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Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Romances and the Sea

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Abstract. Biographical materials and the writer's journals show that Ann Radcliffe had some personal knowledge of the sea and to some extent of sailing. She was also a lover of nature, an enthusiast of 17th-century landscapists, a connoisseur of Pre-Romantic poetry, who was also familiar with contemporary esthetic tastes and theories. In this context, the article analyzes seascapes, maritime and nautical references, motifs of storm and shipwreck in Radcliffe's Gothic romances, including some poetical lines inspired by the sea with which *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is interspersed. The writer's descriptions of the sea and her use of this element in her works are discussed in relation to her fictional characters and plots.

Key words: Ann Radcliffe, Gothic romances, the sea, seascapes

One of the modern Gothic scholars has observed that "intersections between the Gothic and the sea are so visible that the main question is why they are so rarely examined" (Alder 2017, 1), encouraging researchers at the same time to focus their attention on the role of the sea in canonical Gothic novels, such as *Frankenstein*, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *Rebecca*, and adding to the list somewhat disparagingly "the coastal sunsets, storms, and nautical poetry that litter *The Castle* [sic!] *of Udolpho*" (4). This has been the motive for the following examination of Ann Radcliffe's interest in the sea, and first of all how she used it in her successive Gothic romances, as well as how her images of the sea relate to contemporary esthetic trends.

Critics noticed Radcliffe's fascination for the sea a long time ago; in her 1926 study of the writer's connections with Romanticism, Alida Wieten remarked: "If there is anything she loves better than mountains, it is ocean and lakes. There is hardly a heroine in all her novels, but admires them" – to add somewhat laconically that "It is unnecessary to give many instances" (Wieten 1926, 45). In the most authoritative biography and

"'cultural history' of a writing woman," Rictor Norton argues that Ann Ward, the future writer Ann Radcliffe, was 7 years old when staying with her uncle Thomas Bentley in Chelsea, close to the River Thames, she probably first saw "picturesque boats" at nearby Chelsea Reach, which she was to transform in her novels into "That characteristic vision of the flashing white sail of a boat glimpsed through the mist or at twilight" (Norton 1999, ix and 29). The scholar believes that Ann Ward could well have accompanied the Bentleys, who had no children of their own, on their visits to seaside resorts such as Margate. In any case, Bentley's wife was frail and sickly, and the second half of the 18th century came to be known in England as the "seaside mania" largely owing to the work of Richard Russell who was a medical doctor famous for propagating treatment by sea water (Gray 2006, 46).

Following her marriage to William Radcliffe in January 1787, Ann Radcliffe and her husband clearly shared their countrymen's enthusiasm for seaside holidays, and according to R. Norton, she "almost certainly" visited the coast of Kent "long before" her 1794 journey to Holland; the scholar also suggests that Dover castle, situated on the top of a hill at the edge of the sea, could well have been the model for the castles of Athlin and Mazzini (or one of them) in her first and second Gothic romances dated 1789 and 1790 respectively (Norton 1999, 176). Ann Radcliffe's first documented passage by sea took place in the spring of 1794, when she sailed with her husband from Harwich to Hellevoetsluis in Holland, thus beginning their continental journey whose destination was to be Switzerland, but which came to rather an abrupt end in Freiburg, as continental Europe was plunging into chaos due to the wars started by the revolutionary army of France. The Radcliffes consequently returned to Holland and took a passage back home on board an American vessel, to safely land in Deal. The writer's references to both these passages by water in her *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*, which was published in the following year, are quite scanty. She only makes some observations on the "encroachments of the sea" on the Dutch side of what she calls "the German Ocean" (Radcliffe 1795, 2), though on the return voyage she recalls how they were becalmed and thus delayed, to be rewarded at the same time by the picturesque sunset and then sunrise at sea. One more non-fictional source which documents the writer's excursions to several locations on the east and south coast of England from 1797 onwards, are extracts of her own journals quoted by Thomas Noon Talfourd in his "Memoir" of Ann Radcliffe which was prefixed to the posthumous edition of her last novel *Gaston de Blondeville*, also comprising a metrical tale entitled *St. Alban's Abbey*, and several poetical pieces. Some of the writer's seaside peregrinations, reported in her journals, are very interesting, for instance, her trip to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight in the autumn of 1798, when her boat "Passed through the fleet" of men-of-war anchored at Spithead and after landing she took a "Walk by moonlight on the rampart" of Portsmouth (Talfourd 1826, 31). Incidentally, this section of Ann Radcliffe's journals brings to mind Jane Austen's visits to Portsmouth made just a few years later and fictionalized in chapters 41 and 42 of *Mansfield Park* (1978 [1814]), whose heroine Fanny Price strolls along the same ramparts admiring ships lying at anchor in the Spithead roadstead. However attractive and inspiring those trips to the seaside must have been, Radcliffe's reader will remember that by 1797, the date of the first entry in her journals quoted by Talfourd, she had already published all five of her Gothic romances.

Before focusing on images of the sea in these works, it must be observed that Ann Radcliffe never saw the regions and countries whose coasts and seas she described in

them. With a view to possible borrowings for her French, Swiss, and especially Italian locations, scholars have pointed to several 18th-century travel books (e.g. by Hester Piozzi) and letters (e.g. by Thomas Gray), however, all of them could be useful to the writer only in her rendering of townscapes (e.g. Venice) and landscapes (e.g. Savoy Alps). Ann Radcliffe herself refers to the contemporary "writers of travels" and mentions Tobias Smollett (in her *Journey* 1795, 105), though his *Travels through France and Italy* published in 1766 was also of no use in the context of sea storms, shipwrecks, threat of pirates – all of which she described, but of which she had no personal experience. For nautical scenes of this kind, the writer could find inspiration in her beloved Shakespeare: I have calculated that in *The Romance of the Forest* Radcliffe makes references to 8 different plays of the famous dramatist, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to as many as 11, and to the same number again of different plays in *The Italian*. The said references take the form of chapter epigraphs, citations in the text of her novels, scenes or situations drawn from Shakespeare's tragedies, comedies and historical dramas. Among the plays used in this way there are those that have some nautical flavor, such as *The Tempest* and *Twelfth Night*, and (to a lesser extent) *The Merchant of Venice*. One must remember, though, that apart from direct references to these plays, Shakespeare's dramatic canon comprises some others (e.g. *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*) which feature the motif of storm, shipwreck and capture by pirates.

As regards the way Ann Radcliffe created her seascapes, it is necessary to acknowledge the influence of several contemporary painters and esthetic theories. The writer herself gives clues to both, mentioning by name the following 17th-century French and Italian painters in her Gothic romances: Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Domenico Zampieri and Guido Reni. Excepting the last one, they were landscapists valued for their large-scale paintings, complex and thought-out compositions, rich coloring and light effects. Radcliffe scholars have paid particular attention to Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa as artists who influenced her descriptions of nature the most. Robert Miles goes as far as to consider them "verbal equivalents of their visual landscapes" stating that "Radcliffe's scenic descriptions oscillate between the picturesque and the sublime, Claude and Rosa" (Miles 1995, 122-123). It is worth observing that of the five painters mentioned by the writer in her Gothic romances, Salvator Rosa was also a seascapist, while ports, fishermen and boatmen were also presented by Claude Lorrain and Domenichino. Another interesting observation is that in terms of artistic perception, Ann Radcliffe seems to have seen no essential difference between the majesty and power of the mountains on the one hand and on the other of the sea. During a tour of Cumbria undertaken with her husband in the autumn of 1794, she ascended the summit of Shap Fell (c. 425 meters high) and described "The scene of mountains, which burst upon us [as the one that] can be compared only to the multitudinous waves upon the sea" (Radcliffe 1795, 394). That the writer was a connoisseur of painting is also evident from her later journals, quoted by Talfourd, in which she comments on the "pictures that struck me" (Talfourd 1826, 66), seen at Blenheim Palace, Belvedere House, Knole House, Warwick Castle and Buckingham House (before it was transformed into the royal palace), by a host of artists including Sir Joshua Reynolds and John Opie, van Dyck, Rubens and Teniers, Rembrandt and Philips Wouwerman, Canaletto, Michelangelo and Titian, as well as Hans Holbein. It rests to note that Radcliffe's enthusiasm for painting is evidently shared by her Gothic heroines who are adept draftswomen, or by characters such as Monsieur Verneuil in *The Romance*

of the Forest who is "particularly susceptible of the beautiful and sublime in nature" and who "saw with the eye of a painter, and felt with the rapture of a poet" (Radcliffe 2009, 276).

Similarly as in the case of inspiration drawn from the art of painting, Ann Radcliffe gives clues to the esthetic foundation of both her landscapes and seascapes. The key names here are those of Edmund Burke, mentioned both in the Cumberland section of the writer's *Journey* (Radcliffe 1795, 421) and in her journals quoted by Talfourd (1826, 72), as well as William Gilpin mentioned thrice in her journals (Talfourd 1826, 47 and 55-6). Of these two authorities, Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, first published in 1756, was the most inspiring, particularly the author's findings that pain is stronger in its operation than pleasure, and that pain and danger can be delightful when their causes do not directly affect an observer. In part I, section VII of his treatise, Burke famously associated terror with the complex esthetic effect of sublimity, stating: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (Burke 1968, 39). In part II of his work, Burke enumerates objects that are "terrible with regard to sight" and that can consequently lead an onlooker to the experience of the sublime, remarking that "the ocean is an object of no small terror" (57-8). The philosopher also emphasizes the role of vastness, infinity, obscurity and darkness, lightning and a quick transition from light to darkness or the other way round, suddenness of appearance, excessive loudness – all of which qualities and phenomena apply to the images of the potent ocean in Radcliffe's Gothic romances. Even the more predictable findings in the part of Burke's work which focuses on beauty and which links this esthetic category with qualities in things that induce in a spectator a sense of affection and tenderness and ultimately excite the passion called love, together with a list of such qualities comprising, among others, smoothness, gradual variation or "melted form" (Burke 1968, 117), clear and fair colors, soft and sweet sounds – can also be related, though to a different face, of Radcliffian water world.

William Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, &c. Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, published 26 years after Burke's treatise, provided descriptions of vales and woods, rivers and hills, castles and abbeys – all with a view to their picturesque beauty which was also the effect of "a veil of obscurity" and "deep shadows" (Gilpin 1789, 28), varied by "peculiar illumination" (62) and "accidental light" (97). Some other useful observations made by the author relate to a successful representation of such objects on canvas or paper, which require that "the whole [composition] must be varied in its parts" and that "Tho the parts must be contrasted, the whole must be combined" (122). Although Gilpin was a landscape esthete, he also remarked on the beautiful effect of the "swellings and agitations" of the ocean which are "perfectly harmonious," whereas in the case of swellings "In ground, which is composed of refractory materials, you are presented often with harsh lines, angular insertions, and disagreeable abruptnesses" (105).

It is debatable whether Ann Radcliffe was familiar with any other 18th-century discourses on beauty, picturesqueness or sublimity. R. Norton argues that she may have read Joseph Priestley's lecture on the sublime contained in *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (1777), as "Priestly would certainly have presented a copy of this

book to his friend Thomas Bentley" (Norton 1999, 67), in whose London home the future writer was living from approximately the age of 8 to 16. Another suggestion made by Norton is that since Ann Radcliffe apparently borrowed two blood-curdling scenes from *Sir Bertrand. A Fragment* (1773) by John Aikin, "She therefore must have read the essay which prefaced *Sir Bertrand*, by [his sister] Anna Laetitia Aikin (later known as Mrs. Barbauld), "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror"" (Norton 1999, 69).

Proceeding to the analysis of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic romances with a view to her use of the sea, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, her first production which appeared in 1789, can be regarded as rather a tentative beginning. Of the coastal location of the former castle, the reader merely learns that it is "an edifice built on the summit of a rock, whose base was in the sea" (Radcliffe 1824, 721). The most interesting scene directly relating to the sea occurs in chapter 9 which opens with a description of a stormy evening and features gale-force wind "burst[ing] in sudden squalls over the deep, and dash[ing] the foaming waves against the rocks with inconceivable fury" (749). At the same time, there are "solemn pauses between the stormy gusts" and aural effects involve surges breaking on the shore "in deep-resounding murmurs." The scene is only partially illuminated by the moon which shines "faintly by intervals, through broken clouds, upon the waters" (749). Indeed, even in this brief description of the storm on the sea it would be possible to find echoes of the esthetic ideas proposed by both Burke (suddenness, loudness and low intermittent sounds) and Gilpin (obscurity and stray light). As regards the reaction of a human witness to this spectacle, Osbert, the Earl of Athlin seems to be following in the footsteps of Burke again, experiencing "enthusiastic awe" and standing "wrapt in the sublimity of the scene" (749). A highly dramatic consequence of this storm is shipwreck and the impetus that its survivors provide for the further development of the plot, which is somewhat reminiscent of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The residents of Athlin presently hear signals of distress and shrieks of terror from the sea, and moments later a foreign vessel strikes upon the rocks beneath the castle. Among those rescued from the sinking ship, there is a stranger of rank, the Count de Santmorin, who soon falls in love with his host's lovely sister named Mary and becomes a natural rival to the noble youth Alleyn who has long been enamored of her. Santmorin's shipwreck and unexpected arrival in Athlin thus start a sequence of sensational events on the level of the plot involving conspiracy, abduction and pursuit.

Radcliffe's second Gothic work, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), also opens with a description of a castle situated on the seashore, though this time it is a peaceful bay in Sicily, which accounts for the choice of a different lexical register relative to its location, such as "admirably beautiful and picturesque" (Radcliffe 1899, 3). The view from the castle is also more expansive and embraces the straits of Messina and even the opposite shores of Calabria in the background, with sailing vessels in the middle ground "whose gay streamers glittered in the sunbeams" (12). Though equally brief as the description of Castle Athlin, that of Castle Mazzini shows some compositional advancement which I think the writer owed to her favorite painters, in this case to Claude Lorrain, and in particular to his more extensive prospects including land and sea with fore-, middle- and background, the whole marked by a certain softness and peacefulness. The scene in which Julia Mazzini, forced by her tyrannical father to marry the repulsive Duke de Luovo, retires to her chamber to spend a sleepless night, but, on opening the window of her apartment, finds consolation in the moonlit seascape – is also evocative of nostalgia, melancholy, a mixture of sadness and pleasure emanating from Lorrain's paintings: "The

night was still, and not a breath disturbed a surface of the waters. The moon shed a mild radiance over the waves, which in gentle undulations flowed upon the sands. The scene insensibly tranquillized her [Julia's] spirits. A tender and pleasing melancholy diffused itself over her mind" (25). It should be added that the radiance of the moon reflected in undulating waters, or, several pages later, "a feeble ray [of sunrise] over the surface of the waters, which rolled" (61) can also be related to what art critics refer to as Lorrain's "masterly rendering of light vibrating on the water" (Secomska 1985, 78, my translation).

The most interesting nautical scene in *A Sicilian Romance* is undoubtedly the dramatic passage across the straits of Messina, undertaken by the fugitive Julia Mazzini who is assisted by her brother Ferdinand, in the course of which a violent storm shatters their vessel to pieces. The author may have been inspired by the shipwreck in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, though unlike Sebastian and Viola, Radcliffe's Julia and Ferdinand are separated only after surviving the disaster and not directly as a result of it. On the visual and aural planes the writer skillfully gradates the coming of the tempest which starts as a light breeze accompanied by dark vapors, to gradually increase its force and blacken the sky, except when darkness is interrupted by vivid lightnings which "quivered upon the waters, … disclosing the horrible gaspings of the waves." At the same time "The thunder, which burst in tremendous crashes above, the loud roar of the waves below, the noise of the sailors, and the sudden cracks and groanings of the vessel" – on the one hand terrify Julia, but on the other render the scene tremendously sublime (61-2).

Seascapes in Ann Radcliffe's third work, *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), appear in the section in which the heroine, Adeline de Montalt, reaches the town of Nice on the coast of the Mediterranean after an arduous journey from the Abbey of Saint Clair in France through the Swiss Alps. On first seeing the sea, she is filled with admiration for its grandeur: her eyes fix on the wide waters of the Mediterranean extending as far as the mountains of Corsica in the farthest distance, and on the sails of the fishing boats in front of her. The whole scene is flooded with light, the waters below are "clear as crystal," while further on there are "a thousand brilliant tints," and the horizon is colored with "aethereal blue" (Radcliffe 2009, 282). At the same time the might of the sea, its latent potential, qualifies her admiration as mixed with sublimity. What I find most characteristic of the seascapes in this romance, is Adeline's spiritual bond with the sea. For instance, sunrise on the shore, featuring "The blue sea, the brilliant sky" and bringing "the pure sea breeze" are "circumstances which re-animated her spirits" (288). By contrast, twilight on the water, the last rays of the setting sun reflected on the smooth surface of the sea, evoke painful memories and particularly the heroine's separation from her beloved Theodore. On one of such occasions, she reaches for her lute and begins to play "in softest harmony" with the scenery, singing a wistful song in which she appeals to Shakespeare's Titania to "fly with me through distant air / To isles that gem the western deep!" (284). These lines bring to mind a mythical island paradise, something like the legendary Isles of the Blessed in the Atlantic Ocean, where she could be reunited with her lover. The tranquility of evening seascape affects Adeline's spirits who "lulled by the waves, … resigned herself to a still melancholy, and sat lost in reverie" (294). This kind of fusion was nourished, I believe, by Ann Radcliffe's reading of her favorite and often quoted poets, such as James Thomson, known for his emotional treatment of nature, Thomas Gray, whose still evening landscape is highly atmospheric and accompanied by melancholy reflection, and William Collins, who described harmony of evening environment and its soothing effect on the lyric speaker.

After a sojourn of 3 weeks at Nice, Adeline embarks on a sea voyage to the coast of Languedoc, during which she experiences mixed emotions. She associates the sight of receding shore with the vanishing prospect of happiness, and observes that "my future view is like the waste of waters that surround me" (292). What she apparently means is that the chance of seeing her beloved again will now be forever lost. On the other hand, "the boundless expanse of the waters that spread on all sides" makes her feel as if she was "launched into a new world" (293). Gazing intently at "the liquid glass" on the surface of the sea, and then penetrating the transparent water and watching innumerable fish and marine plants, she seems to be trying to see into her own future. Of course, she is also aware of some physical dangers and trembles with terror at the thought that "a plank alone separated her from death" (292). This phrase is interesting in as much as it is used by professional sailors in later sea fiction: in Captain Frederick Marryat's novel *The King's Own* (1830), the narrator describes his situation as "riding upon the agitated billow, with but one thin plank between me and death" (Marryat 1999, 198), and in Jack London' *Sea-Wolf* (1904), the narrator who finds himself in a small sailing boat "leaping and pounding over the crests" of the waves, remarks that its planking is merely three-quarters of an inch thick and that "Between us and the bottom of the sea was less than an inch of wood" (London 1904, 228). Another interesting detail is that Radcliffe's heroine undertakes the Mediterranean voyage in the company of the ailing Monsieur La Luc, and that it was recommended by the latter's doctor as a remedy for his declining health. Indeed, "La Luc grew better during the voyage, his spirits revived" (Radcliffe 2009, 296) and on reaching the Gulf of Lyons, he even amuses Adeline and his daughter Clara with pointing out major ports along the French coast and describing their commerce.

The use of the sea in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) appears to be more complex than in Ann Radcliffe's earlier Gothic romances, though the first glimpse of the Mediterranean is familiar. Travelling through the Pyrenees from their home in Gascony, Monsieur St Aubert and his daughter Emily approach what is now known as the French Côte d'Azur, where they are rewarded by a stunning vista of the coast with a lonely beacon standing on a promontory jutting out into the Bay of Lyons, a flight of sea-fowl above, "a stealing sail, white with the sun-beam" beyond, and "the blue haze of distance" (Radcliffe 1980, 53-4). The reaction of the heroine runs along the familiar lines: "Emily gazed with enthusiasm on the vastness of the sea, its surface varying, as the lights and shadows fell" (58). Several chapters later, in volume two of the book, the heroine who has lost her parent and been separated from her lover Valancourt, finds herself in Venice where she has been taken by her aunt Madame Cheron and the latter's tyrannical Italian husband Montoni. The window of Emily's chamber affords the view of the Adriatic and, since she feels confined and unhappy, she wishes she could "plunge into the green wave" and become a sea-nymph. She composes a poem on this occasion in which she imagines herself "sporting" with "my sister-nymphs" (178-180). I think the heroine's wish can be related to the Romantic ideal of freedom as symbolized by the sea. As Byron was soon to observe in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, "Man marks the earth with ruin – his control / Stops with the shore" (1985 Canto IV, stanza 179).

From Montoni's palazzo in Venice, Emily takes a gondola trip round the local bay, during which she witnesses a melancholy sunset. The smoothness of the water which reflects heaven and stars makes her pensive and her thoughts go to the dead father and lover left behind in France. At this moment moonlight throws a silvery gleam on her face, so that its contour resembles that of "a Madona, with the sensibility of a Magdalen"

(Radcliffe 1980, 184). It may seem rather surprising that in the scene charged with a potential for a religious experience or illumination, the writer should focus merely on the pictorial aspect of the Madonna, though the term itself has a direct relation to the history of art, and in particular to the Italian Renaissance and masters such as Michelangelo (who emphasized the Madonna's youthfulness). As for the reference to Magdalene, the writer mentions her sensibility, but Baroque painters (e.g. Guido Reni and Rubens who were familiar to Ann Radcliffe) also emphasized her physical beauty. I think that in this context it would be possible to draw a certain analogy between the writer's references to both the Madonna and Mary Magdalene, and to Rossetti's depiction of the Blessed Damozel, where rich Christian symbolism serves to enhance the young woman's beauty. Such an interpretation may be supported by Ann Radcliffe's Dissenting and specifically Unitarian background which favored rationalism. As Eugene B. Murray contends, "Mrs. Radcliffe pressed at the bounds of Rationalism without yielding to Romantic idealism on one hand or to Humean skepticism on the other" (Murray 1972, 161). With a view to the writer's rationalism, it is worth noting that the heroine's father in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, is said to have "the mind of the naturalist" and that "his favourite science" is "the study of botany" (Radcliffe 1980, 3). The same applies to Adeline's guardian Monsieur La Luc in the previously discussed romance, who is an advocate of "the philosophy of nature, directed by common sense" and whose "systems, like his religion, were simple, rational, and sublime" (Radcliffe 2009, 245).

An interesting confrontation between the grandeur of the sea and the splendor of art, and Emily's reaction to them, arises during her visit to the Venice opera (in all probability the Teatro La Fenice built in the neoclassical style and opened just 2 years before the publication of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*), when the heroine finds art created by man "infinitely inferior … to the sublimity of nature" and in particular to "the vast expanse of ocean" and its "rolling waters" (Radcliffe 1980, 189). During Emily's passage from Venice to the estuary of the Brenta river, she sails in a barge and her eyes "glanced over the Adriatic, towards the opposite shores" and "The scenes of the Illiad illapsed in glowing colours to her fancy" (206). Ann Radcliffe also demonstrates that she is familiar with nautical scenes in Homer's epic, when she quotes a passage from the *Iliad* as an epigraph to chapter 13, volume 3, of the novel:

> As when a wave, that from a cloud impends,
> And, swell'd with tempests, on the ship descends,
> White are the decks with foam; the winds aloud,
> Howl o'er the masts, and sing through ev'ry shroud;
> Pale, trembling, tir'd, the sailors freeze with fears,
> And instant death on ev'ry wave appears. (495)

Several pages earlier Emily is on the run from her ghastly prison in Montoni's Udolpho and "hail[s] the waves" on the shore of the Ligurian Sea that she hopes will "bear her back to her native country" (456). She is accompanied by Monsieur Du Pont who is another runaway and the couple of faithful servants Annette and Ludovico. Upon their arrival in Leghorn (Italian Livorno), the heroine shows interest in observing traffic in the local port, the arrival and departure of ships, and particularly sailors' reunions with and partings from their relations. On this occasion she composes a melancholy ballad entitled "The Mariner" which tells the story of a young sailor who takes leave of his sad

bride and sails out to sea, where his vessel is caught in a winter gale which drives it on the rocks and soon all the mates perish in the seething water. This ballad together with the passage from the *Iliad* cited above are clearly related to the storm and shipwreck scene whose detailed description occupies 3 and a half pages in chapter 11 and which comprises a combination of visual and sound effects. The storm hits the ship in which Emily and the other fugitives are crossing the Gulf of Lyons, but it is presented through the eyes and ears of the terrified spectators on land who are the occupants of the Chateau-le-Blanc. The function of this event – apart from its obvious picturesque and dramatic potential – is to bring the heroine to the chateau which once belonged to the late Marquis de Villeroi and his wife. In the nearby monastery of St. Claire, Emily learns that she is the nearest living relative of the deceased marchioness, who appears to have been her aunt, and that the chateau and its domains now belong to her. What is more, the shipwreck effects the re-introduction on the level of the plot of the long absent Valancourt. In a symbolic sense, it can also be connected with the crisis in the relationship between the two lovers. The point is that when she finds shelter at the Chateau-le-Blanc, Emily learns from her host, the Count de Villefort, that Valancourt is not worthy of her, as during their long separation he apparently indulged in gambling and debauchery while staying in Paris. This report temporarily wrecks all chances of their reunion. Interestingly, for his part Valancourt also refers to this critical point in their relationship in terms of a shipwreck, for such is the title and subject of a sonnet which he cuts with his pen-knife on the door of the watch-tower which is the favorite haunt of his beloved. The final lines of this piece are as follows:

> But hark! What shriek of death comes in the gale,
> And in the distant ray what glimmering sail
> Bends to the storm? – Now sinks the note of fear!
> Ah! Wretched mariners! – no more shall day
> Unclose his cheering eye to light ye on your way! (558-9)

Near the end of the narrative, Emily St. Aubert composes a poetical address "To the Winds" which is inspired by the awful spectacle, accompanied by sound effects, of the storm wind sweeping over the billows of the sea. The lines are actually an appeal to the wind not to exercise its destructive power and spare sailing vessels from sinking and their crews from death. This short piece may be interpreted, I believe, in two different ways – as the heroine's subconscious desire for the preservation of her strained relationship with Valancourt, or an omen of death which occurs in the next chapter and relates to Sister Agnes of St. Claire vel Signora Laurentini of Udolpho. In the latter case, the heroine's appeal to the devastating wind is apparently not heard, which is not surprising. Since the dying Laurentini confesses to the crime of poisoning the Marchioness de Villeroi, she must be punished, just as fit punishment is administered to all malefactors in Gothic novels.

One more indirect reference to the sea in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is the mention of pirates who hide their spoil in a cave at the foot of the cliff on which stands the Chateau-le-Blanc. The cave connects with the vaults of the chateau, so that midnight noises made by the pirates lead to the abandonment of one wing of Le-Blanc which the superstitious domestics believe to be haunted. The threat of Barbary corsairs looms on the horizon in *The Romance of the Forest* as well, for which reason the captain of Adeline's ship sailing

from Nice to the Gulf of Lyons, steers the vessel close to the shores of Provence and then Languedoc.

Of Ann Radcliffe's fifth Gothic romance, *The Italian or the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1796), R. Norton writes that it is "filled with music and sounds to an astonishing degree," in contrast to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* "dominated by landscape painting and poetry" (Norton 1999, 130). The reference to music and sounds is very accurate, though it applies to land-based scenes in the first place, such as the church of San Lorenzo in Naples where Ellena di Rosalba sings a divine melody which enchants Vincentio di Vivaldi, or the garden of the villa Altieri where the hero sings a serenade which is meant to attract her attention. There are far more situations involving songs and music as the action of the novel progresses. This is generally not surprising, as from Talfourd's "Memoir of Mrs. Radcliffe" it appears that she was not only a passionate enthusiast of picturesque and sublime landscapes and painters, but also of music. Talfourd affirms that the writer "sang herself with exquisite taste" and that "At the Opera she was a frequent visitor" (Talfourd 1826, 99). In her journals quoted by Talfourd, Ann Radcliffe herself makes numerous references to music, also heard in the open air during her outings, and mentions by name her favorite composers and musicians such as Giovanni Paisiello (65), Felice Giardini (70), and G. F. Händel (99). In the context of maritime references, the writer's sensitivity to sounds translates in her Gothic romances into the roar of the furious waves, the dashing of oars, signals of distress from ships caught in violent storms, groanings of the sinking vessels, and the like effects. In *The Italian* these are more properly musical effects. For instance, strolling along the Bay of Naples on a moonlit night, Vincentio and Ellena hear "the melodies of Italian strains [which] seemed to give enchantment to the scenery of its shore" and "the brisk music of the dance from fishermen, on the margin of the waves below" (Radcliffe 1970, 37). Music significantly contributes to create "such magic scenes of beauty" together with "The deep clean waters [which] reflected every image of the landscape … – all touched with the silvery tint and soft shadows of moon-light" (37). Such imagery accords with the properties on which beauty depends, as listed by Burke in part III of his treatise, sections 14 to 18 and 25, and comprising smoothness, gradual variation, delicacy, clean and fair colors, and soft and sweet sounds.

It is remarkable that the same bay loses its appeal for Vincentio after his beloved is carried away from Naples. He "paced the edge of the waves" recalling "how often from thence they had together viewed this lovely scene!" whose features "had now lost their charm; they were colourless and uninteresting, or impressed only mournful ideas" (Radcliffe 1970, 106). A similar change in the perception of the beautiful Baia di Napoli occurs earlier in the novel, shortly before the death of Ellena's guardian and aunt – Signora Bianchi – who surveys with "languid eyes" the waters of the bay studded with "gaily painted ships, and fishing-boats" which have "no longer power to cheer her" (37-8). On the other hand, it is more natural when images of the storm at sea relate to some dramatic events on the level of the plot. Radcliffe's own versified epigraph to chapter 7, volume 2 of the novel, brings images of the heaving stormy waves under darkening skies, accompanied by the "mighty / Sounds of strife" and the appearance of "the shadow of Death" (208), which prophesy Ellena's ordeal in a decaying mansion situated on the margin of the Adriatic, where she is to be murdered and her body is to be disposed of in the sea. On the evening on which her captor Schedoni intends to perpetrate the crime, the heroine finds herself on a desolate beach, as gusts of wind begin to make waves and the

screams of sea-birds portend a storm. Fortunately for her, the monk's determination wavers in the face of her innocence and helplessness, but also because her blood spilled on the sand might be observed by local fishermen. For his part, Schedoni's agent Spalatro refuses to kill the girl because stormy sea haunts him with memories of bloody deeds that he himself committed on this very shore: "often of a night, when the sea roars, and storms shake the house, *they* have come, all gashed as I left them, and stood before my bed!" (230).

Ann Radcliffe's posthumously published *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826) was inspired by her visit to Kenilworth Castle which she made in 1802. Long ago scholars observed that this work was "an experiment in a new field" and that it was "the one book in which she [the author] made a conscientious attempt to reproduce the life of the past" (McIntyre 1920, 66 and 80). The modern editor of the novel points to "the dearth of trademarks commonly associated with the Radcliffean Gothic" and suggests that "To the modern audience, *Gaston* would appear to be an unlikely, if not unfathomable cross between the supernatural of Shakespeare, the marvelous of Matthew Lewis, and the mock-historical of Sir Walter Scott" (Chiu 2006, vii). In this sense, Radcliffe's last production hardly qualifies as a Gothic romance, and its material setting – Kenilworth Castle located in the landlocked county of Warwickshire – has no potential for creating any maritime scene. Nevertheless, the author presents the protagonist of the novel, a merchant named Woodreeve, as newly returned from "his merchandize into the north seas" (Radcliffe 1826, vol. 1, 180). Further on in the novel can be found two similes relating to the sea: thus, the hum of voices in the castle's great hall resembles "noise as of murmuring tides" (vol. 2, 58) while one of the ladies is "beautiful as morning, rising from the sea" (vol. 2, 342). Of more importance, however, is the pageant presented before King Henry III and his court at Kenilworth, opening with "a sea shore, with high white cliffs, … waves, flushed with the setting sun and bickering in the light, as also breaking with gentle noise upon the strand; and a ship riding at anchor near" (vol. 2, 69-70). The successive scenes presented in the show allude to the assassination of Woodreeve's kinsman in the forest of Arden by the king's favorite the Baron de Blondeville.

Concluding the article, Ann Radcliffe's use of the sea in her Gothic romances can be described as systematic and forming an integral part of their overall structure. She introduced this element into all her fictional works, where it plays the role comparable to mountains. Her seascapes in the successive romances show a remarkable advance in artistic quality and constitute a masterly literary realization in the field of prose fiction of the contemporary esthetic categories of beauty, picturesqueness and sublimity. The writer's descriptions of sunrise and sunset on the waters can be said to have been rendered by an artist who had the eye of a painter and the feeling of a poet. They harmonize with a wide range of mental and emotional states of her heroines, depending on the vicissitudes of their lives, and especially on adversities they meet with at one point or good fortune they have at another. The writer's storms at sea and shipwrecks, presented either from some vantage position on the shore or from the ship's deck, apart from fulfilling most completely the esthetic criteria of terror combined with sublimity, directly relate to highly dramatic twists and turns of the plot, such as the heroine's escape which is foiled by shipwreck, sudden arrival of an intrusive suitor, or reunion of separated lovers. Regarding Ann Radcliffe's poetic lines, with which her romances are interspersed, and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in particular, they contain nautical references that relate to different situations and events in the narrative, for instance revealing the

protagonists' anxiety or inner turmoil, or prophesying some kind of oncoming crisis. Even though on the technical side, the writer's picturesque and atmospheric seascapes show the influence of some 17th- and 18th-century landscapists and poets, as well as art theorists, she must be considered an original and highly imaginative artist who successfully used the sea in a new literary medium and made it a functional element of her works.

On the generic plane, this article will hopefully shed more light on the nature of nautical Gothic. As has been demonstrated, though the motive of the sea is not compositionally central in Ann Radcliffe's romances, its role is vital on the level of imagery, plot, characterization and theme. Her seascapes create the effects of picturesque beauty and sublimity in terror, dramatic happenings on the sea affect the course of the action, various faces of this element serve as projections of the protagonists' emotions and anxieties, thus adding to the psychological realism of the writer's works, while the glassy surface of the water occasionally provides an opportunity for the distracted heroine to catch a glimpse of the self. Owing to the incorporation of the sea, Gothic fiction as such seems to have acquired an extra dimension – perhaps because this element is so fluid and dynamic. In this context, reading later Gothic novels with a view to the sea, such as *Melmoth the Wanderer* or *Dracula*, together with scholarly focus on the Gothicized rendering of the sea in later nautical fiction, typified by Marryat's *Phantom Ship* or Cooper's *Red Rover*, may prove to be highly rewarding.

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