



Anne Seymour Damer

Belmour

A Modern Edition

NORTHWESTERN WORLD CLASSICS



Edited and with an introduction
by Jonathan David Gross

Belmour



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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Anne Seymour Conway was born on November 8, 1749, at Coombe Bank in Kent, and spent her youth at Park Place, Remenham, near Henley-on-Thames.¹ She was the daughter of well-known parents: Henry Seymour Conway served as an army officer and politician, and his wife, Caroline Bruce, née Campbell, Lady Ailesbury, was the daughter of John, fourth Duke of Argyll. Anne retained the aristocratic Whiggish outlook of her parents. Her father's secretary, David Hume, allegedly encouraged her interest in sculpture.² When her parents traveled abroad, her guardian was Horace Walpole, who bequeathed his Strawberry Hill home to her as his executor and legatee. On June 14, 1767, Anne married John Damer. After seven years they separated, and he committed suicide on August 15, 1776, leaving her in debt. Damer's career as a sculptress began after this tragic incident, which, as shown in her many letters to friends such as Mary Berry, tinged the rest of her life with melancholy.

Before the death of her husband, Damer commissioned Daniel Gardner to paint her and her friends as the witches from *Macbeth*. He wrote the following poem to accompany the portrait:

Tales of Old Witches are no longer heard,
Fictitious legends once receiv'd for truth.
And wisely here the Artist has transferr'd
The pow'rs of sorcery from age to youth.

Beware, ye Mortals, who those comforts prize,
Which flow from peace from liberty, and ease,
Th' Enchanter's wand, and magick spells despise,
But shun the witchcraft of such eyes as these.³

Of the three women in the painting, Damer is the only one who looks out at the viewer, defiantly.

Anne Damer gave copies to Lady Melbourne and Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, as gifts. Each version differed slightly, with details painted into the hem of a garment in the painting, to commemorate the recipient.⁴ After her husband's suicide, the group portrait became her farewell gesture to the bon ton, for Damer's father-in-law, the notorious Lord Milton, insisted that she sell her own jewelry to pay the considerable debts her husband had accumulated as a fashionable rake. When her father-in-law also proved unreliable in paying her pension, she lived with her parents for a while and later (in 1778) rented an apartment behind Lady Melbourne's home in Piccadilly, on Sackville Street.⁵ Though she seemed anxious to avoid public attention, she attracted onlookers who gawked at this aristocratic woman with a smock and mob cap, working in the damp yards behind her own apartment—a far cry from the fashionable residence she had once kept in London. In the 1770s and for two decades afterward, several caricaturists lampooned her as a lesbian who shunned the company of men, insinuating that she was responsible for her husband's suicide. One particularly cutting sketch of July 1, 1789, shows her gelding the *Apollo Belvedere*, a reference to a statue she intended for the new Drury Lane (c. 1802), which burned to the ground on January 24, 1809.⁶ By the 1790s, the playwright Hannah Cowley could depict Anne Damer as a respected artist whose romantic attachment to her own sex symbolized the excesses of the age of sensibility. Despite her jealous detractors, however, Damer was no dabbler. She influenced the perception of Lord Nelson, Charles James Fox, George III, and other figures through her neoclassical busts.

As a sculptress Anne Damer recorded the historical actions of others, but she also became a historical curiosity herself. A pen portrait of Damer appears in Susan Ferrier's *Marriage*, showing her as a cross-dressing woman, complete with riding

crop and “worsted stockings and black leather shoes, something resembling buckets.”⁷ The painter Joseph Farington noted Damer’s histrionic farewells to Mary Berry and disagreed with her outspoken opinions on painting.⁸ As an actress, she sometimes embarrassed audience members, such as the future Lord Palmerston, who, with the prince regent and the king and queen, attended numerous plays in which she performed at the house of her half sister, the Duchess of Richmond. Nevertheless, the House of Commons ended sessions early so Charles James Fox and William Pitt could attend a production of *The Way to Keep Him* on April 20, 1787, at Richmond House. “So moving were Mrs. Damer and Lord Henry Fitzgerald” in Nathaniel Lee’s *Theodosius, or the Force of Love*, that “when the latter fell by his own sword, that Miss Harriet Hobart and Lady Ann Wesley were carried out in a faint,”⁹ one audience member observed. Anne Damer helped to design sets, featuring her own sculpture (of Elizabeth Farren, for example) as backdrop; her beautiful costumes received favorable notice in almost every performance.¹⁰ She played Donna Violante in *The Wonder*, by Susan Centlivre; Lady Lovemore in Arthur Murphy’s *The Way to Keep Him*; and Lady Freelove in George Colman the Elder’s *The Jealous Wife*. She delivered General Burgoyne’s epilogue to her father’s adaptation of Louis Boissy’s *Les Dehors Trompeurs (False Appearances)*. In Mary Berry’s *The Fashionable Friends*, Damer appeared as Selina Vapour, reciting the epilogue written by William Lamb. The play was successful at Strawberry Hill in 1800, but closed shortly after its release in London at Drury Lane, reputedly because of its immorality. Damer’s actress friends included Elizabeth Farren and Sarah Siddons, whom she portrayed as the muses Thalia and Melpomene, respectively, in busts exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1789.

Damer traveled to Europe on numerous occasions, keeping a careful record of her observations. She was in north-

ern Germany and the Hague with her parents in 1760–61; in Germany, the Low Countries, and Paris in 1772; and in Paris, the provinces, and Flanders in 1774–75 (when she met Marie Antoinette) and in 1777–78.¹¹ She visited Rome, Naples, and Florence in 1778–79, 1780–81, and 1785–86, which helped her portray Italian scenes in *Belmour*, especially in the chapters that involve Mrs. Stainville's affair with Lord Raymond. After first meeting Mary and Agnes Berry in 1789, she traveled to Lisbon for her health from November 21, 1790, to March 1791, and seems to have begun *Belmour* in Portugal.¹² Damer visited Sir Horace Mann in Florence and also Sir William Hamilton in Naples, where she met Nelson in 1798. In 1802, Damer traveled to Paris with Mary Berry during the peace of Amiens and met the empress Josephine, Napoleon's mother, and Maria Cosway, who showed her some hidden treasures in the Louvre. She presented Napoleon with a bust of Charles James Fox during the Hundred Days, in 1815.

As an honorary exhibitor at the Royal Academy rather than an official member, Damer contributed thirty-two works from 1784 to 1818, only a fraction of her total output. Walpole encouraged her talent, though his praise led James Dallaway and Alan Cunningham to criticize her work more harshly than they might have.¹³ She learned modeling from Giuseppe Ceracchi and marble carving from John Bacon the Elder. William Cumberland Cruikshank taught her anatomy. Among her early works are four wax medallion portraits done in the manner of Isaac Gosset the Elder (1713–99)—of her mother (1777?), her cousin Charlotte Campbell (1777?), Voltaire (1777), and the emperor Augustus (1777). These differ from more fully realized busts, which include Lord Nelson (marble, 1803), Joseph Banks (bronze, 1812–13), and herself (marble, 1786, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence), as well as a statue she executed of George III (marble, 1790–94).¹⁴ In her lifetime, Alan Cunningham noted inconsistencies in the degree of finish given to

her works and concluded that she employed assistants. More recently, critics argue that Damer consciously altered her style from the finished busts of 1784 to the rough and chiseled appearance of Nelson and Banks, which she thought of as closer to the Greek (as opposed to the Roman, mistakenly accepted at that time for Greek). She was not a “dilettante, but . . . an Artist,” as she put it in an autobiographical statement, one who traveled often to Italy to study “works of art which are to be found there in order to perfect her knowledge of the true and simple style of the Greeks she has always tried to emulate.”¹⁵

In 1818, Damer moved to York House, Twickenham, where she continued to produce sculpture. She died on May 28, 1828, at her London house, 9 Upper Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, and was buried in the church at Sundridge, Kent, alongside her mother, under a gravestone of her own design. Though her notebooks survived, she ordered all her other private papers, including Horace Walpole’s letters to her, destroyed.

Notes

1. I follow the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* in listing Anne Seymour Damer’s birth date as 1749, though it is sometimes listed as 1748 (see the Noble and Benforado references below). For the most recent information, see Alison Yarrington, “Damer, Anne Seymour (1749–1828),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–9). See also Percy Noble, *Anne Seymour Damer: A Woman of Art and Fashion, 1748–1828* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1908), and Susan Benforado, “Anne Seymour Damer (1748–1828). Sculptor” (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1986).

2. Alison Yarrington, “The Female Pygmalion: Anne Seymour Damer, Allan Cunningham, and the Writing of a Woman Sculptor’s Life,” *The Sculpture Journal* 1 (1997): p. 34.

3. George C. Williamson, *Daniel Gardner* (New York: John Lane, 1921), p. 44.

4. Elizabeth Milbanke, *Byron's "Corbeau Blanc": The Life and Letters of Lady Melbourne*, ed. Jonathan David Gross (Houston: Rice University Press, 1997), plate 19.

5. "Albany" in F. H. W. Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, vols. 31 and 32, *St. James and Westminster, Part 2* (London: Athlone Press, 1964), plate 115, pp. 367–89. "In February 1785 the Melbournes came to an agreement with their friend, the sculptress, Anne Damer, for her to open a door and window into their garden from the yard of a house in Sackville Street. Mrs. Damer is said to have advised on the finishing of Melbourne House. Lady Birkenhead has written: 'Her knowledge and advice were valued by Lady Melbourne and were of great service to her in the decoration of the house'" (386); see also Mary Berry, *The Berry Papers: Being the Correspondence Hitherto Unpublished of Mary and Agnes Berry, 1763–1852*, ed. Lewis Melville (London: John Lane, 1914), p. 21.

6. Benforado, pp. 192–93.

7. Susan Ferrier, *Marriage: A Novel*, 1818, ed. Herbert Foltinek (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 42, 48.

8. Joseph Farington, *The Joseph Farington Diary*, ed. Kenneth Garlick, Angus D. Macintyre, and Kathryn Cave, 16 vols. (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 1978–84), August 19, 1798, 3:1048.

9. Sybil Marion Rosenfeld, *Temples of Thespis: Some Private Theatres and Theatricals in England and Wales, 1700–1820* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1978), 48.

10. *Ibid.*, 56.

11. Benforado, "Anne Seymour Damer," 44, 271.

12. Anne Seymour Conway Damer, Notebooks, 1791–97. 4 vols., Lewis Walpole Library, New Haven, Conn., 4:71; see also Berry, *The Berry Papers*, p. 27.

13. Yarrington, "The Female Pygmalion," *passim*.

14. Benforado, p. 15; see also Yarrington, "Damer, Anne Seymour (1749–1828)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–9).

15. Benforado, "Anne Seymour Damer," p. 19.

- 1749** November 8: Anne Seymour Conway is born.
- 1767** June 14: Marriage to John Damer.
- 1776** August 15: Suicide of Anne Damer's husband, John Damer.
- 1781** Anne Damer travels to Rome; she returns from the Continent on August 31.
- 1784** Damer participates in the Westminster election of Charles James Fox.
- 1787** April 20: Damer makes her first of several appearances in amateur theatricals, in *The Way to Keep Him*.
- 1788** May 23: *False Appearances*, a play translated by Henry Seymour Conway, is produced at the Duke of Richmond's private theater at Goodwood.
- 1789** April 20: *False Appearances* is produced at Drury Lane.
- 1790** Damer travels to Lisbon, Portugal, and stays from November 21, 1790, to March 1791; she visits Granada and other cities and returns to London in early May 1791.
- 1795** July 9: Death of Damer's father.
- 1797** March 2: Death of Horace Walpole; Damer inherits Strawberry Hill.
- 1797** April: Mary Berry makes the first reference to Damer's novel, *Belmour*, which she reads in manuscript between April and August.
- 1798** Damer decides to complete a bust of Nelson in Naples after meeting Nelson, whom Damer calls the greatest historical figure of the age.
- 1800** Mary Berry's *The Fashionable Friends* is produced at Strawberry Hill.
- 1801** July: Publication of Anne Damer's *Belmour*, which Damer wrote between 1791 and 1797 during her sojourn in Por-

- tugal and Spain. She focused intensely on the novel in August 1797 according to her unpublished notebooks.
- 1802** Damer and Mary Berry meet the empress Josephine and Napoleon's mother during the peace of Amiens.
- 1802** Mary Berry's *The Fashionable Friends*, staged at Drury Lane, closes after three nights.
- 1803** January 17: Death of Damer's mother.
- 1811** Damer bequeaths Strawberry Hill to Dowager Countess Waldegrave, along with Walpole's prints, books, and furniture included as heirlooms. Damer had lived at this playful monument to Gothic style from 1797 to 1811 and issued tickets to visitors, as Walpole had done during his lifetime.
- 1815** In April, during the Hundred Days, Damer presents a bust of Charles Fox to Napoleon; she receives gifts from Josephine and a diamond-studded snuffbox from the emperor.
- 1828** May 28: Death of Anne Damer.

“I am going to pass an hour with Lord Belmour,” Mary Berry wrote to Anne Damer. “I dare say we shall both of us think of you.”¹ This quotation captures perfectly the autobiographical themes of Damer’s only novel, *Belmour*. In this work, she explored romantic passion, the erotic distance between lover and beloved, and the pernicious influence of selfish mentors. Influenced by Ann Radcliffe, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and, perhaps, Elizabeth Inchbald, Anne Damer began *Belmour* in Portugal. By writing a novel, she could evoke the comforting presence of Mary Berry, confronting her feelings for the young woman in the voice of a male suitor named Belmour. While sometimes read as a window into her private life, however, *Belmour* conceals as much as it reveals.

Twenty years before she published her novel, Anne Damer became the target of personal abuse. Newspaper caricatures blamed her for her separation from her husband, his suicide, and her apparent lack of grief. Hester Thrale linked her to sapphism generally and to the actress Elizabeth Farren in particular,² while others fanned the flames. William Combe in *The First of April*, attacked Damer out of pique against the Hertford family, to which Damer was related on her father’s side (Hertford was Damer’s father’s older brother). Jack Cavendish in *A Sapphick Epistle* and observers of her close friendship with the Duchess of Devonshire seemed threatened by and unduly curious about Damer’s sexual and financial independence. These rumors circulated from the 1770s until the time she published *Belmour*. Damer countered them through her acting, her sculpture, and, perhaps, her novel, but they never disappeared. Emma Donoghue’s *Life Mask* explores Anne Damer’s erotic relationship with Elizabeth Farren, while Andrew Elfen-

bein's *Romantic Genius* explains how rumors about her lesbian identity influenced her artistic career. "As a potential response to rumors of sapphism," Elfenbein notes, "*Belmour* extends the strategy of Damer's sculpture. It denies the marginality that such rumors imposed on her by showing her ability to participate in major literary trends of the day, such as the psychological novel."³

Five years after inheriting Strawberry Hill, Damer published *Belmour* along the lines first sketched by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Clara Reeves's *The Old English Baron*, and Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Though set mostly in England, *Belmour* is more cosmopolitan (though no less anti-Catholic) than gothic novels set in Italy. Damer's extensive travels lend authority to the Portuguese and Italian settings of *Belmour*, however much influenced by Radcliffe, who never visited the countries she so beautifully described. Perhaps Damer's work as a neoclassical sculptress (her reading of Epictetus and her assiduous notes taken at numerous museums) led her to look outside of England for literary models. Politically, she was cosmopolitan or Whiggish enough to present Napoleon with a bust of Charles James Fox and to send her bust of Lord Nelson to the king of Tanjore. Most important for *Belmour* was Damer's use of the uncanny and her exploration of the theme of melancholy, which drew on her passionate friendship with Mary Berry first articulated in her Lisbon notebooks. There is no doubt that Damer's life influenced her art. To compartmentalize them is to see how closely they intertwine.

The Work: *Belmour*

Damer's novel appeared in July 1801 and met with a brief but positive notice in the *Monthly Review*: "Considerable talents are here displayed in the support and delineation of characters,

accompanied by many just reflections, and a knowledge of the world." Though generally appreciative of *Belmour's* "just reflections," the reviewer questioned the work's morality: "We must except, however, the libertine behaviour of Lord Belmour, in violating the rights of honor and hospitality by his criminal intimacy with Lady Roseberg; a conduct which cannot easily be reconciled with the openness and generosity of his disposition. That man can have little soundness of principle or true benevolence, who is guilty of such a flagrant act of villainy in the house of his unsuspecting friend.—Nor can we commend his virtuous wife, as Emily Courtenay is described to be, her expressions of tenderness towards her former admirer, and still giving him hopes of their future union.—We cannot deem that author's moral sentiments *quite* correct, who holds up such characters as worthy of our perfect approbation and esteem."⁴ Despite the reviewer's caveat, Damer had successfully portrayed aristocratic men and women's lives as they were actually lived.

Damer was part of an informal literary circle throughout her life, whether she was performing in amateur theatricals, curating Horace Walpole's library at Strawberry Hill, or adding volumes to her own, reputedly one of the finest in London. She subscribed to *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* by Catherine Jemmat in 1772, *The History of Miss Meredith* by Eliza Parsons in 1790, and *Contrast* by Regina Maria Roche in 1828. So well known was she as a literary figure that Charlotte Smith mistakenly attributed *Letters of Miss Riversdale* to her. Some even speculate that Damer borrowed Belmour's father's name, Delavere, from Delamere in Smith's *Emmeline*,⁵ though it seems more likely that she only advised the author on her style, a task she also performed for her cousin Lady Charlotte Campbell.⁶

Anne Damer read *Delphine* in 1802, one year after *Belmour* appeared. She admired the author's subject, but found Madame de Staël's novel too self-revelatory: "It would be, by no means, I should think, a portrait that one should choose to

expose of oneself,” she wrote. Damer thought Rousseau, in *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, the better guide: “How differently has Rousseau treated a great passion, and a passion which leaves a ten times deeper impression of its violence on my mind than all the so-often repeated struggles of Leonie and Delphine.”⁷

Damer knew the challenge of reining in the “passions,” as Staël referred to them in her *Treatise*.⁸ What Damer shared with Staël was class solidarity and a thorough knowledge of neoclassicism; they differed in their politics, most specifically in their attitude toward Napoleon, whom Damer admired and Staël, after an initial infatuation, opposed for more than ten years. After 1802, Damer (perhaps following Staël’s world-historical example) sought to influence the cultural destiny of France, India, and England as a sculptress more forcefully than she had done before.

In the end, Walpole’s influence on *Belmour* was greater than Staël’s or Rousseau’s. He resembles three characters: Lord Delavere, Dr. Stanmore, and Courtenay. As Delavere, he is a father figure to Emily—prideful, charismatic, but obtuse, insisting that his son marry Lady Clementina Alton (as Walpole mistakenly blessed Anne’s marriage to John Damer); as Dr. Stanmore, he encourages Emily’s interest in the arts; and as Courtenay, his Gothic Dean Abbey recalls Strawberry Hill. Courtenay resembles the “Horry” of Damer’s correspondence, the Walpole of old age whose doddering attachment to Mary Berry proved embarrassing. In her letters to Mary Berry, in fact, Damer called him “the Grim King,” underscoring his rather moody and autocratic rule of Strawberry Hill.⁹ Anne Damer was “Stick,” because of the wooden cane she used after she fell off a scaffold¹⁰ and because she propped up Walpole and his new “wife,” Mary Berry.

Anne Damer’s notebooks reveal that the inspiration for *Belmour* came, in large measure, from her passion for Mary Berry. Unable to appear together as often as they would like,

Anne Damer and Mary Berry continually imagined meetings and chance encounters.¹¹ The fantasy of a lesbian life lived to its full sapphic potential haunts the eros-driven adventures of Belmour, whose very name means “beautiful love” in Italian. If she didn’t make it up, Damer may have borrowed the name from the widow in Murphy’s *The Way to Keep Him* (a part Mrs. Hobart played at the Richmond house theatricals), the libertine Bellmour in William Congreve’s *The Old Batchelour*; or the addressee Belmour in Henry Cawthorne’s poem “Life Unhappy.”¹²

Damer’s possible allusion to Congreve’s *The Old Batchelour* is particularly intriguing. In this play, Fondlewife is an alderman cuckolded by the handsome Bellmour. Anne Damer might well say with Congreve’s character, “Pox choak him, would his Horns were in his throat.”¹³ As Bellmour cuckolds Fondlewife,¹⁴ so Damer cuckolded Walpole, seducing Mary Berry from under his nose. Other passages from the play also recall Damer’s complex relationship with Horace Walpole and Mary Berry. “Why art thee distrustful of the Wife of thy Bosom?” Fondlewife asks Barnaby, who answers, “Because she is young and vigorous, and I am Old and impotent— . . . my inclination was (and is still) greater than my power.”¹⁵ These lines add further dramatic irony and may account for Damer’s decision to cast herself as a novelistic version of Congreve’s libertine Bellmour, seducing young women from the clutches of parasitic old men.

In short, the reader familiar with eighteenth-century poetry and drama cannot help but see Anne Damer as a cross-dressed version of her hero Belmour, a widow who traveled to Lisbon, a person capable of military courage and enterprise. In Damer’s novel, Belmour boards a frigate and reveals his personal bravery, just as Damer withstood an attack on her boat crossing the English Channel.¹⁶ As Belmour pursues Emily, so Damer pursued Mary Berry. Emily is artistic, musical, and a sensitive

appreciator of picturesque and sublime landscapes in Italy and Portugal. She sketches in Venice, just as Mary Berry (like her sister Agnes) sent landscapes of Pisa back to Horace Walpole expressly for his comment. Damer's love for Berry led her to elide both characters, Belmour and Emily. Mary Berry also addressed Damer in intimate terms, as her other half. "Dear Soul!" Berry wrote, "I am indulging myself in idleness, of body I mean, & not coming to you tonight—This *indulging* myself in *not* coming to you has an odd sound to my ears—but you ought not to be affronted at it when I tell you I am going to pass an hour with Lord Belmour" (April 1797).¹⁷ Deeply immersed in a life with Horace Walpole and Mary Berry, Anne Damer fashioned Belmour from plays and poems by Murphy, Congreve, and Cawthorne, while still expressing her longing for Mary Berry (the Emily of Damer's novel), whom she could not meet in public as often as she would have liked. Perhaps referring to other aspects of this roman à clef, her mother noted the autobiographical sources for the novel, writing a poem in her daughter's voice: "Don't think me a conceited Elf, / I took the Models from myself."¹⁸

Horace Walpole's letters portray his relationship with Anne Damer in revealing ways. The author of *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Mysterious Mother* cast Henry Seymour Conway's young daughter (for whom Walpole was caring) as a surrogate spouse. "Pray, what have I done?" he wrote to Conway. "Have I come home drunk to my wife within these four first days? Or have I sat up gaming all night and not come home at all to her, after her Lady Mother had been persuaded that I was the soberest young nobleman in England, and had the greatest aversion to play?"¹⁹ In another letter, Walpole also referred to himself as Anne Conway's husband. "She is quite contented with the easy foot we live upon," he wrote. "Separate beds, dining in her dressing room when she is out of humour, . . . who knows but at your return you may find your daughter with qualms and

in a sack?”²⁰ Playful though the letter is, Walpole clearly had a tyrannical side (a darker version of Stanmore, in Damer’s novel). He overpraised Damer, inspiring a counterreaction that hurt her career and left her with a dilettante’s reputation. “Mrs. Damer has finished a bust of an infant Atys or Paris in marble, that not only surpasses any Grecian flesh, but comes up to the softness and delicacy of Correggio,” he wrote to William Hamilton on January 17, 1788. “Yet while her mornings are so Athenian, in the evenings she is a capital actress in comedy; and as I conclude she possesses every talent she pleases I am teasing her to appear in tragedy. She has a pathetic harmony in her voice that Mrs. Siddons wants.”²¹

By 1789, the septuagenarian Walpole met the Berry sisters (then in their early twenties). In one of his earliest letters, he signed himself Horace Fondlewives and wrote to them as “Mes très chères Fraises” (April 11, 1789). “As the honeymoon is not over, I hope you will come to me again tomorrow evening,” he wrote, signing off as “Your most affectionate and doubly constant husband.”²² Though Walpole only played the part of husband in these passages, he glowered if Damer hinted that she received a letter from the Berrys before him.²³ Walpole piled up wives, neglected them, and apologized for his emotional neediness. In *The Castle of Otranto*, Manfred has two wives, too: he tries to divorce Hippolyta and marry his son’s widow, Isabella. There may well have been a bit of Manfred in Walpole after all.

Three months after meeting the Berrys, Anne Damer sailed for Lisbon on November 17, 1790, free for a time from the emotional complications of life at Strawberry Hill, however pleasant in other respects. Traveling in part to restore her delicate health, she was dismayed by the disorder at her residence in Portugal: “You cannot form to yourself an idea of the Portuguese, their indolence or indifference, neither money nor entreaty will bring them. When I came I found two panes

of glass broken, and for five days, though the master of the house and my own servants went twenty times a day after the people, I could not have them put in.”²⁴ When she dined at the minister’s house, she noted the “fat, vulgar women, and scowling, unknown men. . . . I should like to see something of the Portuguese, which is not very easy for foreigners.”²⁵ Traveling was “really an operation,” she noted on December 2, 1790. “There are several only two-wheeled chaises, open before, with leathern curtains that draw; you set out as if on a journey, and go nodding along over the worst pavement possible and up and down very steep hills, on which this town stands, yet these chaises are actually the vehicles best calculated for this tour.”²⁶ She did manage to see an aqueduct, but noted that Portugal’s landscape was hardly picturesque. “Here you have a cornfield, an orange garden, a church, and then a house, just as it happens, all jumbled in the same queerest manner that I ever saw. The aqueduct may be called magnificent, but the arches are, I think, too close.”²⁷ Her room, where she ultimately wrote *Belmour*, was “small, white-washed, and a sort of farm-house chimney occupies one-half of it [resembling Emily’s small room in *Belmour*]; it is high and built with large, rough stones; there are some shelves, two tables, and many chairs; here I have my books and my writing, and my ideas are not at least outwardly frozen; their substitutes for fires are large cloaks, of the form you see in Florence, which they wear very gracefully, both men and women; they are eternally wrapped up in them, riding, walking, hanging over a balcony when the sun shines, or sitting at home in a state of idleness—a state to which they seem to have a great propensity, by what I hear and by the little I have seen.”²⁸ The cloaks would later find their way into *Belmour*, with the hero sporting a white one in Venice.

In the winter of 1791, Anne Damer visited Lisbon. She noted a “respectable” Gothic church she saw more than once. “One of the most ancient is horrid to look at, almost totally

destroyed by the earthquake, little else but the outside walls standing. The Castle, formerly a Moorish Palace, was nearly made a ruin. You see here and there a little bit of a column, etc. stuck in little better than a mud wall, but this her majesty does not think of rebuilding; she has at immense expense built a church called the Convento Nuovo, or the Coracao de Jesu (the heart of Jesus), in the worst taste, adorned by many colossal statues in the Style of Bernini exaggerated.”²⁹ In this church, Damer identified a Raphael which was “miserably painted over, which I gained much credit by finding out, though it is as plain as the nose on one’s face.”³⁰ Damer then made a tour of Seville, Granada, Cordoba, Toledo, the Escorial, and Il-de-Fons. At Valladolid, Spain, she visited the cloisters of a monastery of Dominican friars, where she saw Gothic architecture that may well have influenced the portrait of a Portuguese monastery offered in *Belmour*. At Burgos, she visited the cathedral. “Wishing to see it thoroughly, and particularly the Cloister, and not being sure of the same indulgence I met with from my Dominican Friars at Valladolid, I went dressed in Lady Spencer’s fashion; this dress, with the large cloak and boots, is what, in point of dressing, the bench of Bishops could not object to.”³¹ While executing busts of Joseph I, the late king of Portugal, in bronze (the statue was modeled and cast in Lisbon), she continued to gather material for her sculptures and her novel. She traveled to Bayonne and Bordeaux, arriving in Paris on May 3 at the home of her friend Madame Balbi. In Paris, where General Lafayette governed, Damer was visited by the Poissards, a radical element in the French Revolution, and visited the Champs de Mars, then called the Champs de la Fédération. She found this area of Paris spoiled in beauty by the recent political unrest. She attended the Théâtre de Monsieur the following day, went to the Assemblée Nationale, and then drove to see the ruins of the Bastille. Though *Belmour* was most likely composed over a six-year period (1791–97), these

travels clearly influenced the setting of the novel. In her room in Portugal, she wrote passionate letters to Mary Berry and recorded Berry's replies. And in Lisbon, her dog Fidele died. So attached had she become to this animal that she requested that she be buried with him at her death, along with her sculpting tools.³²

Clearly the visit to Portugal was a crucial part of Damer's emotional and artistic development. Free at last from Horace Walpole and his circle, Damer was able to think creatively about the life she had been living at Strawberry Hill. Now, for the first time, Mary Berry came to Anne Damer's consciousness much as Emily Melville comes to Belmour's. Damer addressed Berry as her "soul" and Berry wrote back in the same style. "Tell me all you do & all you see; & above all—all you suffer—such letters are real comforts to me & yesterday I wanted it . . . I long for nothing but to admire this place [Italy] with you, and to see you feel its tranquil beauties as much as I do myself—," a phrase Damer recorded in her notebooks.³³ At the same time, she lived a very public life. Horace Walpole informed the Berrys that she was "received at Elvas with all military honours and a banquet, by order of Mello, formerly Ambassador here (London). It was handsome of him, but must have distressed her, who is void of all ostentation and love of show."³⁴ Though she attended formal occasions, Damer was very much alone. "From the time I leave Lisbon to the time I reach Madrid, I shall not have a single letter," she wrote.³⁵ At this time, Damer's sense of personal freedom was very much on her mind. "He may not, as unvalued persons do, carve for himself; Ham," she wrote, quoting *Hamlet*.³⁶ She puns on the word "carve," reminding herself that even as a sculptress she cannot consort with just anyone, but has public appearances to keep, perhaps because she is the daughter of Henry Seymour Conway and bears letters of introduction from Horace Walpole. The significance of "carve" would not have been lost

on Damer, since in this speech Laertes advises Ophelia about how to conduct herself sexually. In a more classical mode, she summoned quotations from Ovid and Terence to teach herself patience, and praised Cicero's letters, while excoriating "Lucan" whom she found "hard and bombastic."³⁷ "To fortune, strange that thou art never constant, never to be depended upon in thy favors," she noted after reading Terence, a writer she admired more.³⁸ Her perpetual melancholy led her to quote Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*: "He that commends me to my own content / Commends me to the thing I cannot get" (1.2.32).³⁹ And later, in that same journal, she (or perhaps it was Mary Berry; the attribution is unclear) apologized for appearing happy: "Tell me that you have not been quite alone these two or three evenings—I had a sort of uncomfortable affected cheerfulness while with you this morning, which yr low spirits seem'd to make necessary, but which left me, as soon as I left you, & my mind felt a sort of relief in returning uncontrouled to the thoughtfull melancholy which seems too natural to it."⁴⁰ Melancholy was clearly a favorite theme in Damer and Berry's correspondence.

By the time Anne Damer published *Belmour*, she had an unsentimental view of life, which was reflected in her fiction. Belmour comes to Emily already jaded. His chief characteristic is melancholy. Having pursued Lady Roseberg unsuccessfully, Belmour feels destined to wander the earth alone. Emily exhibits the same fear in her travels with Mrs. Stainville. Yet Emily's position is even more precarious than Belmour's. For all her beauty, Emily has married a man many years her senior and lived with him, sequestered, for more than a year. Though she declares that she would rather have tended to Dr. Stanmore, and only married Courtenay because Stanmore thought it would protect her financially, Emily hardly behaves in a way that inspires trust, despite Dr. Stanmore's speech at the end of the novel praising her blameless conduct. She encourages

Belmour's advances even while dining with her husband. This comes to a head when Emily encourages Belmour to depart because she fears Courtenay has detected them. Shortly after the lovers separate, Courtenay kisses away the tears Emily sheds for Belmour, and Emily lets him do so, until this hypocrisy becomes too much for her. Courtenay is not innocent of Belmour's attentions, for he comments sarcastically on this topic. Reading the false newspaper report that Belmour has become an ambassador to Russia, Courtenay acknowledges Emily's tact in asking Belmour to leave, painful though this must have been.

For a novel that treats so many melancholy characters, *Belmour* ends happily. Courtenay dies soon enough so Emily can marry Belmour without compromising herself morally. That music and song accompany their reunion—Emily's playing the ancient organ at Dean Abbey that Courtenay's father commissioned—is both predictable and yet disturbing. The very instrument that should bind Emily to her husband's family draws her closer to Belmour.

Damer treats her hero's flirtations with married women as routine. Belmour pursues Lady Roseberg and Emily Courtenay in the presence of their husbands, in both cases becoming the husbands' preferred guest. Lord Roseberg insists that Lady Roseberg invite him to their home. He opens his carriage door to Belmour when he sees him walking along the road. For Belmour's part, "the open, generous candour of his mind, often revolted at the means, which were taken to ensure the continuance of their commerce without suspicion"; though he continues in the relationship with Lady Roseberg, nothing could "reconcile him . . . to the constant scene of deceit and hypocrisy, to which he was hourly witness" (p. 47). Similarly, Courtenay tries to share his German translations with Belmour over breakfast. Though a traditional hero in other respects (he provides for the poor, for example, and unites Wilmot with his lover), Bel-

mour uses Courtenay's own inkwell to write Courtenay's wife a note (a dramatic symbol fraught with Freudian overtones). Courtenay's servant makes the mistake of revealing that Belmour visited Dean Abbey in Courtenay's absence. What might work as farce in a Restoration comedy seems simply sad here, as Courtenay suggests he can trust Belmour because he is a "new friend" (though Courtenay's "sarcastic smile" when he makes this remark [p. 170] indicates that Courtenay knows what is afoot). Despite Courtenay's erratic behavior, Emily knows her own conduct is not beyond reproach: "We must not while we *talk* virtue, *practice* vice," she informs Belmour, before encouraging him to leave (p. 177).

Adding further to the melancholic tone of the novel is the narrator's cynicism. "She had hitherto seen the world in all the gayest colours of spring, and had only read of wintry blasts in the fictitious pages of a novel" (p. 22), the narrator says of the young and vivacious Lady Clementina. Aunt Eliza, Lady Clementina's chaperone, "had the *misfortune*, for a misfortune it too generally is, to become a very considerable heiress" (p. 21). Mrs. Stainville does her best to corrupt the young, even stealing away their admirers (Lord Raymond), while older men make themselves a burden, never more so than when professing the best of intentions. Dr. Stanmore advises Emily in all situations, yet Emily's desire to please him leads her to marry Courtenay. In fact, the misguidance of impressionable youth is one of the narrator's favorite themes. Belmour gives up a parliamentary career supporting the Whigs lest he disobey his father, who needs him to vote with the king to maintain the interests of Belmour Castle; he wished to follow his friend and join the navy but his father "strenuously" opposed this (p. 35); and, most damagingly, Belmour feels incapable of "counteracting his dying father's last request" that he marry Lady Clementina (p. 118). The narrator underscores Lord Delavere's vanity by stressing his relentless pursuit of a marquisate, a "long wished

for title" (p. 78); the narrator, who uses the phrase "poor Belmour" on more than one occasion, further tips her hand by reminding the reader that Belmour's father was an only child accustomed to getting his way. Finally, the narrator's descriptions of Emily suggest an older person looking at the young with a mixture of envy and pity. The reader participates in Belmour's burning passion for Emily, since the narrator continually alludes to her physical beauty. Emily reveals her desire for Belmour when she studies his family's portraits at Belmour Castle, hides her catalog of these pictures in a cupboard, and sketches him when he visits the church of the Mendicanti in Venice.

The novel treats homes, abbeys, and castles in some detail, even contrasting them as emblematic of their owners' values. Belmour Castle, located in the west of England, is salubrious, as Dr. Stanmore observes, a "terrestrial paradise!" (p. 183), while Courtenay's ancient Gothic pile, near Cheltenham, is overrun with weeds, with a gate that is rusty and decayed. Belmour's servants greet him and Emily with a rapturous welcome, while Courtenay's are barely present the night he returns with his new bride (even the redoubtable Mrs. Warner cannot manage Courtenay's servants). His indebtedness is a factor in his servants' attitude, for he is a ruined man whose lawyer, Enstine, connives in holding back rent rolls to conceal Courtenay's finances from his prospective wife. Emily only discovers Courtenay's deception when he drops a letter on the floor by accident. She returns the letter to where she found it and never reproaches him with the information she learns. He dies a contented man, informing her that his years with her were the happiest of his life.

The most impressive characters in the novel speak a foreign language (Courtenay and Belmour); the least use their wealth to indulge their laziness (Raymond and Mrs. Stainville). Thus Belmour's knowledge of German, Portuguese, Italian, and

classical languages contrasts with the more ambitious and cynical St. Fort, who arranged to have himself named envoy to Munich without bothering to learn German. Where Belmour is as alert to the interior of churches in Venice as Emily is to the inside of Notre Dame, Mrs. Stainville and Lord Raymond overlook the beauty in Naples and other locations completely, absorbed, as they are, in self-centered moods. Belmour and Emily are fit companions for each other: curious, respectful, and scholarly (Belmour was “the allowed best scholar” [p. 38] at Eton and university, while Emily’s classical erudition rivals Dr. Stanmore’s). Belmour hires a private guide to show him Smyrna, while Mrs. Stainville abandons her intentions to visit sites in Naples and Venice in order to keep Lord Raymond apart from Emily, inventing an excuse of ill health for the purpose (“The sulphureous air of Naples *killed* her; the *oppression* of a *scirocco* was intolerable; and in a *tramontana*, *with her lungs*, *how could she breathe?*” [p. 241]). Emily, by contrast, takes no notice of the flirtatious Lord Raymond and cultivates her artistic gifts, particularly her talents for drawing, at the church of the Mendicanti in Venice, and for organ playing, at Dean Abbey. She draws Belmour to her through her beautiful voice, the artistic complement to her physical beauty, which everyone (even the less sensible characters such as Rycot, St. Fort, and others) can appreciate.

As in the novels of Jane Austen, most marriages in Anne Damer’s *Belmour* are unhappy. Mr. Rycot curses his wife when he misplaces items in his home and perpetually argues with her. Mrs. Stainville’s father uses his daughter’s marriage to revenge himself upon his wife: “Nothing, . . . gave him greater satisfaction, than the offer of Mr. Stainville’s hand for his daughter; who, being a Roman Catholic, and otherwise, in reality, an unexceptionable match, afforded him an opportunity of plaguing his wife, humbling what he called her absurd bigotry, showing his own superior power, and indulging in what he con-

sidered as a proof of his liberal and unprejudiced opinions” (p. 197). Perhaps the most tragic marriage is Emily’s parents’; their early death shows the risk faced by young couples without financial support. Dr. Stanmore, an ideal (if asthmatic) physician of the soul, nurtures two generations of impractical Melvilles (Emily’s mother as well as Emily herself). Despite his best efforts, however, Emily Melville’s future is precarious. Damer’s narrator continually offers an implicit critique of a world too vulgar to appreciate Emily’s great beauty and gifts.

The only political event mentioned in the novel is the battle of Culloden (p. 126), and the reference to her grandfather’s bravery in the battle underscores Emily’s noble roots, which make her worthy of the aristocratic Belmour. Emily Dumont (Emily Melville’s mother) was originally French, though her family settled in Scotland; she was the daughter of an officer, Dumont, who supported the Stuart cause and tried to place a Catholic Stuart king on the throne of England. Unhappy with his frivolous wife, and of a more studious turn, Dumont took his three-year-old daughter away and died shortly afterward. The mother also died and the child was sent to England to live with Mrs. Dawson, whose large family and husband’s ruined fortune led her to give up the child to the wealthy landowner Sir Thomas Melville. The second Lady Melville encourages Thomas to adopt the twelve-year-old Emily (mother of the Emily with whom Belmour falls in love) to tutor her daughter in French but soon grows tired of her and mistreats her. Young Melville falls in love with Emily Dumont and marries her. Disinherited because of this marriage and strapped for money, he subsequently joins the army. Emily and her child are then put in the care of Dr. Stanmore, the surrogate parent: both parents die, the father of a fever, the mother precisely twelve months later of grief. Stanmore takes care of the infant Emily Melville (the heroine of the novel) until she meets Mrs. Stain-

ville at a dance and travels with her throughout Europe. When she returns, Stanmore must travel to Cornwall on business and so Emily, her identity deliberately concealed, stays with Mr. Enstine. She meets Courtenay at a dinner party at Enstine's and marries Courtenay, thinking Belmour has already married his cousin Lady Clementina Alton. Tossed from caretaker to caretaker, from Dr. Stanmore, to Mrs. Stainville, to Mr. Rycot, to Mr. Enstine, Emily finds herself neglected by everyone except Dr. Stanmore, who recognizes her true worth. Emily shows how cultivating the arts and foreign languages can preserve a person's peace of mind. If people let one down, the novel suggests, art never will. And art (music, drawing) can attract like-minded souls in places as far flung as Venice, Bologna, and London.

In addition to exploring the power of art to bring lovers together, *Belmour* includes episodes marked by the uncanny, the return of that which was once familiar but has undergone repression. Terry Castle treats the uncanny in Radcliffe's work in ways that illuminate Damer's *Belmour*. When Belmour visits Emily at Dean Abbey, for example, they go to a music gallery where Emily plays a song that her lover Belmour has previously heard. When Emily visits Belmour Castle, she recognizes Belmour's ancestors as related to the "stranger" she saw in Venice and sketched.⁴¹ When Belmour wanders into Emily's room, he recognizes sketches of scenes he actually visited, indeed sketches of himself. To marry Emily, in other words, is to align himself with a woman who has loved him all along (for the entire length of her sojourn in Italy with Mrs. Stainville, for example). For Emily, Belmour is the "stranger" become familiar, a man who doted over her in secret, exhibiting the kind of sustained attentiveness that augurs for a happy marriage. In what amounts to an extended, two-year courtship in Europe, Emily and Belmour laid the groundwork for their marriage without ever being introduced.

Radcliffe and *Belmour*

Anne Damer drew on Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian* to depict how art draws lovers together in uncanny ways. In both novels, women are mysterious and pursued for that reason. Damer's Emily shares the same name as Radcliffe's heroine. As Emily St. Aubert dreams of Valancourt, so too Emily Melville has thoughts of Belmour. Belmour seems to exist, like Valancourt, in a dream world, in which nothing pleases him so much as hearing Emily sing, watching her sketch, or viewing her portrait (as Emily, in a far more frightening passage in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, views the veiled portrait). Where Radcliffe explores how her own Emily faces threats of physical violence and intimidation in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Damer shows how Mrs. Stainville's careless treatment of the highly sensitive and refined Emily Melville can be no less painful.

There seems to be no extra-literary evidence for Ann Radcliffe's direct influence on Anne Damer's novel. For this reason, perhaps, Andrew Elfenbein concludes that "*Belmour* can be classed with other psychological novels of the 1790s, such as those of Elizabeth Inchbald, which avoid the spectacular incidents of Radcliffe and concentrate instead on tracing characters' interior states."⁴² Elfenbein's assessment of Damer's life is one of the most insightful we have, yet it may be possible that Radcliffe's fiction appealed to Damer for other reasons than its "spectacular incidents." *Belmour* includes long descriptions of nature that recall Radcliffe and that create exalted states of feeling that also appealed to John Keats⁴³ and Percy Shelley.⁴⁴ "[St. Aubert, Emily's father] loved the soothing hour," Radcliffe writes, "when the last tints of light die away; when the stars, one by one, tremble through aether, and are reflected on the dark mirror of the waters; that hour, which, of all others, inspires the mind with pensive tenderness and often elevates it & sublime contemplation. When the moon shed her soft

rays among the foliage, he still lingered, and his pastoral supper of cream and fruits was often spread beneath it. Then, on the stillness of night, came the song of the nightingale breathing sweetness & awakening melancholy."⁴⁵ St. Aubert's worship of nature inevitably leads him to appreciate the nightingale's song and to imitate its sounds. "Sometimes too, he brought music of his own, and awakened every fuzzy echo with the tender accents of his oboe."⁴⁶ Emily shares with her lover the passion for music she enjoyed with her father, but like Belmour and Emily, the erotic encounters between hero and heroine are kept at bay by the music that mediates and interprets, one might almost say "refines," the sexual tension between them. Valancourt is brave enough to face down pirates, but sensitive enough to replicate St. Aubert's appreciation of nature. His love of the natural world allows him to resist the dissipations of London. "These scenes, said Valancourt, soften the heart, like the notes of sweet music, and inspire that delicious melancholy which no person, who had felt it once, would resign for the gayest pleasures. They waken our best and purest feelings, disposing us to benevolence, pity, and friendship. Those whom I love—I always seem to love more in such an hour as this."⁴⁷ Just as the father St. Aubert shapes a woman, Emily, who can love and be loved by Valancourt, so too does Dr. Stanmore mold Emily into the perfect creature Belmour adores.

Music is closely connected to melancholy moods, and in Radcliffe's fiction directly related to them. In fact, the climax of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* includes a poem, "To Melancholy," that anticipates Keats. In "Ode to Melancholy," Keats instructs his anonymous listener to "glut thy sorrow on a morning rose" (line 15).⁴⁸ In this scene, Valancourt, like Belmour, remembers how a musical refrain inspired him to fall in love.

The sun was now setting on that tract of the Pyrenees,
which divides Languedoc from Rousillon, and, placing

herself opposite to a small grated window, which, like the wood-tops beneath, and the waves lower still, gleamed with the red glow of the west, she touched the chords of her lute in solemn symphony, and then accompanied it with her voice, in one of the simple and affecting airs, to which, in happier days, Valancourt had often listened in rapture, and which she now adapted to the following lines:

TO MELANCHOLY

Spirit of love and sorrow—hail!
Thy solemn voice from far I hear,
Mingling with ev'ning's dying gale:
Hail, with this sadly-pleasing tear!
.
O lonely spirit! Let thy song
Lead me through all thy sacred haunt;
The minister's moon-light aisles along,
Where specters raise the midnight chaunt.⁴⁹

In the same way that Valancourt falls for Emily by hearing her play the lute, Belmour hears Emily singing in the church of the Mendicanti in Venice and recollects the Italian air she sings on more than one occasion when they meet again at Dean Abbey. Music becomes a sentimental shorthand that attracts them.

Though this relationship between music and sentimentality appears most often in Radcliffe, one finds it in Rousseau and particularly in the poetry of the time as well. Thomas Warton (“The Pleasures of Melancholy”), Milton’s *L’Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, and many passages by Mark Akenside, James Beattie, and William Collins created an artistic climate that made Damer’s *Belmour* possible. “Is there a heart that music cannot melt?” Beattie asks. Radcliffe quotes this epigraph as a chapter heading for *The Romance of the Forest*.⁵⁰ For Radcliffe, “Nature’s finest

instrument” is the “soul,” and fancy, as Collins suggests, “points the bleeding Friend.”⁵¹ Radcliffe also insists on the relationship between music and morality in the poem she includes in *The Romance of the Forest*, “The Family of La Luc,” written by the Yorkshire poet Henry Cawthorne.

But half mankind, like Handel’s fool, destroy,
Through rage and ignorance, the strain of joy;
Irregularly wild their passions roll
Through Nature’s finest instrument, the soul:
While men of sense, with Handel’s happier skill,
Correct the taste and harmonize the will;
Teach their affections, like his notes, to flow
Nor rais’d too high, nor ever sunk too low;
Till ev’ry virtue, measur’d and refin’d,
As fits the concert of the master mind,
Melts in its kindred sounds, and pours along
Th’ according music of the moral song.⁵²

In the above passage, Clara (the daughter of La Luc whom the heroine Adeline comes across during her wanderings) must learn the regulation of passion from her father, who encourages her to forsake her lute when it interferes with her acts of charity. Before this happens, Clara enjoys the sensuous beauty of music, as Belmour does in both England and Italy.

Sketching also makes its appearance in the novels of Radcliffe, as in this passage from *The Romance of the Forest*:

When she [Clara] was about sixteen she often selected from her father’s library those of the Italian poets most celebrated for picturesque beauty, and would spend the first hours of morning in reading them under the shade of the acacias that bordered the lake. Here too she would often attempt rude sketches of the surrounding scenery and at length by repeated efforts, assisted by some

instruction from her brother, she succeeded so well as to produce twelve drawings in crayon, which were judged worthy of decorating the parlour of the chateau.⁵³

At times the beauties of nature, pictorial art, and music fuse. In *Belmour*, for example, we learn that the hero's mind makes travel particularly pleasant, as it combines the taste for the picturesque, for beautiful art, and for the acquisition of foreign languages. Both Clara, in *The Romance of the Forest*, and Belmour, in Damer's novel, share a love of Italian. "The romantic beauties of Savoy first roused his attention, and, while lost in admiration of the grand features of nature, he for a time forgot his griefs, and fell into a composed and pensive melancholy," Damer writes. "The remains of Grecian and Roman art, so profusely scattered over Italy, in which the refined taste of Belmour took peculiar delight; music, of which he was passionately fond, and literary science, in which he found constant opportunities to indulge, contributed to soothe and occupy his mind; and his perfect acquaintance with the Italian language gave him every advantage, in the pursuits which he followed" (pp. 59–60).

As in Radcliffe's fiction, Belmour's susceptibility to the beauty of art and music distinguishes him from St. Fort and Lord Raymond, who seem impervious to such charms. Emily Melville's close attention to the interior of Notre Dame, like Belmour's interest in the church of the Mendicanti in Venice, further attract them. It is Belmour's interest in opera, after all, that leads Emily to spot him in Bologna (p. 243). These heightened moments strengthen their relationship, though the hero is equally cautious about meeting Emily too openly, thereby compromising her reputation: "He knew, too, that he was not indifferent to her, but that to preserve that interest so dear to him in her heart, he must, by the sacrifice on earth the most painful to himself, continue to deserve her good opinion, and

by a melancholy and probably eternal separation, prevent the possibility of disturbing her peace of mind by his presence” (p. 186). Absenting himself from Emily, by traveling to Smyrna, Turkey, and Greece, is how Belmour proves his love.

Terry Castle provides another explanation for the prolonged absence of heroines in Radcliffe. “Old-fashioned ghosts, it is true, have disappeared from the fictional world,” Castle writes,

but a new kind of apparition takes their place. To be a Radcliffean hero or heroine in one sense means just this: to be “haunted,” to find oneself obsessed by the spectral image of those one loves. One sees in the mind’s eye those who are absent: one is befriended and consoled by phantoms of the beloved. Radcliffe makes it clear how such phantasmata arise. They are the products of refined sentiment, the characteristic projections of a feeling heart. To be haunted, according to the novel’s romantic myth, is to display one’s powers of sympathetic imagination; the cruel and the dull have no such hallucinations. Those, who love, by definition, are open to the spirit of the other.⁵⁴

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily’s father, St. Aubert, does not want to leave his estate because of the continuing “presence” of his dead wife, which has “sanctified every surrounding scene.”⁵⁵ In a sense, Belmour loves the spirit of Emily, which haunts the gardens, operas, and churches he visits, as much as he loves the woman herself. In the same way that Mrs. Stainville carries the orphan Emily off to Europe, where Belmour accidentally finds her, Emily St. Aubert’s aunt carries the orphaned Emily to Toulouse and Emily feels haunted by Valancourt. “A haunted lover can do nothing, it seems, but haunt the haunts of the other,” Castle notes. “To love in the novel is to become ghostly oneself.”⁵⁶