13. Ann Radcliffe's Environmental Novels: *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Italian* (1796)

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Abstract

An overlooked theme in the oeuvre of Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), one of the notable authors of the Gothic novel in late eighteenth-century Britain, is that of ecological sensibility. Radcliffe's romances are informed by thought-provoking reflections on environment, especially in connection to the sublime and the picturesque. In her fictional world, natural landscape plays a pivotal role in shaping the characters. However, this ecological dimension of Radcliffe's novels has not received the critical attention it deserves, although scholarly explorations of how women Romantics depict environment in their works have gained wide currency with the advent of ecocriticism, and more specifically, ecofeminism. This article will attempt to present an eco-centric reading of two of Radcliffe's novels, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Italian* (1796). The article will argue how these now-forgotten novels of Radcliffe – she is chiefly remembered for *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) – yield interesting results when viewed through an ecocritical lens. The two novels offer revealing insights about women, environment, and the relationship between them in patriarchal setups – ideas which are central to the field of ecofeminism. This theme will be explored at length in this article to build a case for Radcliffe's importance as an environmental thinker.

Keywords

- Ann Radcliffe
- A Sicilian Romance (1790)
- The Italian (1796)
- The Gothic
- The Female Gothic
- Ecocriticism
- Ecofeminism

Introduction

Ecofeminism is a branch of Environmental Humanities which seeks to trace how women are perceived in literature and subjected to suppression, much like the environment. Hence, equivalence can be drawn between the two 'victims'. The exploration of how women Romantics depicted the environment in their works gained wide currency during the twentieth century and became more pronounced after the formal coinage of the term "ecofeminism" by Françoise d´Eaubonne in 1974 in her

book *Feminism or Death: How the Women's Movement Can Save the Planet* (2022).

In *The Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* (2014), J.A. Cuddon defines Gothic novels as "tales of mystery and horror" set in "wild and desolate landscapes, dark forests, ... and mediaeval castles with dungeons, secret passages [housing] wicket tyrants and demonic powers" creating a "stupefying aspect of doom and gloom" (Cuddon 308). Following the publication of Sir Horace Walpole's genre-defining *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Gothic novels in English throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries achieved immense popular acclaim. Some of the exemplary Gothic texts post-Walpole are William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), and Mary Shelley's seminal *Frankenstein* (1818).

Primarily reputed as one of the chief progenitors of the Gothic novel, alongside Horace Walpole – and hailed by Sir Walter Scott as "the first poetess of Romantic fiction" – Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) is the author of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *Romance of the Forest* (1791), *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Italian* (1796), and the posthumously published *Gaston de Bonneville* (1826).

This article attempts to read Ann Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Italian* (1796) through the lens of ecocriticism and gender studies by looking at some of the masculine and feminine characters in the texts, and their interactions with the sublime in the natural world – and how these patterns of interactions of the human and the non-human enable an ecofeminist reading of the texts in question.

A brief sketch of the plot lines of *A Sicilian Romance* and *The Italian*

Set in Sicily, as the title suggests, *A Sicilian Romance* tells the story of two young and intellectually sound sisters, Julia and Emilia, with a prime focus on the former. Raised in the Mazzini Castle by their governess Madame de Menon, a childhood friend of their 'dead' mother, young Julia falls deeply in love with Count Hippolitus, who was also her brother Ferdinand's friend. They decide to marry but are opposed by Julia's father, Marquis Mazzini. He wanted her to instead wed Duke de Luovo for climbing the ladder of social personage. To ensure his will prevail, the Marquis locks Julia up in their castle. But the brave Julia, desperately seeking freedom and marriage to Hippolitus, plans a bold escape from the castle. The first attempt was orchestrated by Ferdinand and Hippolitus. But it was intercepted by Marquis, and a scuffle ensued in which Hippolitus was gravely injured. But Julia then tried a second escape, and this time succeeded. She was helped by her faithful servant Caterina, who also gave her haven in her hut in the middle of pristine woodland. Madame de Menon eventually arrives to reunite with her dear

ward. In the meantime, the Marquis and Duke set out to capture Julia and bring her back to the castle. This spurred her to seek shelter in a convent where she would be safe. Then, gradually, a series of events miraculously bring Julia into the 'haunted' southern parts of the Mazzini castle. There she discovers her mother, a prisoner of the Marquis and long-presumed dead because of the Marquis's desire to marry a second time. Thus, the Marquis is repudiated for infidelity, and Julia succeeds in marrying her beau Hippolitus.

The Italian is set in Naples. Vincentio de Vivaldi, the son of the Marchese and Marchesa di Vivaldi, falls in love with the lovely Ellena Rosalba, who was an orphan and lived with her aunt Signora Bianchi. But Vivaldi's parents, especially his mother, were dead set against this match because of Ellena's 'lower' social status. After the mysterious death of Ellena's aunt, she helplessly falls prey to the scheming Marchesa who conspires with her confessor, the Byronic Father Schedoni, to prevent the marriage and in return for Schedoni's help, it was also decided that the Marchesa would exert her influence to assist him in getting a promotion in the clerical order. They succeed in kidnapping Ellena and imprisoning her in a remote convent in San Stefano under the supervision of a cruel Lady Abbess. Vivaldi, meanwhile, correctly guessed the villainous plot and entered the convent in disguise. In the convent, a helpful Lady Olivia assists Ellena in escaping the place and reuniting with her lover. Right after this, however, because of Schedoni's scheming, Vivaldi is indicted by the inquisition and taken for a phony questioning. Meanwhile, under orders from Schedoni, Ellena is abducted again and taken to the house of his partner-in-crime – Spalatro. Under orders from the Marchesa, Schedoni plans to murder Ellena there. But just when he was about to commit the act, he found out that Ellena was his 'daughter' (later it was revealed that she was his niece). After this discovery, a change of heart is effected in Schedoni and he protects her, helps free Vivaldi and tells the Marchesa to allow the lovers to marry each other. The social 'disadvantage' in Ellena was wiped off because Schedoni carried noble blood. Also, it is divulged that Lady Olivia was Ellena's mother. Thus, after happy reunions with her lover and mother, Vivaldi and Ellena tie the knot to conclude the novel.

Radcliffe's Unconventional Feminine and Masculine Characters and Ecological Ethos

The novels present two distinct social worlds that the characters inhabit. In *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality* (1997), Cannon Schmitt calls the *masculine* world of the Gothic as one brimming with "betrayals, confused identities, nebulous malevolence and opaque motivations" (Schmitt 57) of forced marriages, intrigue, and murder. The necessity for marrying to attain a 'higher' social status supersedes love between individuals. The masculine world is marked by an absence of contact with the sublime natural world (this will be explored further later

in the paper). Further, this exhibits the Male Gothic elements most commonly found in works like *The Monk* and *The Castle of Otranto*, respectively. The Male Gothic – to quote William Hughes's *Historical Dictionary of Gothic Literature* (2012) – centers around "visceral elements of horror" (Hughes 319), often conjuring a world where men lord over fleeing damsels in distress, apparitions, trapped women in dungeons, nature does not acquire a cathartic role, and there is ultimately a tragic ending with the protagonists' eventual demise.

This masculine world can thus be called, echoing Claudia Johnson, as one "riven with crisis" (Johnson 2). Taking cues from the existing tropes of the genre, Radcliffe provides what Johnson calls an "imaginative response" (Johnson 2) by subverting the genre from within by pitting the masculine world against what can be called a *feminine* world where love reigns, sublime nature plays an active role, and the readers are treated to a happy ending complete with conjugal bliss.

It might also be useful to read the novels using Val Plumwood and Karen Warren's theories of ecofeminism. In her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (2005) Plumwood formulates a reason-nature dualism as a cudgel to expose how literature created a "master model" (Plumwood 23) that seeks to employ reason as a "conceptual weapon" (Plumwood 54) to exclude anything or anyone who was not seen as possessing "reason". Traditionally, males have been seen as having the copyright on "reason". Hence, women and nature were relegated to being dependent on men as their saviour. As a remedy, Plumwood uses the idea of an "anti-dualist" (Plumwood 33) approach to combat the phallocentric nature of literature.

And, as a critique, Karen Warren in her book *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What it is and Why It Matters* (2000) calls this an "oppressive framework" (Warren 45) created and enforced by this artificial, patriarchal social "value system" (Warren 45) to justify hierarchal power relations between the members of society using binary expressions like "ups and downs." (Warren 45) This further provides "logic of domination" (Warren 46) as the existing privileges belonging to the "ups" (masculine) and desirable to be continued and as an extension creates a logical, inviolable, hierarchal framework to perpetuate the oppression of the feminine forces, namely women and nature.

Radcliffe attacks this "oppressive framework" by creating feminine heroes imbued with the non-masculine sentiments of love and the ability to enter into a dialogue with Mother Nature also and "masculine" heroines who possess agency and are intellectually and economically independent

Two examples of feminine heroes are Hippolitus and Vivaldi. They are both individuals capable of fighting the masculine barriers hindering them from marrying their true loves and remaining unbothered by the threat of social censure. Vivaldi explicitly ignores his family's warnings that he is expected to be a mere "guardian of [his] family's

honour" (Radcliffe 38) and loudly defends the "innocent" (Radcliffe 38) Ellena and humbly asserts that "there are some instances where it is virtuous to disobey even a parent." (Radcliffe 38). He thus asserts his independence from the masculine social framework. The power of imagination and being close to nature are some of the other feminine virtues possessed by Vivaldi. One instance from the text to justify these points can be found when Vivaldi felt that "every object announced the presence of Ellena… and the very flowers so gaily embellished…fascinated his senses and affected his imagination." (Radcliffe 31) This shows how a beautiful object of nature could spur his creative mind into thinking about the girl he loved. Also, this shows how attuned Vivaldi's delicate senses were to enable him to interact with nature. His devotion to Ellena and his interaction with nature make him a *feminine* male.

The Mazzini castle walls spelt doom for Hippolitus. His love, Julia, was 'trapped' in there, and he was mortally wounded while helping her escape the confines of the castle into the outdoor world of love and nature. One night, Ellena heard a sonnet that Hippolitus sang for her, which felt like having a "wild and melancholy symphony" (Radcliffe 23) that "seemed to breathe the very soul of love" (Radcliffe 23). This scene perfectly encapsulates the verse of love Radcliffe espouses. A lover singing out in a grassy knoll, singing a tune for her beloved that softly permeates the walls of the castle that housed her. The walls of the castle, reflecting the barrier between masculine and feminine worlds, are broken down in this scene. This almost pastoral scene can further signify how Radcliffe seems to blur the divide between the traditional way of writing Gothic and a newer way of exercising the craft.

In stark contrast to Hippolitus and Vivaldi, we find the overly, or even crudely, *masculine-'masculine'* men, embodied by the Duke, the Marquis, and Schedoni – but before realising his close familial connection with Ellena. The Marquis had cruelly imprisoned his first wife and had declared her dead so that he could remarry. The 'Gothic' lights and sounds emanating from the castle were conjured up by the Marquis to prevent anyone from knowing about the imprisoned wife. The Marquis's obsession with social connections left him with few moral or paternal pangs about imprisoning his daughter in a castle, and disregarding her affections and emotions. Not unlike him, the Duke to whom the Marquis had betrothed his daughter shared a similar history of violence against his wives. Hippolitus informs Julia that the Duke's two previous wives "had fallen victims to the slow but corroding hand of sorrow" as a result of the Duke's delight in exercising "simple undisguised tyranny" (Radcliffe 57). Schedoni had a long history of violence, of murdering his brother, attempting to murder Ellena's mother before she became Lady Olivia, and then Ellena without knowing that she was his niece. These felonies were inspired by his desire to gain material wealth and rise higher up the clerical echelons of influence.

Similarly, the Marchesa can figure as the archetypal masculine woman figure for whom, like the Marquis, social hierarchy was more important than love. She was willing to be a part of kidnapping and even murder to stop the marriage of two lovers.

Her ways of thinking thus align with those of the Marquis and Duke.

Radcliffe imbues the two heroines – Ellena and Julia – with enough social, intellectual and ecofeminist capital to challenge the "master model" that society had erected to dominate and suppress them. Radcliffe breaks down the barrier of "dualism" to strengthen her female characters with the necessary and putative masculine virtues while letting them retain their feminine qualities that make their marriage possible in the end. Both of Radcliffe's novels present a virgin woman trapped under the thumb of masculine social forces, with Vivaldi's mother and Julia's father acting as the principal blocking characters who attempt to manipulate and control the lives of their children by controlling their matrimonial, and thereby romantic, relations. It is this constraint that Radcliffe's heroines and her approach to the Gothic genre itself attempt to "escape."

It is this desire to escape the world of harsh men to marry Hippolitus and not the Duke that inspires Julia to escape the confinement of her father. In stark contrast to the scheming Marquis and the Duke, Julia is introduced in the novel as having an "extreme sensibility [that] subjected her to frequent uneasiness" (Radcliffe 4) and also being "uncommonly susceptible of the charms of harmony" (Radcliffe 4). Julia is also said to possess intellectual skills that were thought to be present only in menfolk of the time. In a poetically embellished scene, Julia, one night, observing "a fine effect of moonlight" (Radcliffe 9), is said to have "leaned forwards" (Radcliffe 9). This shows her eagerness to breathe in nature's beauty; her lover Hippolitus too possesses the germ of creativity, and it was his music that confirmed "the sweet reality" (Radcliffe 24) to Julia that Hippolitus too loved her. Also, after hearing about the Duke's cruel treatment towards his wives, a distraught Julia again found comfort in the natural sounds of oars on lapping water whose "divine melody" (Radcliffe 58) generated "a sigh of ecstasy from her bosom" (Radcliffe 58) and succeeded in "calming the tumult of her mind" (Radcliffe 58). Nature thus plays a "liminal" role between nature and culture by emanating human characteristics (McGee 69), as Katherine Marie McGee notes in *Responsibility and Responsiveness in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe and Mary Shelley* (2014) and can actively communicate with the characters of the novel. But to perceive this action of nature required an understanding of the sublime not inherent in the masculine blocking characters of the Marquis, the Duke and Marchesa. Nature provides comfort to Ellena, too. She is more at home in the world outdoors than in the convent or the social world ruled by masculine forces. These are a few examples of how nature interacted with the principal feminine characters of the novels.

Ellena is introduced as having "delicacy, grace and severe reserve" (Radcliffe 9). She was also an "orphan" (Radcliffe 13) living under the guardianship of her aunt, who, and this was not public knowledge, helped sustain her by her embroidery skills, but kept this fact concealed because "she could endure poverty but not the contempt of the society." (Radcliffe 13) She can thus be seen as a single woman, possessing economic skill enough (at that time thought to be the monopoly of men) to sustain two people.

Both Julia and Ellena, therefore, are "anti-dualist" heroines – as women armed with masculine “reason”, considerable social, economic, and intellectual capacity – to fight back against the patriarchal forces which attempt to oppress and imprison them, possessing economic and moral agency enough to contemplate an independent living among the world of men (for Ellena) and far away from her home in a forest (for Julia). Further, nature plays a pivotal role in their lives and provides them – especially Julia – with a freedom from the oppressive male-dominated societal framework. These heroines of Radcliffe also possess the skill to enter into a discourse with the natural world. Radcliffe therefore subverts the "logic of domination" that was used as a tool of oppressing and alienating both women and nature. In Radcliffe's novels, the two marginalised forces establish a dialogue between each other, which is a crucial mark of ecofeminism.

In stark contrast, the interactions or the lack thereof between nature and the excessively masculine characters speak volumes about their inability to enter into a united with them in the end. This exhibits the trope of what dialogue with the sublime forces, far beyond the scope of social status and domination that they exercise in their domesticated realms.

"An Unhappy Orphan": The ‘Re-mothering’ of Ellena in *The Italian*

Ruth Beinstoick Anolik in her article "The Missing Mother: The Meanings of Maternal Absence in the Gothic Mode" (2003) notes that the mothers of Radcliffe's novels were the most threatened and often find themselves in "perilous" situations and that there is a tendency of moving towards the recovery of the imperiled mothers and the creation of a storyline wherein the mothers and daughters become "allies" against the unhealthy masculine world. As can be seen, they are either presumed dead (as in *The Italian*), or imprisoned (as seen in *A Sicilian Romance*). Both these novels, to use Anolik's idea, present a movement, as evidenced by the fact that both the persecuted heroines, Julia and Ellena, are reunited with them in the end. This exhibits the trope of what David Durant calls "rediscovered family" in his article "Ann Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic" (1982), as in both novels, the "supposedly dead mother comes back to life." (Durant 526).

As noted earlier, imbued with both reason and production skills, Ellena becomes an "anti-dualist" heroine of Radcliffe who has economic agency enough to sustain a family through economic work. Ellena's love for Vivaldi was not acceptable to his mother because of the "violent” and “self-important" Marchesa's masculine obsession with her ”low” social and "poor" economic status. It can be noted here that the Marchesa could

be seen as an overly-protective mother in that she was simply 'looking after' her son to ensure that his marriage happens to a woman only belonging to high society, and thereby one who does not soil their family reputation. Also, the genuine motherly concern that she expressed for her son on hearing that Vivaldi had been in trouble with the Inquisition. Subsequently, the Marchesa even appointed Schedoni to assassinate Ellena in a bid to stop the marriage – another instance of how far a proactive mother can be willing to go to 'help' her son. Thus, the Marchesa becomes a protective, in her mind, 'caring' mother of Vivaldi.

But Ellena, on the other hand, had already been an orphan who was living with her aunt. Then, after her aunt's mysterious death, she becomes what Rictor Norton in his 1999 biography of Radcliffe *Mistress of Udolpho* calls "doubly orphaned" (30) with no mother figure left to look after her. This made her easy prey for characters like Schedoni, Marchesa and the Abbess. She thus becomes un-mothered and gets kidnapped and placed under the thumb of a cruel abbess. It is here that she realises that in the absence of any human protectors, she found "relief" (Radcliffe 75) looking at the sublime natural world and confesses:

If I am condemned to misery, surely I could endure it with more fortitude in scenes like these than amidst the tamer landscapes of nature! Here, the objects seem to impart somewhat of their force, their own sublimity to the soul. (Radcliffe 75).

Sublime nature thus becomes a mother-like figure that could sustain and help her to be able to live all these years away from Naples and Vivaldi. Thus, nature acts as a re-mothering agent who comes to the succour of her helpless 'child'.

As previously discussed, Lady Olivia, who had selflessly helped Ellena and in doing so risked her position in the convent, was her mother. Thus, along with nature, a literal re-mothering happens after the mother and daughter meet with each other. Also, Schedoni would have certainly murdered Ellena unless their familial connection had been realised. Thus, family, kinship and motherhood protected Ellena through and from grievous hardships. And nature also became a source of hope and rescue for her from the masculine world.

The Idea of the Sublime *Prakriti* in Radcliffe

The discourse on sublimity became popular after Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant's influential ideas on the topic were enunciated in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) and *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790). Burke calls sublimity an "aesthetic judgement" for what can be seen as "limitless" and leads to a "momentary inhibition of vital powers" and then the "overflowing" of them. Sublime forces lead to what is called "apprehension" and

"negative pleasure." The sublime in nature, he says, induces a feeling of "fear without being afraid." Burke calls "dark, gloomy, solid and massive" objects "sublime" and capable of causing "pain" in the minds of those who are capable of perceiving.

The very word 'sublime' finds frequent mention in both novels. It can be observed that both Ellena and Julia can make sense of the sublime, while the masculine characters are unable to even comprehend these forces in nature. One exception can be cited in the band of men led by the Duke to capture Julia who felt what Burke called "terror" from the sublime forces of nature, as discussed previously. This inability of the masculine "mushroom men [and women]" forces to interact with the sublime forces can be seen as their lack of sufficient emotional and mental capacity to interact with nature. This can be seen as the "crisis of [natural] reason" of the masculine forces and helps further subvert Plumwood's "binary."

Also, within an ecofeminist framework, nature does not remain a passive agent, but rather emerges containing what Vandana Shiva calls the *adi shakti* of "*Prakriti*" – "a powerful and effective primordial source of power." (38) This awesome power of the sublime *Prakriti* could only be comprehended by the feminine characters of the novels.

The final point can be better enunciated by how nature was perceived as a restricting agent by the Duke and his band of men who went in search of Julia after she had escaped. While Julia had comfortably found her way to safety, the Duke and his men were unable to find their footing in the natural world, in the absence of the socio-cultural givens that enabled them to prosper in the world of men. This feminine new world, however, seemed "dangerous" (Radcliffe 121) to them because of the "darkness", the threat of bandits and the "roaring of the winds through the deep forests hat overhung the mountains" (Radcliffe 82). Thus, in stark contrast to the way nature becomes a nurturer for the women, the men discover the Gothic in the natural world and face struggle. Nature in Radcliffe contains what Edith Burkhead in her book *The Tale of Terror* (1920) calls "natural terror" (Radcliffe 27) and is unlike the manufactured terrors found in the male space of Gothic novels. Thus, Radcliffe emphasises giving the 'supernatural' elements of her story a rational and natural explanation in the end. In a similar vein, the sublime natural world provides an intrinsic connection to the soul, Ellena, something that the masculine world, where the "tamer [not so sublime] landscapes" do not furnish her.

We find a complete inversion of the traditional Gothic aspects in this natural setting. Greta Gaard's "mushroom men" (Gaard 24), i.e., masculine forces unable to harmoniously interact with the natural, ecofeminist world of Radcliffe, suffer here and find it difficult to travel freely, unlike women. Radcliffe thus fittingly calls the world of nature "a smiling Eden" (Radcliffe 24), far away from what David Durant calls "a fallen world", while discussing the domestic social world where women face persecution and can live freely in the "pastoral safe Eden" of nature.

To foreground Radcliffe in the ideas of the sublime, wherein the sublime is fearful without necessarily being a cause to be afraid of. It then has differential outcomes for different genders. The masculine-masculine will become linearly frightened by nature's fearful but quite natural elements (such as the storm, for example, is a cause of worry for them). But the feminine-feminine (and by extension the masculine-feminine too) may ride the back of the fearful sublime with a joyous energy of their deeper hearts and take valiant pleasures in the dangerously beautiful plays that nature throws them into. Thus, the masculine characters, because of their inability to feel nature, become frightened of her force, while the feminine can take on and comprehend the sublime natural world.

Conclusion

Ann Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* and *The Italian* can thus be read through an ecocritical framework by engaging with the depictions of the sublime natural world which plays a crucial role in creating a Female Gothic space in the texts. Radcliffe's deft use of the sublime grandeur of the natural world as a site where human beings (especially women) are able to lead freer and healthier lives in green forests away from the controlling masculine dungeons and castles is a subversion of the Gothic strains, dominated by Male Gothic patriarchal motifs. By moving away from the tragic endings of the works of authors like Walpole, Beckford, and Lewis, Radcliffe devises a new way of writing the Gothic novel, pivoting on a happy resolution symbolized by a wedding joining two lovers in an everlasting, convivial bond which marks the victory of mirth, love, and life over fear, horror, and death – marking a victory of the Female Gothic.

In both novels, men with *feminine* like Hippolitus and Vivaldi triumph over the archetypal patriarchal men, and social structures. Not unlike the female protagonists, these men are able to engage positively in a dialogue with the natural world, and become a part of the Female Gothic world in Radcliffe's tales. The female protagonist in the texts are imbued with the *masculine* ethos of reason and intellectual prowess. Reading from an ecofeminist point of view, this subversion of gender expectations enables Radcliffe to create unique "anti-dualist" Female Gothic protagonists – both female and men.

As a woman author writing at a time when women did not enjoy much freedom and the promise of a good life in both the social and the literary world, the characters Ellena and Julia, their fantastical adventures in the natural world, and their female companionship fending off the forces of the Male Gothic can be read as a depiction of Radcliffe's proto-feminist and environmental ethos, and the creation of a literary Eden which could provide a means of escape to men and women trapped in the tightly-guarded castles of their day and age.

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