged by her husband. She was writing quite early, as many women writers were still struggling with authorship during the nineteenth century, as is shown in the third chapter. This chapter also presented an image of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century patriarchal society that suppressed women and their creativity, which led to the emergence of female literature in which patriarchy was subverted, as is the case in Female Gothic literature. This can also be seen in Radcliffe’s romances. Since her literary work is situated at the beginning of the Female Gothic, her romances are not extremely revolutionary. She is still cautious in her characterisation of rebellious heroines and her representation of the subversion of patriarchal society.

Despite the fact that Radcliffe stood at the very beginning of the Female Gothic, those typical characteristics of Female Gothic fiction are already quite developed in her romances. Her characterisation of both the heroine and the villain reflects the gender roles of patriarchal society in the eighteenth century; the villain is a patriarch who uses his authority to impose his decisions on his (mostly female) subordinates, while the heroine is a proper young lady who behaves according to the feminine ideal of the eighteenth century. The heroine’s character is greatly influenced by the concepts of femininity and sensibility, as she has many female virtues, is proficient at several feminine activities, and weeps and faints in reaction to misfortunes. As regards sensibility, however, an evolution can be found in Radcliffe’s work: in her early work, such as *The Romance of the Forest*, the heroine is much more influenced by sensibility than in her later work. Adeline is a paragon of sensibility, Emily is more rational than Adeline and Ellena is the most rational and calmest heroine of all three. Although Radcliffe’s heroines are still cautious and they behave according to the patriarchal
feminine ideal, they subvert patriarchy, which is embodied by the villain. The heroines defy the patriarch's authority: they rebel against his decisions, refuse to obey his orders and try to escape from his influence. The characterisation of the villain in Radcliffe's romances also became typical of Female Gothic fiction. The villain is the embodiment of patriarchy, who has authority over several characters in the narrative, but is defied and undermined by them. The family relationship between the villain and the heroine and the villain's role as a father figure can again be linked to patriarchy, more specifically to patriarchal structures within the family. In the end, the patriarch is imprisoned. All villains die by poison, either by taking it themselves (as in the cases of the Marquis and Schedoni), or by being poisoned by someone else (as in the case of Montoni), which symbolises the end of patriarchy. Another common feature of the Gothic villain that has been examined in this dissertation is his dual personality that causes him to be called a 'hero-villain'. However, the three villains I studied do not all possess this duality of character in the same degree, and as with the sensibility in Radcliffe's heroines, an evolution can be found. The Marquis seldom shows a softer side in his conduct towards Adeline; Montoni does possess a softer side, as he sometimes behaves more gently towards Emily; and finally, Schedoni has the most distinct dual personality, because of the profound emotions he shows when he realises that Ellena is his daughter. Nevertheless, the evil side still dominates in all three villains.

We can conclude that in her romances, Radcliffe indicates a negative perspective on patriarchy. Her narratives always consist of a courageous heroine who struggles with the constrictions of patriarchal society and rebels against a villain who imposes those constrictions on her. She wants to make her own choices and refuses to obey the patriarch's rules and orders. The most common restriction that is depicted in each romance is the choice of a future husband. She falls in love with a male paragon of sensibility, the hero of the narrative, but she is separated from him and she is dictated to marry someone else: in Adeline's case it is the Marquis himself, Montoni arranges a marriage between Emily and Count Morano, and Ellena is forced to choose to either take the veil or marry someone chosen by the Marchesa di Vivaldi. Patriarchal society is thus presented as the real source of danger that threatens the heroine. This could be

110 As is done by Stoddart, pp. 176-180, but also by other critics, for example Durant, who uses the slightly different term 'villain-hero' (p. 520).
connected to Radcliffe's famous technique of the ‘explained supernatural’:¹¹¹ maybe she invented this technique to clarify that the real horror in the story is not caused by some supernatural power, but by the patriarchal suppression of women. The political, social and economic power that lies with men is being used to suppress women and restrain them in their choices. The patriarch steals the heroine's inheritance or prevents her from gaining any fortune, which leaves the heroine economically powerless: the Marquis took over the title and fortune of Adeline's father, putting Adeline in a convent and plotting to murder her in order to avoid losing his newly gained wealth to the rightful heir; Montoni forced Emily to sign over her inherited estates; and Schedoni killed Ellena's father in order to steal his fortune (and wife), and afterwards he tried to prevent his niece, though unconscious of this relationship, from marrying into nobility by putting her into a strict convent. As explained in the previous section, convents are often connected to patriarchal suppression, although a more positive view on the convent is also given in Radcliffe's literary works. At the end of the narrative, after defeating the patriarch, the heroine finally receives her inheritance, thereby gaining economic power and the ability to make her own decisions. She marries the ‘feminised’ hero whom she loves and she creates a new family, which is not based on patriarchal structures, but on equality.¹¹² Although Radcliffe is often seen as a conservative female author whose romances were silly stories about a proper, highly sensitive young lady who is assaulted by a Gothic villain, but marries the hero and lives happily ever after, we can conclude that her literary work was more revolutionary. Patriarchy is clearly defied in her romances and in the end, Radcliffe even offers an alternative to the traditional patriarchal structures within the family by creating a new family based upon equality.

¹¹¹ This term is already explained in section 2.2, based on Miles (ODNB).
¹¹² Hoeveler, p. 7.
Appendix

A. Conversation between Adeline and the Marquis

_The Romance of the Forest_, volume I, chapter XI, pp. 159-161:

He observed her pause, and, in the eagerness to turn her hesitation to his advantage, renewed his proposal with increased vehemence. — ‘To-morrow shall unite us, lovely Adeline; tomorrow you shall consent to become the Marchioness de Montalt. You will then return my love and’ —

‘You must first deserve my esteem, my Lord.’

‘I will — I do deserve it. Are you not now in my power, and do I not forbear to take advantage of your situation? Do I not make you the most honourable proposals?’ — Adeline shuddered: ‘If you wish I should esteem you, my Lord, endeavour, if possible, to make me forget by what means I came into your power; if your views are, indeed, honourable, prove them so by releasing me from my confinement.’

‘Can you then wish, lovely Adeline, to fly from him who adores you?’ replied the Marquis, with a studied air of tenderness. ‘Why will you exact so severe a proof of my disinterestedness, a disinterestedness which is not consistent with love? No, charming Adeline, let me at least have the pleasure of beholding you, till the bonds of the church shall remove every obstacle to my love. To-morrow’ —

Adeline saw the danger to which she was now exposed, and interrupted him. ‘Deserve my esteem, Sir, and then you will obtain it: as a first step towards which, liberate me from a confinement that obliges me to look on you only with terror and aversion. How can I believe your professions of love, while you shew that you have no interest in my happiness?’ Thus did Adeline, to whom the arts and the practice of dissimulation were hitherto equally unknown, condescend to make use of them in disguising her indignation and contempt. But though these arts were adopted only for the purpose of self-preservation, she used them with reluctance, and almost with abhorrence; for her mind was habitually impregnated with the love of virtue, in thought, word, and action, and, while her end in using them was certainly good, she scarcely thought that end could justify the means.

The Marquis persisted in his sophistry. ‘Can you doubt the reality of that love, which, to obtain you, has urged me to risque your displeasure? But have I not consulted your happiness, even in the very conduct which you condemn? I have removed you from a
solitary and desolate ruin to a gay and splendid villa, where every luxury is at your command, and where every person shall be obedient to your wishes.’

‘My first wish is to go hence,’ said Adeline; ‘I entreat, I conjure you, my Lord, no longer to detain me. I am a friendless and wretched orphan, exposed to many evils, and, I fear, abandoned to misfortune: I do not wish to be rude; but allow me to say, that no misery can exceed that I shall feel in remaining here, or, indeed, in being any where pursued by the offers you make me!’ Adeline had now forgot her policy: tears prevented her from proceeding, and she turned away her face to hide her emotion.

‘By Heaven! Adeline, you do me wrong,’ said the Marquis, rising from his seat, and seizing her hand; ‘I love, I adore you; yet you doubt my passion, and are insensible to my vows. Every pleasure possible to be enjoyed within these walls you shall partake, but beyond them you shall not go.’ She disengaged her hand, and in silent anguish walked to a distant part of the saloon; deep sighs burst from her heart, and, almost fainting, she leaned on a window-frame for support.

The Marquis followed her; ‘Why thus obstinately persist in refusing to be happy?’ said he; ‘recollect the proposal I have made you, and accept it, while it is yet in your power. To-morrow a priest shall join our hands — Surely, being, as you are, in my power, it must be your interest to consent to this?’ Adeline could answer only by tears; she despaired of softening his heart to pity, and feared to exasperate his pride by disdain.

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**B. Conversation between Emily and Montoni**

*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, volume III, chapter V, pp. 379-381:

‘I sent for you, Emily,’ said Montoni, raising his head, ‘that you might be a witness in some business, which I am transacting with my friend Orsino. All that is required of you will be to sign your name to this paper:’ he then took one up, hurried unintelligibly over some lines, and, laying it before her on the table, offered her a pen. She took it, and was going to write—when the design of Montoni came upon her mind like a flash of lightning; she trembled, let the pen fall, and refused to sign what she had not read. Montoni affected to laugh at her scruples, and, taking up the paper, again pretended to read; but Emily, who still trembled on perceiving her danger, and was astonished, that her own credulity had so nearly betrayed her, positively refused to sign any paper whatever. Montoni, for some time, persevered in affecting to ridicule this refusal; but,
when he perceived by her steady perseverance, that she understood his design, he changed his manner, and bade her follow him to another room. There he told her, that he had been willing to spare himself and her the trouble of useless contest, in an affair, where his will was justice, and where she should find it law; and had, therefore, endeavoured to persuade, rather than to compel, her to the practice of her duty.

'I, as the husband of the late Signora Montoni,' he added, 'am the heir of all she possessed; the estates, therefore, which she refused to me in her life-time, can no longer be withheld, and, for your own sake, I would undeceive you, respecting a foolish assertion she once made to you in my hearing—that these estates would be yours, if she died without resigning them to me. She knew at that moment, she had no power to withhold them from me, after her decease; and I think you have more sense, than to provoke my resentment by advancing an unjust claim. I am not in the habit of flattering, and you will, therefore, receive, as sincere, the praise I bestow, when I say, that you possess an understanding superior to that of your sex; and that you have none of those contemptible foibles, that frequently mark the female character—such as avarice and the love of power, which latter makes women delight to contradict and to tease, when they cannot conquer. If I understand your disposition and your mind, you hold in sovereign contempt these common failings of your sex.'

Montoni paused; and Emily remained silent and expecting; for she knew him too well, to believe he would condescend to such flattery, unless he thought it would promote his own interest; and, though he had forborne to name vanity among the foibles of women, it was evident, that he considered it to be a predominant one, since he designed to sacrifice to hers the character and understanding of her whole sex.

'Judging as I do,' resumed Montoni, 'I cannot believe you will oppose, where you know you cannot conquer, or, indeed, that you would wish to conquer, or be avaricious of any property, when you have not justice on your side. I think it proper, however, to acquaint you with the alternative. If you have a just opinion of the subject in question, you shall be allowed a safe conveyance to France, within a short period; but, if you are so unhappy as to be misled by the late assertion of the Signora, you shall remain my prisoner, till you are convinced of your error.'

Emily calmly said,
'I am not so ignorant, Signor, of the laws on this subject, as to be misled by the assertion of any person. The law, in the present instance, gives me the estates in question, and my own hand shall never betray my right.'

'I have been mistaken in my opinion of you, it appears,' rejoined Montoni, sternly. 'You speak boldly, and presumptuously, upon a subject, which you do not understand. For once, I am willing to pardon the conceit of ignorance; the weakness of your sex, too, from which, it seems, you are not exempt, claims some allowance; but, if you persist in this strain—you have every thing to fear from my justice.'

'From your justice, Signor,' rejoined Emily, 'I have nothing to fear—I have only to hope.'

Montoni looked at her with vexation, and seemed considering what to say. 'I find that you are weak enough,' he resumed, 'to credit the idle assertion I alluded to! For your own sake I lament this; as to me, it is of little consequence. Your credulity can punish only yourself; and I must pity the weakness of mind, which leads you to so much suffering as you are compelling me to prepare for you.'

'You may find, perhaps, Signor,' said Emily, with mild dignity, 'that the strength of my mind is equal to the justice of my cause; and that I can endure with fortitude, when it is in resistance of oppression.'

'You speak like a heroine,' said Montoni, contemptuously; 'we shall see whether you can suffer like one.'

Emily was silent, and he left the room.

C. Conversation between Ellena and the abbess

*The Italian*, volume I, chapter VIII, pp. 83-85:

During several days after Ellena's arrival at the monastery of San Stefano, she was not permitted to leave the room. The door was locked upon her, and not any person appeared except the nun, who brought her a scanty portion of food, and who was the same, that had first admitted her into that part of the convent appropriated to the abbess.

On the fourth day, when, probably, it was believed that her spirits were subdued by confinement, and by her experience of the suffering she had to expect from resistance,
she was summoned to the parlour. The abbess was alone, and the air of austerity, with which she regarded Ellena, prepared the latter to endure.

After an exordium on the heinousness of her offence, and the necessity there was for taking measures to protect the peace and dignity of a noble family, which her late conduct had nearly destroyed; the abbess informed her, that she must determine either to accept the veil, or the person whom the Marchesa di Vivaldi had, of her great goodness, selected for her husband.

‘You never can be sufficiently grateful,’ added the abbess, ‘for the generosity the Marchesa displays, in allowing you a choice on the subject. After the injury you have endeavoured to inflict upon her and her family, you could not expect that any indulgence would be shewn you. It was natural to suppose, that the Marchesa would have punished you with severity; instead of which, she allows you to enter into our society; or, if you have not strength of mind sufficient to enable you to renounce a sinful world, she permits you to return into it, and gives you a suitable partner to support you through its cares and toils, — a partner much more suitable to your circumstances than him, to whom you had the temerity to lift your eye.’

Ellena blushed at this coarse appeal to her pride, and persevered in a disdainful silence. Thus to give to injustice the colouring of mercy, and to acts most absolutely tyrannical the softening tints of generosity, excited her honest indignation. She was not, however, shocked by a discovery of the designs formed against her, since, from the moment of her arrival at San Stefano, she had expected something terribly severe, and had prepared her mind to meet it with fortitude; for she believed, that, so supported, she should weary the malice of her enemies, and finally triumph over misfortune. It was only when she thought of Vivaldi that her courage failed, and that the injuries she endured seemed too heavy to be long sustained.

‘You are silent!’ said the abbess, after a pause of expectation. ‘Is it possible, then, that you can be ungrateful for the generosity of the Marchesa? But, though you may at present be insensible to her goodness, I will forbear to take advantage of your indiscretion, and will still allow you liberty of choice. You may retire to your chamber, to consider and to decide. But remember, that you must abide by the determination you shall avow; and, that you will be allowed no appeal from the alternatives, which are now placed before you. — If you reject the veil, you must accept the husband who is offered you.’
‘It is unnecessary,’ said Ellena, with an air of dignified tranquillity, ‘that I should withdraw for the purposes of considering and deciding. My resolution is already taken, and I reject each of the offered alternatives. I will neither condemn myself to a cloister, or to the degradation, with which I am threatened on the other hand. Having said this, I am prepared to meet whatever suffering you shall inflict upon me; but be assured, that my own voice never shall sanction the evils to which I may be subjected, and that the immortal love of justice, which fills all my heart, will sustain my courage no less powerfully than the sense of what is due to my own character. You are now acquainted with my sentiments and my resolutions; I shall repeat them no more.

The abbess, whose surprise had thus long suffered Ellena to speak, still fixed upon her a stern regard, as she said, ‘Where is it that you have learned these heroics, and acquired the rashness which thus prompts you to avow them! — the boldness which enables you to insult your Superior, a priestess of your holy religion, even in her sanctuary!’

‘The sanctuary is prophaned,’ said Ellena, mildly, but with dignity: ‘it is become a prison. It is only when the Superior ceases to respect the precepts of that holy religion, the precepts which teach her justice and benevolence, that she herself is no longer respected. The very sentiment which bids us revere its mild and beneficent laws, bids us also reject the violators of them: when you command me to reverence my religion, you urge me to condemn yourself.’

‘Withdraw!’ said the abbess, rising impatiently from her chair; ‘your admonition, so becomingly delivered, shall not be forgotten.’

Ellena willingly obeyed, and was led back to her cell, where she sat down pensively, and reviewed her conduct. Her judgment approved of the frankness, with which she had asserted her rights, and of the firmness, with which she had reproved a woman, who had dared to demand respect from the very victim of her cruelty and oppression. She was the more satisfied with herself, because she had never, for an instant, forgotten her own dignity so far, as to degenerate into the vehemence of passion, or to faulter with the weakness of fear. Her conviction of the abbess’s unworthy character was too clear to allow Ellena to feel abashed in her presence; for she regarded only the censure of the good, to which she had ever been as tremulously alive, as she was obdurately insensible to that of the vicious.

Ellena, having now asserted her resolutions, determined to avoid, if possible, all repetition of scenes like the last, and to repel by silence only, whatever indignity might
be offered her. She knew that she must suffer, and she resolved to endure. Of the three evils, which were placed before her, that of confinement, with all its melancholy accompaniments, appeared considerably less severe, than either the threatened marriage, or a formal renunciation of the world; either of which would devote her, during life, to misery, and that by her own act. Her choice, therefore, had been easy, and the way was plain before her. If she could endure with calmness the hardships which she could not avoid, half their weight would be unfelt; and she now most strenuously endeavoured to attain the strength of mind, which was necessary to support such equanimity.

D. Ellena’s praising of the convent and abbess of Santa Maria della Pieta

_The Italian_, volume III, chapter IV, pp. 299-300:

If the soothings of sympathy and the delicate arts of benevolence could have restored the serenity of her mind, Ellena would now have been peaceful; for all these were offered her by the abbess and the sisters of the Santa della Piéta. They were not acquainted with the cause of her sorrow, but they perceived that she was unhappy, and wished her to be otherwise. The society of Our Lady of Pity, was such as a convent does not often shroud; to the wisdom and virtue of the Superior, the sisterhood was principally indebted for the harmony and happiness which distinguished them. This lady was a shining example to governesses of religious houses, and a striking instance of the influence, which a virtuous mind may acquire over others, as well as of the extensive good that it may thus diffuse. She was dignified without haughtiness, religious without bigotry, and mild, though decisive and firm. She possessed penetration to discover what was just, resolution to adhere to it, and temper to practise it with gentleness and grace; so that even correction from her, assumed the winning air of courtesy: the person, whom she admonished, wept in sorrow for the offence, instead of being secretly irritated by the reproof, and loved her as a mother, rather than feared her as a judge. Whatever might be her failings, they were effectually concealed by the general benevolence of her heart, and the harmony of her mind; a harmony, not the effect of torpid feelings, but the accomplishment of correct and vigilant judgment. Her religion was neither gloomy, nor bigotted; it was the sentiment of a grateful heart offering itself up to a Deity, who delights in the happiness of his creatures; and she conformed to the
customs of the Roman church, without supposing a faith in all of them to be necessary to salvation. This opinion, however, she was obliged to conceal, lest her very virtue should draw upon her the punishment of a crime, from some fierce ecclesiastics, who contradicted in their practice the very essential principles, which the christianity they professed would have taught them.
Bibliography


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