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“Valancourt the Wanderer: space, self and truth in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*”

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Space, Haunting, Discourse. Maria Holmgren Troy et Elisabeth Wennö (éds.) Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2008): 78-91.

Critics who study Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) often leave the character of Valancourt aside, for obvious reasons: he is the heroine’s ineffectual lover, a bland sentimental hero who is absent from the central action most of the time. However, it is precisely because of his absence that he is the focus of the present study. He is the object of several discourses which define him, sometimes *in absentia*. Indeed, Emily, who is most frequently the focal character, frequently muses on him, which enables the writer to lay bare the workings of memory, from an associationist perspective. Moreover, Valancourt’s integrity undergoes an almost literal trial at the end of the novel, revealing the legal discourse which shaped the conception of truth and identity in the late eighteenth century. Finally, as he is redeemed through love, his story highlights the part played by sentimental discourse in the construction of identity. Associationism, legal discourse and sentimental literature are three different modes of comprehending self and truth. The purpose of the following study is to explore the different configurations of space in these three epistemological stances.

Three words can help describe the interconnection between space, haunting and discourse in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: re-animation refers to the action of a consciousness that brings back the past by projecting it onto specific settings; re-articulation is a more rational way of resurrecting the past by assembling signs; and construction denotes the way self and truth are shaped by social, and more specifically legal, discourse. Depending on the paradigm, two elements vary in the representation of space—the number of dimensions, and the localization of borders.

In her most famous novel, Ann Radcliffe uses “haunt” as a verb, of which the characters can be subject or object, and as a noun, to refer to places which are frequently visited by them. It is also often used in conjunction with apprehensions, to describe psychological states such as the fear of banditti as characters travel through mountains and forests. This was no innovation on her part. For instance, when the eponymous protagonist of Smollet’s *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) went through a forest in which he had been attacked, himself and the forest were haunted: “[I]t is not to be supposed, that he passed his time in the most agreeable reverie, while he found himself involved in the labyrinth of these shades, which he considered as the *haunts* of robbery and assassination. … [H]e was *haunted* by the most intolerable apprehensions” (Smollet 88, emphasis added). Moreover, according to Terry Castle, in the eighteenth century, spirits were denied any existence outside of the minds of the people who claimed they saw them. This brought about an internalization of ghostly qualities and a spectralization of the mind, and of the imagination in particular. In short, ghosts changed status from object to metaphor in the discourse on the mind. Literal and figurative meanings co-exist in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Valancourt haunts the mountains in the sense that his is a diffuse, mobile presence. The first time he appears, he is dressed as a hunter, a pretext for him to "saunter" among the mountains. He introduces himself as "a wanderer" to Emily and her father (32). In addition, Valancourt behaves like a ghost. Because Emily and Valancourt's attachment is thwarted during most of the novel, the young man is doomed to haunting Emily's surroundings. After his suit is rejected, he confesses to Emily: "I have *haunted* this place—these gardens, for many—many nights, with a faint, very faint hope of seeing you" (152, emphasis added). This type of haunting is benevolent: Valancourt plays the part of a guardian angel, "[watching] around [Emily's] habitation, while [she] slept" (108-9). Earlier in the novel, two widowers, Emily's father and a peasant, had discussed the existence of spirits. Emily's father had concluded: "We are not enjoined to believe, that disembodied spirits watch over the friends they have loved, but we may innocently hope it" (68). In a sort of Pascalian leap of faith, the dead are given the ability to protect the living, which blurs the ontological boundary between them.

This discussion recalls the debate over ghosts in the second half of the seventeenth century. The rationalist attacks on ghosts, by Hobbes among others, had led Christian divines such as Joseph Glanvill, Richard Baxter, and John Wesley to defend the doctrine of spirits as the foundation of other articles of faith, such as resurrection and the immortality of the soul (Castle, *Female Thermometer* 171). As E.J. Clery explains in *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, in the 1660s, attested apparition narratives had been offered as an antidote for the spread of atheism (19-20). Radcliffe's position is set against what Vivaldi, a character from her 1797 novel *The Italian*, calls "the tales of our grandfathers" (78). The narrator descries traditional superstition, which is usually the attribute of servants, but acknowledges that superstition retains strong power over sensitive imaginations. This double-bind is illustrated in the last part of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which stages a debate between a Baron and a Count on: "Whether the spirit, after it has quitted the body, is ever permitted to revisit the earth; and if it is, whether it was possible for spirits to become visible to the sense" (549). The rationalist Count is proclaimed the winner by the narrator but he still does not convince everyone, which the narrator explains by the human love for the sublime, or: "that love, so natural to the human mind, of whatever is able to distend its faculties with wonder and astonishment" (549).

When Emily is taken to Italy, Valancourt haunts the places he associates with her in order to encounter her memory. His behaviour illustrates a "crypto-religious" relation to space. Mircea Eliade contends that even the profane man who has robbed the world of its sacred aura shows traces of religious behaviour. Because he invests space with value, space is no more homogeneous to him than it is to the religious man. Some places are more important than others, such as the site of first love. The religious experience makes the creation of a world possible by the discovery of a central point. (Eliade 20-24) In Valancourt's profane experience of love, Emily's face is precisely that central point. As they are about to part, Valancourt exclaims: "this countenance, on which I now gaze—will, in a moment, be gone from my eyes … and I shall be a wanderer, exiled from my only home!" (160). Valancourt's return to specific spots signals places of pilgrimage. After Emily goes to Venice, he finds it difficult to leave "the scenes which so powerfully awakened her image". The cult of private memory creates breaks in space, giving special value to "the *spot*, where he had been accustomed to converse with Emily" (291, emphasis added). The passages which show Valancourt or Emily reminiscing about each other also have a narrative function: they remind the reader of scenes s/he has witnessed and give unity to the narrative. For instance, as Emily crosses the Alps, she looks back to the beginning of the novel, remembering Valancourt as he used to wander through the mountains. Thus, Valancourt haunts Emily's fancy and through this medium, he haunts space. Unity is also created by the recurrence of scenes of recollection which echo one another throughout the novel.

Crypto-religious behaviour is in fact a recurrent feature of Ann Radcliffe's fiction. For instance, in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), Adeline meets La Luc, a philanthropist pastor who has lost his wife. He has erected an urn in her memory, which functions as the "monument of his grief": "This was an object round which the affections of La Luc had settled themselves; it was a memorial to the eye, and the view of it awakened more forcibly in the memory every tender idea that could associate with the primary subject of his regard" (274, 279). Space becomes sacralized: "It is never prophaned by the presence of the unfeeling", La Luc explains to a visitor, who on his part respects "the sacredness of sorrow" (274). The presence of the monument transforms the spot into a sacred space, as it is "consecrated to the memory of his deceased wife" (279).

The ability to evoke the past of a certain place, to make dead voices speak where they used to speak entitles one to actually own a place. Economic and sentimental values must coincide from an ethical point of view, otherwise place becomes silent. For instance, when Epourville, the estate where Emily's father, St Aubert, spent his childhood, is bought by a man who "neither revered nor valued it", the "peal of laugher, and the song of conviviality" are no longer heard (22). In contrast, to St Aubert, Epourville is "a place which spoke so eloquently of former times" (24). When St Aubert muses on an oak, he brings the past back to life: "the pursuits and events of his early days crowded fast to his mind, with the figures and characters of friends—long since gone from the earth" (24). A similar contrast is later introduced between Emily, who wants to keep the estate of La Vallée, and Montoni, the villain who rejects her attachment to the place as "the romantic illusions of sentiment" (196). At the end of the novel, Montoni's death restores La Vallée to Emily, who can then enjoy "its pleasant scenes, and the tender remembrances, that haunted them" (570). Emily achieves adulthood when she reappropriates her past and becomes the owner of the places which witnessed "the well-known scenes of her early life" (581). The rightful owner of a place is the one who knows its ghosts.

When characters are shown reminiscing about absent beings, space seems to have turned into a screen, on which the imagination or, to use Radcliffe's favourite term, "fancy" projects its visions. This representation of the interaction between inner and outer space can be read in terms of post-Lockean epistemology. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke compared the understanding to a dark room, which receives ideas from the outside through a few openings:

> [E]xternal and internal sensation, are the only passages that I can find, of knowledge, to the understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover, are the windows by which light is let into this dark room. For, methinks, the understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little opening left, to let in external visible resemblances, or ideas of things without (II.11.17, 158)

The mind can retain and project image-traces of past sensations onto the internal screen of memory. As recent criticism has pointed out, this epistemological representation found a technological equivalent in the visual entertainment provided by phantasmagoria. Terry Castle, in "Phantasmagoria and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie", reminds her readers that "phantasmagoria" was initially an exhibition of optical illusions which relied on the magic lantern (Castle, *Female Thermometer* 141). The magic lantern is an apt simile for memory as Radcliffe represents it. Emily experiences hallucinations when, following Hannibal's tracks, she imagines him crossing the Alps with elephants, or when she resurrects the "scenes of the Illiad" as she crosses the Adriatic (166, 206). Although the author specifies that all of this happens "in the eye of fancy", verbs such as "she saw," "she perceived," "she looked" indicate how "real" the experience is to the subject.

Interestingly, Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*, was to compare the visions created by Gothic novels to those of phantasmagoria shows, describing a process of contamination propagated by circulating libraries. The contents of the books were described as the product of "a sort of mental *camera obscura* manufactured at the printing office, which *pro tempore* fixes, reflects and transmits the moving phantasms of one man's delirium." (Clery and Miles 276-7) The visions created by the novel were indeed to be shared by the reader.

Boundaries between inner and outer world were porous. Ghosts became "one's own thoughts bizarrely externalized", but the mind was not only a magic lantern projecting illusionary forms outwards: "the mind itself now seemed a kind of supernatural space, filled with intrusive spectral presences—incursions from past or future, ready to terrify, pursue or disable the harried subject" (Castle, *Female Thermometer* 165, 168). Indeed, Emily's imagination is haunted: "When she was alone, unable to sleep, the landscapes of her native home, with Valancourt, and the circumstances of her departure, haunted her fancy." (169) Emily's mind is also haunted by apprehensions, which the narrator leads us to question, for example when she is wrongly convinced that Montoni has killed her aunt.

So far space has been regarded as a blank stretch, but it is also strewn with fragments, objects or sensations, which become props for characters to resurrect the past. When Valancourt wants to recall Emily, he dwells on "the *objects* they had viewed together, which appeared to him *memorials* of her affection" (291, emphasis added). Valancourt, who just like La Luc in *The Romance of the Forest* seems to have read Locke's chapter on retention (II,x) also draws on visual and auditive memories:

> [H]e would endeavour to *recollect* all she had said, on that night; to catch the tones of her voice, as they faintly vibrated on his memory, and to *remember* the exact expression of [her] countenance. (292, emphasis added).

Echoes of voices and images must be worked on for the past to be resurrected. Locke emphasized the necessity of pilgrimages to keep memories alive:

> [T]here seems to be a constant decay of our ideas … those that are oftenest refreshed by a frequent return of the objects or actions that produce them, fix themselves best in the memory, and remain clearest and longest there. (149, Locke's emphasis)

Locke explicitly uses graveyard imagery:

> [T]he ideas, as well as children, of our youth, often die before us: and our minds represent to us those tombs, to which we are approaching; where though the brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away (149).

Pilgrimages are a way to fight the threat of decay. The result of such practices is hallucination, or ideal presence. In a letter to Emily, Valancourt writes: “here, then, I wander, and meet your image under every shade” (192).

From a part to the whole, objects can bring forth numinous presence by metonymy. Synecdoche, a type of metonymy in which a part stands for the whole and the whole for a part, could be regarded as the figure of speech of associationism. Characters use this type of device when they rely on a fragment from, or associated with, the object or person to be recalled. For instance, when she is in Chateau-le-Blanc, Emily is taken by a servant to the late Marchioness’s room. Objects such as her slippers, her gloves, and her veil suggest the body which used to wear them, a body which the servant’s memory brings back to life. The characters seem to have assimilated the tenets of associationism and can partly control the working of their memory. However, they are sometimes victims of metonymy in a more general sense: for example, actions without agents suggest the presence of a mystery to be uncovered.

Radcliffe creates mystery by dissociating cause and effect. Her employment of metonymy is also related to the second mode of experiencing self and truth: re-articulation, that is, a rational reconstruction on the basis of signs. In this connection, haunting and hunting have more links than mere euphony: haunting often takes the appearance of hunting in the sense that it can be a form of persecution; just like hunters try to master space during a beat, it is often impossible to hide from a ghost. Conversely, ghosts are a spur to hunting: their fleeting presence calls for a physical chase and, metaphorically, their presence often points to a mystery to be uncovered. Here Carlo Ginzburg’s analyses may be relevant. He identifies “an evidential paradigm”, a reading method which consists in collecting clues and originates in hunting. He argues that hunters learned to “sniff out, record, interpret, and classify … infinitesimal traces”, and that this is the origin of reading. (102). According to him the data are always arranged by the observer in a narrative sequence, so that the first narration may have consisted in: “relating the experience of deciphering tracks” (103). Ginzburg’s reasoning leads us to follow a process of reconstruction ourselves: from the sign to the sentence to the narration to discourse. Similarly, Radcliffe details the steps of reading and interpretation at several moments of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. This process may be seen as an analytical frame similar to associationism, a theory according to which the superior forms of psychic activity are the result of the association of simpler facts and in fact of sensations. For example, when St Aubert and Emily hear music being played in a solitary wood, a peasant tells them:

> That guitar is often heard at night, when all is still, but nobody knows who touches it, and it is sometimes accompanied by a voice so sweet, and so sad, one would almost think the woods were haunted (68).

In the first chapters, a secret admirer leaves traces of his presence, as if he wanted to be hunted himself. Indeed, in the first chapter, Emily finds a love poem. Later, and on the same spot, she hears music being played, and finds more verse, explicitly dedicated to her. Finally, a bracelet, which belongs to her mother and bears a portrait of her, is found missing. The writing, the playing, and the stealing are actions without identified agents, produce effects without apparent causes. Using the inductive reasoning of detectives, Emily is led to conclude that "the poet, the musician, and the thief were the same person" (10). Through Emily's collecting of clues, a story, that of a secret admirer, is beginning to emerge. The secret admirer signposts the textual space, creating a sort of treasure hunt for Emily. The content of the poem is secondary to its actual presence and the implications of that presence.

Later, after the two young people have met and parted, the passages Valancourt has underlined in a collection of Petrarch's poems enable Emily to "bring himself to her presence" by "*re-tracing* a page" (58, emphasis added). The book, which Valancourt has substituted for one of Emily's, becomes a "memorial of his affection" (58). A similar game of hide and seek is played at the end of the novel in the doubly haunted tower facing the sea. Valancourt haunts this specific spot through Emily's memory, and because he actually frequently visits it (540). Emily recognizes Valancourt's doing in a poem engraved in a wall, and after a bit of detective work, concludes that he is still in her surroundings:

> From these lines it appeared, that Valancourt had visited the tower; that he had probably been here on the preceding night, for it was such an [sic] one as they described, and that he had left the building very lately, since it had not long been light, and without light it was impossible these letters could have been cut. It was thus even probable, that he might yet be in the gardens (559).

Phrases such as "it appeared," "it was impossible," "it was probable", adverbs such as "probably" and "thus", and conjunctions—"for", "since"—emphasize the rational aspect of Emily's reasoning. The almost mathematical quality of the sequence of propositions testifies to Radcliffe's desire to lay bare the workings of the mind.

The text of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is strewn with a sort of dust of signs, full or hollow, inviting characters and readers to investigate. Radcliffe often uses the word "vestige" in its etymological sense of trace and clue ('vestige' from latin *vestigium*, meaning 'trace'). She also uses crosses, tracks, gibbets, hieroglyphics, traces of blood, and others, as in the following passage:

> [H]ere and there a cliff reared on its brow a monumental cross, to tell the traveller the fate of him who had ventured thither before. This spot seemed the very *haunt* of banditti; and Emily, as she looked down upon it, almost expected to see them stealing out from some hollow cave to look for their prey … Soon after an object not less terrific struck her,--a gibbet standing on a point of rock near the entrance of the pass, and immediately over one of the crosses she had before observed. These were hieroglyphics that told a plain and dreadful story (54, emphasis added).

The cross, the cave, and the gibbet suggest a story of assassination and punishment. This landscape is the "haunt" of banditti because they dwell there but also because they leave scattered traces of their presence behind them. The past can then be reconstructed from fragments through detective work.

Through the accumulation of signs associated with Valancourt, Radcliffe hints at the possibility that there is no identity outside of legal discourse. In her introduction to *The Castle of Otranto,* Emma Clery argues that in Gothic fiction, the use of interchangeable characters shows that identity "is a matter of public interpretation rather than private expression, and to this extent the horror mode tells an important truth about the role of social convention in constituting a subject" (xvii-xviii). Valancourt's story at the end of the novel is a tale of virtue in distress, or of innocence lost and restored, which points precisely to the role of social convention in the construction of identity.

Throughout the novel, Valancourt is cast by other characters in different categories which were stereotypical in eighteenth century literature. This illustrates the process of "public interpretation" to which Emma Clery refers. The characters give verdicts on Valancourt. The young man is introduced through St Aubert's approving eyes. Valancourt uses a hunter's outfit to give local inhabitants a satisfactory reason for his presence among their mountains, but spares animals. He reads Homer, Horace and Petrarch. He displays civil, compassionate "manly frankness, simplicity, and keen susceptibility to the grandeur of nature" (34). In short, he is a man of feeling, or sentimental hero, as G.J. Barker-Benfield defines him:

> Sentimental heroes opposed gambling, oaths, drinking, idleness, cruelty to animals, and other elements of popular male culture. Because the sentimental hero was benevolent, compassionate, humane, literate and tasteful, he would make a better husband by placing a high value on a harmonious marriage and on domesticity. (110)

When St Aubert meets him, he thinks: "Here is the real ingenuousness and ardour of youth … this young man has never been to Paris" (36). St Aubert himself has withdrawn from Paris, "more in pity than anger" (1). In her other novel set in France, *The Romance of the Forest*, Radcliffe also depicts Paris as a corrupting site. La Motte, after fleeing from the capital, mends his ways: "his character gradually recovered the hue which it would probably always have worn had he never been exposed to the tempting dissipations of Paris." (354) Here

Radcliffe uses primitivist tenets, held by Rousseau among others, which asserted that in the state of nature, rational man, because he was not affected by the vices of civilized society, was moral and benevolent. Other contemporary authors, such as Robert Barge, in *Hermsprong* (1796) and Elizabeth Inchbald, in *Nature and Art* (1794-6), criticized urban society for its hypocritical language and manners, as well as its conventions, which smothered the sincerity and authenticity of the rural world. Radcliffe similarly described ideal pastoral worlds, which stood in opposition to depraved cities. After Valancourt goes to Paris, it is therefore no surprise to learn that he has succumbed to vice, gambling in particular. He then falls into the "rake" category. When he comes back to the countryside, he undergoes a sort of trial among his peers, during which the dice are loaded: his vices are exaggerated, but in the end Emily restores him to his previous self.

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, legal discourse is not contained within the boundaries of a court or a study. The plot is shaped by retributive justice. Chapter 17 opens with a quote from *MacBeth* as epigraph, in which it is explicitly stated that the villains shall be punished:

> But in these cases,
> We still have judgment here; that we but teach
> Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
> To plague the inventor: thus even-handed justice
> Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
> To our own lips (654).

The novel fulfils the Shakespearian agenda and ends on the idea that

> though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction upon the good, their power is transient and their punishment certain; and that innocence, though oppressed by injustice, shall, supported by patience, finally triumph over misfortune! (672).

Justice fails to materialize in positive institutions, but legal vocabulary pervades the narrator and the characters' language. Moreover, judicial situations are staged.

When Valancourt returns from Paris and the young lovers meet again, a snapshot is given of their inner selves through the other's perspective. While Valancourt notes that Emily has not changed—"In her he perceived the same goodness and beautiful simplicity, that had charmed him on their first acquaintance"—, she reads alteration on his face:

> The lights, which were hung among the trees, under which they sat, allowed her a more perfect view of the countenance she had so frequently in absence endeavoured to recollect, and she perceived with some regret, that it was not the same as when she last saw it … it had lost much of the simplicity, and somewhat of the open benevolence, that used to characterise it (502).

Although Valancourt has lost his “simplicity” and “open benevolence”, he remains a “readable” character, whose inner characteristics show on the surface. The lights certainly help in the above passage, but more importantly, in Radcliffe’s fiction, villains have opaque and duplicitous faces, while “good” characters are transparent. The fact that Valancourt remains readable is a sign that he is not completely corrupt. Also, the images of Emily and Valancourt are impressed on the other’s heart, and are valid reference points, criteria for comparison. Inner space is the repository of truth. For instance, when Emily finds that Valancourt has not been true to himself, void follows:

> She had no longer even the melancholy satisfaction of contemplating his image in her heart, for he was no longer the same Valancourt she had cherished there … On perceiving this beloved idea to be an illusion of her own creation, Valancourt seemed to be annihilated, and her soul sickened at the blank, that remained (581).

While vision does not lie, language can. Indeed, Valancourt asserts “I had once a taste for innocent and elegant delights. I had once an uncorrupted heart”, a statement which he later writes off as a “self-accusation” into which he has been “surprised” (504). Emily is transformed into a judge. After noting Valancourt’s alteration and sense of guilt, she listens to the prosecution’s charge. Her host, the Comte de Villeroi, brings her a double testimony regarding Valancourt’s life in Paris:

> My son has too often been an eye-witness of the Chevalier’s ill conduct … I have myself seen the Chevalier engaged in deep play with men, whom I almost shuddered to look upon. (507)

The Count draws on that double testimony to assert that Valancourt has revealed a deep taste for vice and was sent to prison twice, from where he was released on the intervention of a Countess he lived with. His verdict is clear: “[Valancourt’]s morals are corrupted” (507). The Count exemplifies the old practice of earlier legal codes, which relied on two eyewitnesses. Emily uses logical parallels and comparisons to try to apprehend the truth: “She *recollected* Valancourt’s sayings, on the preceding evening, which discovered the pangs of self-reproach, and seemed to confirm all that the Count had related” (506, emphasis added). The narrator highlights the structure of her reasoning: “she endeavoured to *recollect* all that the Count had told, to examine the probability of the circumstances he himself believed, and to consider of [sic] her future conduct towards Valancourt” (509, emphasis added). Judicial work is presented as a memory process, a re-collection. In contrast with the Count’s method, Emily seems to apply the subjective theories of proof, that is, she pays attention to the speaker’s personality and motives (Wein, 305). For instance, she suspects that the Count may have personal motives for breaking her attachment to Valancourt: “she even ventured to doubt the integrity of the Count himself and to suspect, that he was influenced by some selfish motive, to break her connection with Valancourt" (509).

Emily grants Valancourt a final interview, during which legal discourse gives way to sentimental discourse. She chooses to test Valancourt's integrity. What matters is not whether he did misbehave in Paris, but whether he can redeem himself. When it becomes clear that his conduct has been misrepresented, Emily does not require a careful refutation of the indictment. She restores Valancourt's identity by noting that "his look, his voice, his manner, all *spoke* the noble *sincerity*, which had *formerly* distinguished him" (669, emphasis added). He is redeemed through wordless immediacy. The legal discourse which shapes the characters' dealing with Valancourt remains a haunting presence because it fails to materialize in an actual court scene. Instead of locating the triumph of truth within a public, judiciary frame, Radcliffe makes the integrity of self triumph through the private transparency of hearts. Emily's inner space is the repository of Valancourt's true identity. (581)

Radcliffe's novels at times also put the readers in the positions of detectives or jury members, a device which is part of her "legalistic style" (Sage 33). In his *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition*, Victor Sage argues that: "For Ann Radcliffe, the imaginative act is … a rooting out of the truth. The reader sometimes appears to be overhearing legal proceedings rather than reading a novel" (33).The reader may be under the impression that s/he can reach the truth by his or her own means, but in fact, Radcliffe develops "an authoritarian relationship between the narrator and the reader", or "readerly discipline" (Wein 291). As Wein suggests, the Grand Inquisitor may also be an apt figure to describe the position of the narrator (295). For example, the reason Emily gives another interview to Valancourt is the providential and arbitrary arrival of a character from Paris, who bears witness to the young man's integrity and shows that he was the victim of slander. His testimony is completed by the narrator, who gives the final verdict: "though his passions had been seduced, his heart was not depraved, nor had habit riveted the chains, that hung heavily on his conscience" (652). After clearing Valancourt of the charge of having compromised himself with ladies of intrigue and gamesters, the narrator concludes: "these were such scandals as often mingle with truth, against the unfortunate" (653-3). This indication is left unexplored, thus leaving hovering possibilities to haunt the reader.

To conclude, the epistemological use of space varies in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. It is two-dimensional when it becomes a screen on which memory projects its visions. It is sometimes three-dimensional, when it holds objects and memorials. Moreover, the mind itself is spatialized when it becomes haunted: it too can be projected upon and can be the walking ground of ghosts. Radcliffe maintains a division between inner and outer worlds, with the possibility for the depth to show on the surface. The existence of an inner world is threatened by the possibility that characters may only exist within language, the object of the others' discourse, and in particular legal discourse, in which case they would be one-dimensional.

The Mysteries of Udolpho is actually haunted by a dream: that of the immediacy of vision, as when the past is resurrected through re-animation. This is opposed to the slow march of discourse as illustrated by the process of re-articulation. In the first two modes identified (reanimation and rearticulation), identity and the past pre-exist to any attempt to bring them back to life, visually or intellectually. However, Radcliffe at times shows that self and truth are not pre-existent and are shaped by legal discourse. Although approaches such as Eliade's and Ginzburg's, which look for universal and eternal parameters, may seem relevant, it seems, in the final analysis, that Radcliffe's work must be read in its own epistemological context, which includes associationism, sentimentalism, and legal debate.

In "Trials in Romantic-Era Writing: Modernity, Guilt, and the Scene of Justice", Michael Scrivener has suggested that there were three distinct conceptions of how law worked in the Romantic era: paternalistic law, utilitarian law, and a radical critique of law. Paternalistic law relied on providential narratives, an arbitrary model which suggested that God or one of God's agents intervened decisively to affect the plot. As for Utilitarians, they claimed that the legal was an autonomous sphere with its own logic, which constructed the subject. The fact that the subject could be mis-construed or mis-constructed is exemplified by Valancourt's story. Hence, Radcliffe seems to hesitate between providential justice and utilitarian law. At the end of Valancourt's misadventures, she avoids choosing by escaping into sentimental discourse, in which self and truth can only be reached and protected in the heart-to-heart transparency of sentimental lovers.

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