

Monstrous Bodies of Knowledge: The Undead as Epistemological Tool in the Romantic

Period

by

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ABSTRACT

This research conceptualizes Gothic literature featuring undead characters produced and popularized by Britain in the early nineteenth century as educational texts. As an influx of new ideas at home and abroad disrupted the lives of the Romantics, not to mention the literal uprising of bodies in the French Revolution and the lost war with the North American colonies, British citizens dedicated themselves to preserving the relative safety of their shores from external and internal threats. I expand the definition of the “undead” to include any tangible, corporeal being once technically dead and now reanimated. In doing so, I invite a broader range of texts, and authors, into the conversation of Gothic literature and the genre’s continued legacy. My work reads male and female authors in dialogue with one another, both sexes working within common networks, rather than as creating separate or disparate traditions. The production of instructive undead bodies becomes particularly important to the development of British national identity and reveals a reliance on the maternal to educate and inform future citizens. The texts examined in this dissertation reveal the necessity of contemplating the histories and experiences of the past, of non-white voices, and of the female influence.

The texts range in publication date from 1805 to 1863 and thus demonstrate the continued use of the undead in the Gothic genre. An examination of the reanimated corpse in Romantic narrative demonstrates how authors utilized the undead as an educational tool both for the characters inside the text and the actual individuals reading the narrative. The undead offers a lens to look at the Gothic not regarding authorial gender or even a character’s gender, but rather in how the genre portrays bodies, and how those bodies interact with and instruct others. This dissertation’s perception of the undead

as a powerful educational force in literature assists in the attempt to complete a more comprehensive analysis of Gothic, and therefore Romantic, literature.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents. To my mother, who fostered my love of all things supernatural and horrific. To my father, who never made me feel that talking about dead bodies was anything other than ordinary.

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INTRODUCTION

*Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! Her bosom and half her side—
Are lean and old and foul of hue¹
A sight to dream of, not to tell
And she is to sleep by Christabel*

*She took two paces, and a stride,
And lay down by the maiden's side:
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah wel-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge,
"Christabel," circa 1800²*

One of the most famous undead characters in Romantic literature reveals her true nature in the most intimate of spaces. In Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "Christabel," Geraldine's invitation into Christabel's bedroom makes the innocent predatory upon

¹ This line appears in the version of "Christabel" published in Ernest Hartley Coleridge's collection of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's work. He notes that this is how the line appeared in the manuscript of the poem and offers the following citation: "MS. W., S.T.C. (e), S.H." Ernest Hartley Coleridge, *The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge Including Poems and Versions of Poems Now Published for the First Time*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1912) 224. Duncan Wu confirms that the manuscript text of 1800 in possession of the Wordsworth Library, Grasmere contains the line. Duncan Wu, ed., *Romanticism: An Anthology*. Fourth edition (Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2012) 665.

² Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Christabel." *The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Including Poems And Versions of Poems Now Published for the First Time* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912) 224, lines 252–253.

unwrapping her blemished breast. Her “silken robe of white”³ becomes the vestment of the grave, a shroud to shield her corpse from the living. In exposing her naked, decaying body to Christabel, Geraldine provides her prey with an escape. If Christabel had left the room screaming, Geraldine (and the reader) would hardly have been surprised. But Coleridge has something else in mind, an instructional message to impart. Christabel falls into bed with the ambling corpse, inviting destruction into her life through the suggested sully of her virtue. The parallels of consummation and consumption in the poem are hard to miss. The “death” of her virginity combined with the suggested draining of life force by Geraldine present a woman disgraced because of her sexual dalliance with another female. Christabel will be unable to avoid the “mark of shame” that now designates her too as monstrous. Coleridge uses the two fictional women’s interaction to warn readers that sexual acts between females cannot be tolerated for they upset the established dynamics of heterosexual marriage. The most intimate of spaces, the bedroom, cannot be protected if danger is so hospitably invited in as Christabel does with Geraldine. The moral message here is clear, and intentional: young women are in danger of succumbing to the monstrous appetite that is carnal desire. Presented as a terrifying tutor, the undead body is the physical embodiment of experiential knowledge that possesses the power to communicate its lessons in a tangible way.

Human history is monstrous. Monsters occupy the dark corners of human culture, defined by their ability to inspire fear or terror, revealing the anxieties of any given society at the moment of their creation. In this dissertation I do not examine Coleridge at

³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Christabel,” *Christabel; Kubla Khan, a Vision; The Pains of Sleep* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1816) 14, line 59.

length, but the above selection from “Christabel” mirrors the themes presented in this study, including the erotic power of the undead as a disabling device and an implement of carnal knowledge, and the importance of female interaction in Gothic literature. However, my work challenges the assumption that Coleridge has created something unique in his depiction of the undead. My research shows the importance of this type of monster as an instrument of instruction in the Romantic period. From an era of revolutions, both political and philosophical, a concerned England emerges seeking to construct a national identity. As observers of the destruction of the French Revolution and overseas participants in the lost war with their North American colonies, British citizens dedicated themselves to preserving the relative safety of their own shores from external and internal threats. The literature of this period reflects these efforts and is fraught with tension from the weight of that responsibility. At the center of British intellectual conflict lies the physical form. Given the literal uprising of bodies in the French and American Revolutions, authors of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries unsurprisingly choose to explore the conflicts in their world with the rising of monstrous bodies—the undead.

This dissertation examines the different iterations of the reanimated corpse in Romantic Gothic literature and the productive purpose their presence serves. If “the monster exists only to be read,” as Jeffery Jerome Cohen argues,⁴ attention must be paid to not only to what forms the monster appears in but what kinds of texts the creature

⁴ Jeffery Jerome Cohen, ed, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) 4. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

inhabits. I show how the undead have a distinct meaning in Gothic literature by demonstrating not only the prevalence of this type of monster during the Romantic period but also in my examination of how such beings succeed in encapsulating an important moment in literary and cultural history. The development of undead tropes during the Romantic period, particularly the vampire figure, would go on to inform the majority of future iterations of such creatures.

The aims of my research are threefold. First, to redefine the concept of the “undead” to more accurately reflect a monster that had not yet been narrowly categorized by the body’s actions, but by the simple fact that its form is the reanimated corpse. I define the “undead” as any tangible, corporeal being once technically dead and now reanimated. To expand the definition of the undead is to invite a broader range of texts, and authors, into the conversation of Gothic literature and the genre’s continued legacy. By expanding the variety as well as number of texts that can be read as “undead,” my definition challenges the work of scholars who identify the vampire/vampyre in the early-nineteenth century as the only reanimated corpse within literature at this time that carried cultural significance.⁵

Second, my work seeks to provide a more invigorating approach to the modern scholarship of the Romantic period by demonstrating how authors utilized the undead as

⁵ See for example, Carol A. Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth Century English Literature* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampire, Ourselves* (The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Bruce A. McClelland, *Slayers and Their Vampires: A Cultural History of Killing the Dead* (University of Michigan Press, 2006); Patrick R. O'Malley, *Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2010); James B. Twitchell, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

an educational tool both for the characters inside the text and the actual individuals reading the narrative. Feminist notions inform my approach for the production of instructive undead bodies becomes particularly important to the development of British national identity and its reliance on the maternal to educate and inform future citizens. My approach to the texts is inherently feminist in that I engage undead fiction as a way to understand the social and historical structures shaping gender relations. Because of my approach, the third objective of my research is to recognize the contribution of a female presence to the dissemination of knowledge, both through the creators of undead texts and the strong female characters in these narratives produced by male and female authors alike.

The authors I use in this dissertation illustrate my intentions to present a variety of undervalued undead characters throughout the Romantic period. The texts I use range in publication date from 1805 to 1863 and thus demonstrate the continued use of the undead in the Gothic genre. Four of the authors of these texts are identifiable: Mary Shelley, Jane Loudon, Charlotte Dacre, and Agathe-Pauline Caylac de Ceylan Comtesse de Bradi. One text, *Wake Not the Dead* (1823), does not have a confirmed author although it has commonly been attributed to Ernest Benjamin Salomo Raupach, a misidentification I explore as part of the text's analysis in Chapter Four. I did not initially approach my dissertation with the intent to use primarily female authors, but the importance of the female authorial voice, as well as the instructing voices of the women they constructed inside their texts, quickly became apparent. As such, my investigation of the undead in Romantic literature reveals a feminine/feminist history to the undead monster that has until now been largely overlooked.

Nevertheless, the undead offer a lens for us to look at the Gothic not regarding authorial gender or even a character's gender, but rather in how it portrays bodies, and how those bodies interact with and instruct others. To view Gothic literature through the undead is to acknowledge its similarly liminal space both inside and outside of traditional definitions of Romantic literature. Interpretations of the Gothic more often than not fall short. Most readings fail to "[offer] us a perspective that includes both prose and poetry, canonical as well as popular literature, 'male' as well as 'female' narratives," as Anne Williams asserts.⁶ My work with the undead can offer a perspective that incorporates all of these categories. Because my claims about the undead in the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are intended to illuminate the complexity of cultural thought in the period, I have chosen to evaluate texts that are diverse and offer a broad range of perspectives in the scope and significance of undead bodies.

Studying monsters involves dissecting how they function as a method of control and liberation. Monstrous culture reflects and reshapes dominant cultural ideologies. "To be a monster is to be an omen," a thing that surpasses imagination, Stephen T. Asma notes, to become a "cultural category."⁷ The challenge is to identify these categories and scrutinize the events that led to their formation. For Gothic authors, the answer is often nebulous, determined as much by who is reading the text as the creator of it. The undead, however, offer something specific; as a once living human body, the undead corpse retains classification as humanoid if not human, and its uncanny appearance more readily

⁶ Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*. (University of Chicago Press, 2009) 10.

⁷ Stephen T. Asma, *On Monsters*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 13.

accepts the transference of meaning. Dead bodies, Thomas Laqueur says, matter “everywhere and across time, as well as in particular time and particular places” because the end of life is universal. The corpse reminds the living of mortality.⁸ Following Laqueur’s reasoning, the Romantic undead offer insight not only to the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but the past and future as well, an ability made even more poignant given the undead body’s previous occupation living in time and space. Critics like Donna Heiland suppose that any insight offered by monstrosity is inherently dangerous. In *Gothic & Gender* she claims,

Monsters do indeed tend to function as warning or admonitions of one sort or another. They function as uncanny doubles of our societies, reflecting back to us images of everything that we have cast out as undesirable or threatening to the status quo, and forcing us to face that which we would prefer to leave hidden.

Exactly what is threatening changes from one society to another, and from one historical moment to the other.⁹

While my dissertation is informed by Heiland’s idea that monsters often find meaning as cautionary tales and that the implication of their narratives is fluid, I argue that these warnings are not harmful but productive. The monster can be used to challenge the status quo by promoting alternative attitudes to cultural constructs.

⁸ Thomas W. Laquer, *The Work of the Dead: a Cultural History of Mortal Remains*. (Princeton University Press, 2015) 1.

⁹ Donna Heiland, *Gothic & Gender: An Introduction*. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004) 100. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

The role of corporeality is inherent to understand the undead, especially during the Romantic period. Critics at that time acknowledge the bodily importance of the reanimated corpse. In a discussion of ‘vampyres’ appearing in *The Museum of Foreign Literature and Science* (1823), Robert Walsh, Jr. states, “The corporeal grossness, the substantiality ‘palpable to feeling as to sight,’ of this monster of superstition renders its singularly terrific, and lays hold on the mind with a sense of shuddering and sanguinary horror which belongs to few of the aerial demons of imagination, however ghastly or malignant.”¹⁰ Walsh identifies “the corporeal grossness” of the undead monster as its most terrifying element. The realness, the fleshiness, identifies the reanimated body as uniquely frightening because of the impact it has on the physical sensations of those with whom it interacts. Modern scholars of monsters reflect similar opinions. The ability of the undead to break boundaries, not only metaphorically but literally, contributes to their impact as liberating monsters. “The *revenant* presents an insolvable figure in discourse,” Clare Raymond confirms, “disturbing boundaries, disrupting and confusing the difference between the dead and the living, even the difference between death and life.”¹¹ The disturbances the undead cause as liminal beings reflect the shifting world Britain had to confront in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As an influx of new ideas at home and abroad disrupted the lives of the Romantics, dichotomies became imprecise. The insertion of the undead into Gothic literature marks this turmoil.

¹⁰ Robert Walsh Jr., *The Museum of Foreign Literature and Science*. (Philadelphia: E. Littell and R. Norris Henry, 1823) 432.

¹¹ Clare Raymond, “Response to Elena Anastasaki’s ‘The Trials and Tribulations of the *revenants*.’” *Connotations* 17.2-3 (2007/2008) 257.

While other monsters prevailed in Gothic narratives, including the ghost/specter, their significance suggests a sorrow of the past, serving as tragic symbols of mistakes yet forgiven. Ghosts represent the future, Jacques Khalip contends, not only as comforting “fantasies of eternal return” but as “unburied, ambivalent possibilities, gratifying us precisely by mortifying our desires: they call us through voices that have an interest in us, despite our unwillingness to hear them.”¹² The ephemeral quality of the ghost means all revelations in encountering such a being must be unsure. Incorporeal spirits are insubstantial symbols as their very lack of a physical body confirms. Ghosts represent idealized versions of the past of deaths that *might* have meaning and futures that *may* occur. The tangible body of the reanimated corpse is more assured in form and function. The undead only become such because their deaths *do* have meaning and symbolize future repercussions that are not merely possible but inevitable. Unlike the ghost that calls out in hopes of being heard, the undead speaks to us directly as one corporeal body to another. Ghosts also “preserve the boundaries between life and death more firmly than do ghouls or vampires,” as Joseph Andriano acknowledges.¹³ In eliminating, or at least shrouding, the strict borders between the living and dead, the impact of the undead comes from its defiance of categorization. The ability of the reanimated corpse to exist between states of being, modes of meaning, and cultural classification, makes it the perfect vessel for Romantic period authors to confront contradictory or challenging ideas. Support for

¹² Jacques Khalip, *Anonymous Life: Romanticism and Dispossession*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) 115.

¹³ Joseph Andriano, *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 72.

this claim is found in Adriana Craciun's *Fatal Woman of Romanticism*, with its argument that undead bodies "bear more than truth." The undead function as a third, alternative category to the binaries often perceived as infallible (man/woman, life/death).¹⁴ Gothic authors would naturally adopt these characters in their narratives. The Gothic is about transgression. The Gothic, Heiland insists, focuses on "corruption in, or resistance to, the patriarchal structures that shaped the country's political life and its family life, and gender roles within those structures come in for particular scrutiny" (5). As creatures of borders, the undead magnify the tensions in Britain regarding the construction of a national identity, which requires a place and purpose for every citizen, including women. The appearance of undead monsters as predatory beings, principally as sexual and physical assailants, represents the ferocity of the attempts to define/redefine British culture. As this dissertation shows, Gothic authors used the undead as epistemological devices to impart their lessons, relaying instructions with the intent of contributing to the success of Britain's future.

To assume that all representations of the undead are inherently evil, a claim Bruce McClelland makes in his work on vampires, negates the important social function of these characters outside of their capacity to symbolize the malevolent.¹⁵ I argue that the occupation of the undead is not merely to warn the living but to instruct them. While these lessons are at times cautionary, imparted with malice, destruction, and death, they are also productive, even protective. The significance and symbolism of the undead to the

¹⁴ Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Woman of Romanticism* (Cambridge University Press, 2002) 12.

¹⁵ Bruce A. McClelland, *Slayers and Their Vampires: A Cultural History of Killing the Dead* (University of Michigan Press, 2006) 1–3.

late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are only properly assessed when texts with monsters that fall outside of the restrictive definitions of “vampire” or “mummy” (although both will appear in my analysis) are acknowledged. By confronting narrow-minded interpretations of the undead akin to those expressed by Carol A. Senf, we may see a more cohesive and representative picture regarding Romantic feeling towards death, sex, and the possibility of reanimation.¹⁶ The complexities of these ideas as portrayed in the undead body make room for alternative voices to be heard. The texts examined in this dissertation reveal the necessity of contemplating the histories and experiences of the past, of non-white voices, and of the female influence. The declarations made by these characters broaden cultural understanding of death as not necessarily finite. The undead demonstrate that physical desire can cause the destruction of a successful future for Britain. The effort to extend the definition of the reanimated corpse serves not only to allow the addition of other voices to the history of the Gothic and undead, but also to establish that such monsters, although often frightening, are always instructive. The meaning of the undead monster is revealed to be not just a fearful presence but a distributor of knowledge.

My use of the term “Gothic” in referencing undead narratives of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries most closely relies on Beth Lau’s introduction

¹⁶ Carol A. Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth Century English Literature* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2013) 12. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text. Senf evaluation of the undead in nineteenth-century literature only applies to those texts were monsters “explicitly referred to as a ‘vampire’/‘vampyre’ or whose author “is familiar with the belief in vampires” and “deliberately” inserted these creatures into their narratives (12). To limit analysis of the Gothic undead to only characters referred explicitly by those words is not only a disservice to the genre, but neglects the oral and social history of the undead over time.

to the edited collection *Fellow Romantics: Male and Female British Writers, 1790–1835*.¹⁷ Lau moves away from the divisive “masculine Romanticism” and “feminine Romanticism” dichotomy introduced by Anne Mellor, to embrace an inclusive category Lau designates as the “Fellow Romantics.”¹⁸ My work reads male and female authors in dialogue with one another, both sexes working within common networks, rather than as creating separate or disparate traditions. Romantic texts overlap one another to produce “similar motifs and express many shared aspirations, convictions, anxieties, and conflicts” (Lau 2). I employ this mode of thinking to the Gothic texts examined in this dissertation where I argue not for distinct types of literature in which the undead appear but rather look at the reanimated corpse as a means to further emphasize the connections among texts featuring such monsters. My work continues that of Diane Long Hoeveler in its alignment with her assertion that female gothic novels penned by women writers aimed to secure woman’s position in the home by glorifying the patriarchal family, and fetishizing virginity and marital chastity.¹⁹ However, as the undead demonstrate, these themes were not present solely in “the female gothic,” or only novels, nor exclusively something female authors could produce but may be identified as a larger aim of the Gothic genre as a whole.

¹⁷ Beth Lau, “Introduction.” *Fellow Romantics: Male and Female British Writers 1790–1835*, edited by Beth Lau (Ashgate, 2009) 1–15. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁸ See Anne Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*. (New York & London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁹ Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes*. (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998) 5. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

Even as I use Lau's *Fellow Romantics* theory as my framing methodology, particularly in refusing to acknowledge any one text as being of either the "feminine" or "masculine" Gothic tradition regardless of the gender of the author, I recognize that the male and female experience, particularly regarding sexuality and gender, are different and as such are expressed in the literature the author produces. The undead serve as one of the interrelations where the literature of men and women have more in common than not. Both genders portray aggressive, predatory undead characters as erotic and manipulative. Male and female authors also both show sexuality to be dangerous to the individual and the community in which they live. Where female authors differ is in their greater likelihood to construct relationships between women as productive for the advancement of society. Additionally, female authors are more likely to construct undead characters whom offer little threat of bodily harm to the living. To ignore the texts of one sex offers an incomplete picture. The comparison of all undead texts is productive because of the cultural borders the monster patrols. Conflicts between life and death, sex and virtue, good and evil, monstrous and beautiful are universal tensions the reanimated corpse addresses in its boundary-crossing body, regardless of the sex of the author.

The *Fellow Romantics* philosophy considers Romanticism as a whole, "a more unified and coherent movement and period" than some scholars have claimed (Lau 2). Confirmation of the unified Gothic movement as a response to revolution are found in the work of Chris Baldick, Valdine Clemens, Linda Colley, Adriana Craciun, Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson, and Andrew Smith.²⁰ All of these scholars reflect Baldick's claim

²⁰ See Chris Baldick, *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Clarendon Press, 1990); Valdine Clemens, *The Return of*

that “the social and political issues highlighted by the revolutionary process” are expressed and explored in the Gothic genre (16). United within a new phase of continued movement towards desacralization and social anxiety (Clemens 24), which includes increased scrutiny of the body both as biological machine and political object, Gothic literature concerns itself with the “fears of, or enthusiasm for, revolutionary idea” (Smith 3). I agree with Craciun’s assessment that the French Revolution ushered in political upheavals that pressed female writers to confront the body where they battled the agency, and alienation, available in acceptance of one-sex models of (male) citizenship (15). However, the presence of undead bodies in Gothic texts demonstrates that such “battles” were not limited to female authors alone.

My study of the undead is informed by the historicist concept that the Gothic and the Romantic exist adjacently, as understood through Michael Gamer’s *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*. Gamer’s claim that “the reception of gothic writing—its institutional and commercial recognition as a kind of literature—played a fundamental role in shaping many of the ideological assumptions about high culture that we have come to associate with ‘romanticism’” allows for the interpretation of the undead in texts from this period as both Gothic and Romantic because of their part

the Repressed: Gothic Horror from the Castle of Otranto to Alien (Albany: State University of New York, 1999); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003); Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Woman of Romanticism*. (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson, “Chapter 1: Romanticism and colonialism: texts, contexts, issues.” *Romanticism and Colonialism*, Eds. Tom Fulford and Peter J. Kitson (Cambridge University Press, 1998) 1–12; Smith, Andrew. *Gothic Literature*, Second edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013). Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

in moral instruction.²¹ My work, like that of Tom Dugget, Andrew Smith, and Diane Hoeveler, challenges the assumption that Gothic literature is somehow divergent or inferior to Romantic texts.²² This dissertation's perception of the undead as a powerful educational force in literature assists in the attempt to complete a more comprehensive analysis of Gothic, and therefore Romantic, literature.

Gothic texts present the reader with disruptive ideas, but they also offer solutions. The monstrous undead body in the Gothic narrative functions as the instructor through which elucidation may be achieved, and the undead's ability to generate fear allows the lessons it imparts to be "heard" more clearly. David Punter astutely asserts,

Fear is not merely a theme or an attitude it also has consequences considering form, style and the social relations of the texts; and exploring Gothic is also exploring fear and seeing the various ways in which terror breaks through the surfaces of literature, differently in every case, but also establishing for itself certain distinct communities of language and symbol.²³

The undead become a symbol and an instructive language, a "riff." Here I employ Hoeveler's term from *Gothic Riffs* to explore the repetition of undead monsters in Gothic

²¹ Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*. (Cambridge University Press, 2000) 2.

²² Tom Duggett, *Gothic Romanticism: Architecture, Politics, and Literary Form* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Andrew Smith, *Gothic Literature*. Second edition. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in European Imaginary, 1780–1820* (The Ohio State University Press, 2010).

²³ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: The Gothic Tradition*, Vol. 1. (Longman Group Limited, 1996) 18.

narrative. The “riff,” or any reoccurring theme produced in Gothic literature including popular, overlooked, and marginalized texts serves to unite all manifestations of the Gothic in much the same way as the Fellow Romantics model.²⁴ What the undead “riff” illuminates is a Romantic preoccupation with developing new identities in a time of conflict. Readership for Gothic horror increases in crisis periods, as Valdine Clemens claims, particularly “when the public mood becomes uneasy and pessimistic, and when re-evaluation of the national identity seems to take on a particular urgency.”²⁵ The education aspect of Gothic literature finds support with Clemens who declares, “Not only do Gothic stories convey admonitory, prophetic, and instructional messages, but they also perform a literary (or cinematic) type of psychosocial therapy. That is, in frightening us out of our habitual ‘wits,’ Gothic fiction can shock us into using them in more viable ways” (1). For the Romantic authors analyzed in this dissertation, the “instructional messages” that the undead impart can loosely be gathered into two primary categories: the recognition of past knowledge as essential, and the potential effects of carnal knowledge. The seemingly disparate concepts of erotic and historical knowledge are united in the undead. The undead’s ability to “shock” the other characters in the texts to use their wits or succumb to suffering depends on its corporeality, of the knowledge its body possesses from having lived before. Definitive knowledge gained from experience is most authentic, as the undead body demonstrates having the privilege (and curse) of

²⁴ Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in European Imaginary, 1780–1820* (The Ohio State University Press, 2010) 6, 12.

²⁵ Valdine Clemens, *The Return of the Repressed: Gothic Horror from the Castle of Otranto to Alien* (Albany: State University of New York, 1999) 5.

knowing about life and death, and the authentic understanding that emerges from having “lived” both. The reanimated corpse is thus the perfect instructor, capable of speaking about the past, present, and future simultaneously, able to relate to its living subjects in corporeal familiarity.

Chapter 1 presents two lesser-known works by Mary Shelley, “Valerius: the Reanimated Roman” (1819) and “Roger Dodsworth: the Reanimated Englishman” (1863). Both of the undead characters in these texts support the notion that Shelley’s work was concerned with education and demonstrate the importance of knowledge to understanding self, a theme she did not abandon after her most famous work *Frankenstein* (1818) but continued to reiterate in the bodies of other reanimated men. Both of the undead men she invents in each short story demonstrate the cultural necessity of wisdom only procured through lived experience, which serves to remind readers that conceptual knowledge alone is not enough to construct neither successful societies nor personal identity. Neither undead character in Shelley’s works prompts fear in the characters who encounter them but serve as intellectual companions and muses to the living, illuminating the benevolent potential of the undead.

In Chapter 2, I argue that Jane Loudon’s *The Mummy!: A Tale of the Twenty-Second Century* (1827) serves as a continuation of Shelley’s ideas through its portrayal of an undead Ancient Egyptian as the moral compass to a future Britain. The undead Cheops may inspire fear but ultimately provides moral instruction to the characters he deems worthy of assistance. His most promising pupil is the young orphan Clara, whose actions make Britain secure from both foreign invasion and interior conflict. Loudon demonstrates the value of history, even if it is monstrous, as an instructive force. She also

positions strong, young women as essential to the survival of a nation. Taken together, the Shelley and Loudon chapters support my claim that undead texts of the early nineteenth century were used to validate a national preoccupation with the distant past as necessary to the country's success in the future.

The dissertation next shifts its focus to the erotic elements of the undead, a component central to succeeding to representations of the Romantic monster. Chapter 3 examines Charlotte Dacre's overlooked collection of poetry, *Hours of Solitude* (1805), as arguably the first British text to introduce the sexually alluring, physically predatory male vampire. Two poems from the volume, "The Skeleton Priest, or The Marriage of Death" and "The Aerial Chorus, or The Warning," include female protagonists who are offered counsel by undead women, an element explained by Dacre's commitment to female education. Like Shelley and Loudon, Dacre portrays both the procurement of knowledge and its edification as not only noble acts but also exploits that must become universal. Her recognition of the power of female sexual desire within her depictions of the undead offer insight into the mind of the Romantic woman and demonstrate that women of the period were engaged in conversation about carnal knowledge.

Chapter 4 scrutinizes a tale of what may very well be the first explicitly female vampire (an undead woman who drinks the blood of the living) in *Wake Not the Dead* (1823), a tale presented as a lesson of the necessity of male sexual restraint. Unlike Dacre, the author of this text composes female desire as something outside of a woman's control. The undead woman at the heart of the story is a victim to her sexuality because of the wrongdoings of her husband. Having been resurrected at the behest of her husband solely for his sexual gratification, the female vampire lays siege upon his household and

destroys his title and familial line. *Wake Not the Dead* presents unchecked male desire as disastrous, reflecting British anxieties about growing challenges to patriarchy emerging as women find a more noticeable voice within the literary marketplace and the construction of future British citizens through an increased role in childrearing.

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation with an analysis of “The Little Dead Woman” (1836), a short story of undead revenge translated from the French author de Bradi, which appeared in the British publication *Tales of All Nations; or, Popular Legends and Romances* (1836). A tale of an abandoned young woman whose own desire for revenge reanimates her corpse, the text, narrated by a woman, elevates the importance of female agency to the production of a just society. Like the preceding chapters, the investigation of de Bradi’s text reveals the value of the instructive female voice, and therefore argues for a movement towards devoting significant attention to the experiences of women in addition to men in the construction of national and self-identity.

All of the texts explored in these five chapters were critically challenged but publicly valued, as their multiple editions and appearances in popular magazine and newspapers show. The undead seem to have been tolerated if not accepted by Romantic readers in the nineteenth century, as their continued application by multiple authors demonstrates. To make the monster productive and instructive rather than simply titillating or as a means to inspire fear, elevates the undead as an important cultural trope we still employ today. In making the definition of the “undead” more inclusive, my work allows new voices to be added to the conversation of Gothic texts and draws attention to how “outsider” voices shape the narratives that become part of culture. This dissertation offers another way to examine Romantic culture through a monster that could not have

been constructed at any other time. While Romantic-era British authors may have adopted ideas about reanimated bodies from other cultures, as *Wake Not the Dead*, *The Mummy!*, and “The Little Dead Girl” exhibit, using the undead as corporeal manifestations of knowledge elevated the purpose of the creature as an educational device. The presence of the undead monster alone is significant, but the lessons they impart even more so. As the works selected for this dissertation demonstrate, the primary messages that emerge are that modernity is not possible without listening to the past, and sexuality must not be ignored, but regulated, a feat achievable only when women’s voices are recognized as significant.

CHAPTER ONE

MARY SHELLEY'S BENEVOLENT UNDEAD

"There is something sacred to common apprehension in the repose of the dead. They seem placed beyond our power to disturb... We shrink from their touch, and their sight."

—William Godwin, *Lives of the Necromancers*, 1834²⁶

"His semblance was that of life, yet he belonged to the dead. I did not feel fear or terror; I loved and revered him."

—Mary Shelley, "Valerius: The Reanimated Roman," written 1819²⁷

The epigraphs above reveal an important distinction between Mary Shelley's conception of death and corpse revival. She believes that reanimated dead bodies are not monstrous, but generous beings, capable of circulating ancient wisdom and inspiring progress. It's a distinction she makes that differs not only from her father's conception of these ideas but that diverges from most other authors of the Romantic period. Shelley's undead bodies are unique in their ability to create, rather than destroy. While Shelley's earliest and most famous text exploring the boundaries of life and death, *Frankenstein* (1818)²⁸ seemingly adheres to the dominant belief that reanimated bodies are inherently

²⁶ William Godwin, *Lives of the Necromancers: Or, An Account of the Most Eminent Persons In Successive Ages, Who Have Claimed for Themselves, Or to Whom Has Been Imputed by Others, the Exercise of Magical Power* (London: F. J. Mason, 1834) 29. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

²⁷ Mary Shelley, "Valerius: The Reanimated Roman." *Mary Shelley: Collected Tales and Stories*. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 343.

²⁸ *Frankenstein* represents the commencement of a series of experimental narratives that Shelley uses to flesh out the borderland between life and death by establishing education as crucial to existence for all states of being. For Shelley, such investigation cannot be possible without negotiating the role of education in "life." The Creature's required schooling includes not only language and reading, but "proper"

evil, her short stories “Valerius: the Reanimated Roman” (1819)²⁹ and “Roger Dodsworth: the Reanimated Englishman” (1863)³⁰ offer an alternative, subversive reaction to the reanimated corpse. Written in 1819, “Valerius: The Reanimated Roman” was published for the first time in Charles E. Robinson’s 1976 edited collection *Mary Shelley: Collected Tales and Stories with Original Engravings*. Likely written in 1826 as part of an elaborate newspaper hoax, “Roger Dodsworth: the Reanimated Englishman” did not appear in print until after Shelley’s death. Even so, it offers us a more complete picture of Shelley’s commitment to exploring the boundaries of life and death, and the role education plays in understanding one’s place throughout all states of being.

Through minimizing the supernatural elements that enable the resurrection of the titular characters both of these texts establish the Gothic bodies of the undead as inherently unthreatening, Shelley defies other Romantic assumptions of reanimated bodies. Her father, William Godwin’s final work accentuates the more common portrayal of the undead in his *Lives of the Necromancers: Or, An Account of the Most Eminent Persons In Successive Ages, Who Have Claimed for Themselves, Or to Whom Has Been Imputed by Others, the Exercise of Magical Power* (1834). A collection of paranormal legends and historical responses to witchcraft and magic, Godwin frames the text as

gender roles, interpersonal communication, and compassion. Like a child, he needs to learn how to act “human,” a training unneeded by Valerius and Roger Dodsworth.

²⁹ Mary Shelley, “Valerius: The Reanimated Roman,” *Mary Shelley: Collected Tales and Stories*, ed. Charles E. Robinson (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 332–344. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

³⁰ Mary Shelley, “Roger Dodsworth: The Reanimated Englishman,” *Mary Shelley: Collected Tales and Stories*, ed. Charles E. Robinson (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 43–50. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

merely a small representation of instances when “delusion” influenced humanity. Nevertheless, he acknowledges these legends as powerful “salutary” lessons (ix–x). One such instructional musing he imparts claims the natural result of pondering the reanimated corpse, the “supernatural and uncontrollable,” automatically leads one “to fear it and to deprecate its hostility” (Godwin 181). In contrast, Shelley’s undead narratives position the undead as altruistic, inspirational muses and devoted companions. Her message reveres the past rather than ridiculing it, and challenges the conception that the unknown or “uncontrollable” should automatically be approached as threatening. In “Valerius” and “Roger Dodsworth,” the undead should be embraced as portents of knowledge.

The protagonists in Shelley’s “Valerius” and “Roger Dodsworth” were once human, possessing a wisdom that can only be aggregated through time and experience, therefore making them valuable tools to the living upon their reanimation. Despite the reanimated men’s intellectual worth to the living, both Valerius and Dodsworth struggle with adapting to the present world. Their stories illuminate the disruption that occurs when bodies exist out of time and between states of being. As the titles of both works imply, both Valerius and Dodsworth existed as living humans, a fact established clearly in each narrative, but they have returned from the grave for mysterious reasons. The undead men cannot truly belong to the world they now inhabit because their bodies defy simple classification, an anxiety both corpses recognize, therefore making them ultimately ineffective instructors. Because both undead men literally cannot live up to the identities and expectations of modern society both seek refuge apart from the human world; Valerius embarks on a voyage to visit the landmarks of his past as well as explore

the new artifacts society has created, and Roger devotes his time to books. Both narratives are not merely exercises in experimental narrative techniques, as Elena Anastasaki asserts, but rather reveal the weight Shelley places on the alienating effect of otherness.³¹ Her characters do not toil in vain. Through their problematic experiences they offer a potential remedy—education—as a mediator for human feelings of alienation. Shelley’s short stories position the active pursuit of knowledge as a way of obtaining meaning and even personhood.

The themes that began with *Frankenstein* as continued in “Valerius” and “Roger Dodsworth” demonstrate Shelley’s lifelong pursuit of meaning and self-identity through education. Shelley’s continued investigations into Gothic education are pervasive throughout her oeuvre with *Frankenstein* serving as the entry point into her experimental system and “Valerius” and “Roger Dodsworth” demonstrating alternative hypotheses, following what Robert Mitchell argues when claiming that “experimental *systems* persist only to the extent that they create *new* questions and concepts.”³² The short stories denote an important shift in her philosophy where a historical obligation to continued education negates the need for social belonging. Education is crucial to Frankenstein’s Creature in the novel, with Shun-Liang Chao even contending that the entirety of *Frankenstein*’s plot revolves around the instruction of both Frankenstein and his Creature, but both characters

³¹ Elena Anastasaki, “The Trials and Tribulations of the Revenants: Narrative Techniques and the Fragmented Hero in Mary Shelley and Theophile Gautier,” *Connotations* 16.1-3 (2006/2007) 27. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

³² Robert Mitchell, *Experimental Life: Vitalism in Romantic Science and Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013) 9. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

are ultimately betrayed by their knowledge when it fails to save them from loneliness, even death.³³ Conversely, Valerius and Roger ascend to higher planes of knowledge only because they embrace solidarity as a positive aspect of their education. While both Valerius and Roger initially find comfort and stimulation in their interactions with others, in a young mother and physician respectively, the two reanimated men turn from society and to physical objects, which they view as timeless artifacts of knowledge.

Frankenstein's education follows the development of one creature's journey from what Chao refers to as "a natural state to a cultured one" (Chao 224), but Shelley's shorter works of reanimation place socialized beings in new societies as a disruptive but not terrifying experience. The undead cannot only be viewed as objects of terror, nor dismissed as Gothic monsters devoid of purpose other than to cause distress in the narrative and the mind of reader. As Valerius and Roger demonstrate, conceptualizing the undead bodies of the Romantic period as productive, instructive reanimated forms prioritizes the undying necessity of knowledge. These two characters remain unique in their unblemished appearance. They do not look dead which allows them to interact more readily with the living, making their decision to abandon human society all the more compelling. Valerius and Roger's ancient corpses hide their otherness beneath their seemingly uncorrupted flesh, but the living Creature's body seems monstrous in its revelatory composition. Ironically, only Frankenstein's creation visibly embodies death with yellow, watery eyes, black lips, a "shriveled complexion," and muscles and arteries

³³ Shun-Liang Chao, "Education as a Pharmakon in Mary Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN" *The Explicator* 68.4 (2010): 224. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

“scarcely covered” by yellow skin.³⁴ The translucent skin reveals the inner workings of life; barely covered musculature and visible arterial system make inner movement (or lack thereof) observable. The Creature forces all who encounter him to acknowledge a walking human anatomy, albeit a distorted one. The inner workings of the human body become monstrous in their grotesque glory, finally revealed through the newly introduced fields of physiology, medicine, comparative anatomy and a better understanding of human reproduction.³⁵ In revealing the usually invisible working body beneath flesh, the Creature becomes more monstrous than the reanimated corpses of “Valerius” and “Roger Dodsworth” for it flaunts the disgusting reality of being human. What was once conceptual has become concrete, defying reason with its existence and proving that knowledge can be disarming, even disruptive, representing the isolating nature of progress through the Creature’s ultimate rejection from human society. Despite being a modern marvel of science and innovation, the Creature cannot conform because he is alone. The grotesque body of Frankenstein’s Creature becomes the blemished visage of antiquity. Shelley’s following texts shift focus from the segregating limitation of nontraditional bodies to more amorphous threat of a displaced mind. While the Creature’s living body separates him from the society of others, the displaced knowledge Valerius and Roger hide within their seemingly ordinary dead bodies also alienates them from the

³⁴ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text, Contexts, Criticism* ed. J. Paul Hunter (New York: W.W. Norton, 2012) 35. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

³⁵ See Robin Jarvis, *The Romantic Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1789-1830*, 107–113; Elena Anastaski, “The Trials and Tribulations of the Revenants: Narrative Techniques and the Fragmented Hero in Mary Shelley and Theophile Gautier,” 26; Richard Sha, *Perverse Romanticism: Aesthetics and Sexuality in Britain, 1750-1832*, 29.

modern world. These reanimated corpses of the past must learn how to function in cultures that fetishize their antiquity, using their human bodies to facilitate the expansion of their intellects.

The two sections of this chapter explore the theme of isolation as essential to personal development through each of the two short stories. The first section begins with a summary of the “Valerius” narrative then moves into an examination of how interpretation of the past can only successfully occur with the interaction of living bodies and the items they produce. This section also investigates how Shelley elevates the importance of women to the development of national identity particularly in how they can instruct others to experience the sublime through nature. The second section includes a plot summary of “Roger Dodsworth” as well as Shelley’s role in the hoax that inspired the text and how it was received during the Romantic period. Analysis of the reanimated Englishman’s retreat into intellectual isolation reveals Shelley’s intent to present the past as a mode of inspiration rather than omniscient force in modern culture.

VALERIUS: THE REANIMATED ROMAN

Although Romantic readers never had the chance to encounter the narrative in which a resurrected ancient Roman awakens rather begrudgingly in modern Italy, Shelley’s “Valerius” stands as a reflection of the period’s preoccupation with bodies and death. It also shows Shelley’s particular fascination with how the two things—bodies and death—are related in the pursuit of knowledge. Shelley’s exploration of the reanimation theme is symbolic of Romanticism and its aesthetics. Anastasaki compares the “commonplace” Romantic feeling of being out of place historically and socially to the

“tangible” expression of such anxieties in Romantic authors’s treatment of the reanimated corpse (31). Again, the subject of “otherness” emerges in Valerius’s undead body, which existing between life and death, struggles not in the physical pain of rebirth but rather in the mental and emotional agony of existing between moments in time. Valerius finds purpose in exploring modern inventions with the help of a living woman, Isabell. As a creature of the past that no longer exists, and foreigner to the present, his investigation is an attempt to prepare for his uncertain future as an undead Roman.

The narrative opens with Valerius and “an Englishman of rank” sitting under the shade afforded to them by nearby tombs of the Elysian fields. Valerius goes on to recount his life since reanimation to the English “stranger,” choosing to begin his story with the history of his human life where he lived “frugally and filled with honour” as a Roman knight and consul in the time of Cicero and Kato, a profession that would lead to his death in battle at the age of forty-five (“Valerius” 333).³⁶ Valerius expresses that beginning the story in the past affords him the ability to emphasize the dramatic, and disappointing, changes in the world since that time. The Roman gives no explanation for his reanimation hundreds of years later only saying that “[the] sensations on my revival, and how the appearance of this world—fallen from what it once was—struck me when the light of the sun revisited my eyes after it had deserted them many hundreds of years”

³⁶ One cannot help but connect this encounter with that of Victor Frankenstein and Captain Walton, and the similarity further accentuates Shelley’s experimental system, where similar elements are combined in different ways with the hopes of producing revelatory conclusions about the meaning and purpose of life.

(“Valerius” 332–33).³⁷ Somehow procuring passage to Rome in a carriage accompanied by an unnamed priest, Valerius refuses to speak to any of his travel companions for fear that their dialect and conversation should “crush my last hope” that his glorious Rome still exists. The “shattered” remains of the Forum shock Valerius. Only the Coliseum, built after his time, offers any relief to the undead Roman for it represents a “seal of Eternity” reflecting his beloved Roman Empire (“Valerius” 334–35). Valerius forever haunts the structure, claiming it as “my abode during my second residence on earth” (Shelley 336). He only resolves to leave the Coliseum when a young mother, child in hand, asks him to teach her of the greatness of his Rome in return for her instruction in modern customs and manners (“Valerius” 338). The woman, Isabell becomes “the only hope and comfort” in Valerius’s life, a “divine creature” he loves dearly. Valerius’s account ends when he and the English stranger rowing to Naples, and a second, fragmentary version of the narrative in Isabell’s voice follows in Shelley’s manuscript (“Valerius” 339). Isabell begins her account of her relationship with Valerius by describing his initial withdrawal from all of society. Originally from Scotland,³⁸ Isabell was once too a stranger to the Italian landscape. She represents a less-disruptive but still foreign presence with whom Valerius can connect. The young, beautiful Isabell finds

³⁷ Valerius’s story here is convoluted and prompts more questions than answers. He makes repeated reference to “priests” who seem to be the first people he encounters after reanimation but gives no further detail.

³⁸ Isabell’s interest in and devotion to the body of an ancient man challenges the assumptions of Susan Manning who argues that the Scots of the Romantic period perceived antiquity subjectively and ambivalently Susan Manning, “Antiquarianism, the Scottish Science of Man, and the emergence of modern disciplinarity,” *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, eds. Leith Davis et al. (Cambridge University Press, 2004) 57–76.

herself driven by “interest and curiosity” to pursue a friendship with Valerius. She approaches the Roman at the place of antiquity he resides in, the Coliseum, and offers the following proposal to Valerius: “You shall teach me to know all that was great and worthy in your days, and I will teach you the manners and customs of ours” (“Valerius” 338). She goes on to detail the various locales and monuments she takes the undead Roman to in an attempt to inspire a connection between him and the modern world by evoking his past (“Valerius” 340–42). Her narration ends with a declaration of her affection for Valerius that inspires her to confront the “earthly barrier” between them (“Valerius” 344).

Characterized by the narrator as awkward in modern dress, Valerius’s “placid and commanding” Roman face produces a countenance similar to that of “a statue of Marcus Aurelius” (“Valerius” 332–33). Valerius’s outward appearance alienates him from the modern world. Despite lacking monstrous features his body is jarringly out of place. Nevertheless, his body is recognizable as human and stimulates the minds and bodies of those he encounters because of this fact. While brooding and intense, Valerius is not the traditional Byronic hero Anastasaki identifies. Her interpretation of Valerius claims that Shelley intentionally made the decision to present him as a new romantic hero “to give concreteness and plausibility, to give a ‘reason,’ to the romantic feelings of not belonging and make the romantic character more sympathetic even while he appears increasingly detached from the common man” (Anastasaki 40). This chapter asserts the impossibility of complete disengagement on behalf of the audience to the undead character, and instead I argue that the possession of a human body, even undead, unites all in corporeal unity through the experience of living in the human form. The real factor of separation can be

found in the displacement of the body and mind in time or space. For the undead, what should be dead is alive, and what should be the past is now present. This disruption is the cause of discomfort for Shelley's undead, a tension reflected in the uneasiness of the reader if the narrative succeeds in evoking reflections upon their own lives. Even without this outcome, Valerius's reliance on encountering relics of the past in his desperate struggle to find self-meaning stresses the necessity of a physical past for both human body and culture. "Valerius" presents the idea that without knowledge of the past, one cannot exist happily in the modern world.

Valerius is distraught, which stems not only from his nonlinear history, but in the disgust he feels for the current world he occupies. What he sees as a decline of civilization is caused by the world's current obsession with individualism over nationalism: "I need not trouble you with the history of my life—in modern times, domestic circumstances appear to be that part of man's history most worthy of enquiry. In Rome, the history of an individual was that of his country" ("Valerius" 333). Individualism does not exist for Valerius; his understanding of time is based not on years, but on the lives of others. The undead Roman's identity lies in his relation to other *living* humans and the relics they create. Unlike Frankenstein's Creature, Valerius's opinions of others merely situate him chronologically. The spaces he occupies concurrently with others creates a place-specific existence, with Rome providing the relational timeline without which he cannot exist. Valerius's new undead "life" finds structure as he pursues relics of the Rome—the place/person—he remembers, using their decay or permanence as a basis for his modern experience. He travels to seek the "boasted improvements of modern times, and to judge if, after the great fluctuation in human affairs, man is nearer

perfection than in my days” (“Valerius” 339). Ultimately, this proves to be a hopeless pursuit, for this exploratory education fails to surpass the ancient world of his memories, essentially making his own presence (and new present) meaningless. The decay of the old world made visible through Valerius’s reanimated corpse suggests that a desire to identify new relics, physical structures of the modern world that mimic the grandiose fantasy of his ancient Rome, leads only to misery.

Valerius’s nostalgia for the past is compounded by the disruption of his mind and body in time. Because he defines identity as being part of the nation, of being one body of many, one mind of a collective self, the undead Roman needs others like him to survive. Because of the inability for his undead body to interact with others like it and his mind’s desperate longing for unity through shared national experience of a culture that no longer exists, Valerius’s current reanimation becomes maddening. His suffering “is clearly the direct consequence of his experiencing a lack of familiarity,” writes Anastasaki, “and—most importantly—continuity” (30). The reality of not-knowing fuels his endless pursuit for some new beacon of knowledge to serve as place-specific locator with which he can reposition his identity.

Valerius’s initial inability to locate a laudable purpose in the modern world emphasizes Shelley’s affectionate use of antiquity. The things that remain “ever, ever the same” like the Tiber suggest an eternal power through their magnificence and an oversized frame. For Valerius, power comes from that which can endure the ravages of time and nature. The Coliseum inspires a “holy awe” in Valerius because he identifies its architecture with “the grandeur of my country—that is the only worthy asylum for an ancient Roman.” Valerius vows early on to return to the Coliseum after his journey

across Italy for his “heart is still there” (“Valerius” 334–36). Every other place he travels facilitates nothing but a sensation of desolation. Upon Valerius recognizing that his body is itself a corporeal monument to Rome, his displacement in time accrues historical meaning and generates additional pressures. His unique perspective to see the “tremendous change” that occurs over time in what to him seems only a matter of days becomes a godly burden as the only witness to time’s passing, an encumbrance Valerius describes to his travel companion with these words:

I cannot recollect the agony of these moments—without shuddering. It was not a train of bitter thought; it was not a despair that ate into the nerves but shewed no outward sign; it was not the first pang of grief for the loss of those we love. It was a fierce fire that enveloped the forests and cities in its flame; it was a tremendous avalanche that bore down with it trees and rocks and turned the course of rivers; it was an earthquake that shakes the sea and overturns mountain and threatens to shew to the eyes of man the mysteries of the internal earth. Oh, it was more than all these! More than any words can express or any image portray! (“Valerius” 337).

The sublime face of nature, unburdened by human history allows Valerius to experience emotion again, something he could not have accomplished without the guidance of the living, proving that the present shapes the past. Instead of relying on a dead nation to define him, on place and personhood, Valerius embraces timeless nature. The acceptance of the natural world as a referential system for identity demonstrates the necessity of physical environment to modern life as a means of creating shared experience and uniting

all bodies. Valerius learns this lesson of the sublimity of nature and the importance of time not from a priest, politician, or even a learned man, but from a young mother.

Their relationship begins with the promise of education. Each character's narrative derives from individual desires: hers for knowledge of the past, and his for an understanding of the present. Both of their lives become consumed by the alternating roles of teacher/student, a relationship made possible at least in part by their differing genders. The other men in the story receive far less attention. The narrator mentions the existence of Isabell's son and husband, but they remain otherwise unnamed, and Valerius's traveling companion is described only as "an Englishman." Isabell and Valerius's worlds exist for one another, and their devotion is all consuming, suggesting an underlying sexual tension driving their educational arrangement. Not only does Valerius call Isabell his "only hope and comfort in my life" ("Valerius" 339), but he attributes to her his continued desire for existence.

Isabell's purpose initially seems simply to be keeping Valerius alive, as Anastasaki argues. She is his only connection to the present (Anastasaki 30); however, their relationship quickly develops beyond survival to something much deeper. It is a connection than even Valerius says is stronger than any he had previously experienced in his life in the classical world: "she wins my soul and binds it up in hers in a manner that I never experience in my former life. She is Country, Friends—all, all, that I had lost she is to me" ("Valerius" 339). Given his previous statement that "the history of an individual was that of his country" ("Valerius" 333), the reader can conclude that Isabell is his history—his identity is dependent on her. Even if Valerius does not intend for his reliance on Isabell to construct his identity, his soul is bound to hers. This bondage suggests that a

shift has occurred in the modern era where women are more prominently recognized as important members to the construction of self and national identity. The importance of a national identity separate from other European countries, particularly France, consumed British life. A conscious, united decision Anne Frey identifies as an attempt by Britain to craft a distinct patriotism were aided by shared values of religion, trade prosperity, and liberal history.³⁹ Additionally, Britain felt compelled to establish a national identity given their involvement abroad, which required a standard language and the implementation of administrative structures to govern new British colonies (Frey 13–14). Shelley’s creation of the relationship between Isabell and Valerius reaffirms the importance of women to this construction. The conflicts Britain faced at home and abroad, “generated concern for the nation’s wellbeing that eviscerated the gender line between matters of state and family matters, inviting patriot women to stake out a civic role alongside their male compatriots for or against national policies whose effects potentially impacted domestic prosperity and security.”⁴⁰ Isabell was presumably brought to Italy because of her husband’s job (“Valerius” 338). She symbolizes the crucial role Great Britain played in the formation of national and global identity as their empire expanded across the globe. Isabell does not specify that she will teach Valerius about the manners and customs of her country but of “ours,” suggesting a common culture (albeit a white, Western one) in

³⁹ Anne Frey, *British State Romanticism: Authorship, Agency, and Bureaucratic Nationalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010) 13–14. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁴⁰ Francesco Crocco, *Literature and the Growth of British Nationalism: The Influence of Romantic Poetry and Bardic Criticism* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2014) 157. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

which she as the wife and mother presides over. Associations between women, family, and morality, according to Crocco's argument, made Romantic period females crucial to the development of society as mothers of future generations and "moral compasses" (Crocco 154). Isabell's role in Shelley's text confirms Crocco's theory by acting as teacher to the undead Valerius and in doing so proving her importance to the construction of the past to all men in addition to her son.

As a living ruin, Valerius signifies all that was "grand" in ancient Rome, and Isabell's dramatic impact on his soul signifies the female role in uniting past and present to construct a promising future. Representations of ruins in literature symbolize "the permanence of tradition that held together the nation." The evocation of ruins by Romantic authors "[refurbished] them with new meaning" (Crocco 158–59), something "Valerius: the Reanimated Roman" proves impossible to accomplish without the intervention of women. Isabell's intentions for aiding Valerius were not altogether altruistic; through him, she hopes to gain the traditional (masculine) knowledge he symbolizes to improve her own quality of life, and perhaps even her political standing, in the modern world. In co-opting the wisdom of the ancients, Isabell's feminine knowledge becomes more comprehensive, perhaps even superior.

The inclusion of Isabell's first-person account demonstrates her mastery of emotional and moral knowledge as well as more formal education such as history and politics. At first, she admits her intended desire for a relationship with Valerius to "draw him from the apathy under which he was sunk" ("Valerius: the Reanimated Roman" 339) having witnessed the "depression of his spirits" and general rejection of society. Here she proves her sensibility to the audience, adhering to the Romantic ideal of perceptive,

sensitive caretaker. Isabell seeks “to interest the feelings of Valerius and not so much to shew him all the remains of his country as to awaken in him by their sight a sentiment that he was still in some degree linked to the world” (“Valerius” 342). She can only accomplish this task by first relating the history of the “omnipotent” Roman Emperors and philosopher following his death. The names and deeds she lists, Camillus, Fabricius, Virgil, Horace, Caracalla, Nero, Titus, Ovid, “the mere workmen” (“Valerius” 340, 343), mean nothing to a man who has been dead for centuries other than to establish her superior knowledge. But it is not the fruits of her classical education that impress Valerius, but the way she manages to use that knowledge to inform her sensory experiences. The emotional response Valerius experiences as he is guided by Isabell, holds a greater educational value than her relating any of the advances made in academic and scientific knowledge following his death. As Isabell and Valerius contemplate the Pantheon she muses, “It is at such a time when one feels the existence of that Pantheic Love with which Nature is penetrated—and when a strong sympathy with beauty, if such an expression may be allowed, is the only feeling which animates the soul” (“Valerius” 342). Isabell locates self-identity and the recognition of the soul not in the remains of the Pantheon itself, but in the natural world’s influence upon it. She challenges the ideas Valerius holds about place-specific, national identity. Isabell shows Valerius remnants of Ancient Rome not to comfort him, but to purposefully displace him in time and space in order to unite his mind and body in the modern world to make him a modern romantic. The physical form and the intellect (even the soul) achieve balance in recognizing their shared experience in nature and the sublime experience it can provoke.

Only by merging both traditional (masculine) and emotional (feminine) knowledge as taught to him by Isabell can Valerius find meaning in the modern world. In turn, she is rewarded for her efforts in the removal of the “earthly barrier” between the “love and interest” she has for the ambling corpse through a shared “interest and intellectual sympathy” (Shelley 344). Valerius’s choice to leave Isabell can be explained by his desire to grow personal identity by experiencing nature without his instructor and mother figure. The student sends himself out into the world not solely to “examine the boasted improvements of modern times” (“Valerius” 339) as he claims, but to encounter Nature’s powerful influences/impacts upon these contemporary constructions. This is why Valerius’s narrative ends not with him standing before some great monument of modern knowledge, but on the sea. As the narrator describes in the final lines, “The brilliant spectacle of sunset and the soft light of the moon invited to reverie and forbade words to disturb the magic of the scene. The old Roman perhaps thought of the days he had formerly spent at Baiae, when the eternal sun had set as it now did, and live in other days with other men” (Shelley 339). Timeless Nature, her vast sea and dependable sun recall Valerius’s past without disturbance or disruption. In his experience of this moment, the ancient Roman’s undead body affords his mind a similar encounter to one he had in life, eliminating the initial displacement he felt upon reanimation.

The intimate cross-historical, undead relationship between Isabell and Valerius challenges perceptions of self-identity and knowledge dissemination. By recognizing the capacity of Nature to cross boundaries of time, gender, life and death, Shelley’s narrative stresses the importance of wandering/wondering in the natural world. Humanity must not rely on manmade artifacts and technologies to ensure historical relevance, but rather

emphasize shared experiences between minds and bodies. Even then, isolation is required to solidify self-identity but only after some preliminary education has been obtained. This sensory-based education is symbolized in the undead body itself, which represents the unity of physical experience with intellectual thought to expand conceptions of reality and character.

ROGER DODSWORTH: THE REANIMATED ENGLISHMAN

Valerius's undead experience emphasizes the importance of interpersonal connection as part of the creation of self-identity whether that occurs through shared nationality or instruction on how to perceive Nature to construct meaning. "Roger Dodsworth: The Reanimated Englishman" conversely presents solitude as the key to learning. The absence of the distractions of other, living bodies allows the student to possess greater clarity and concentration. For the displaced, undead Roger, self-imposed exile affords him the ability to function successfully in the modern world, negotiating his past and present self-worth through the circulated knowledge of others.

The narrative begins by reminding the reader that in July of 1826, Dr. Hotham had unearthed a frozen corpse buried in the snows of an avalanche. Upon application of "the usual remedies" the "resuscitated" frozen body claimed himself to be Mr. Dodsworth, and that he died during the reign of Charles I in 1654 ("Roger Dodsworth" 43). Since 1826, Dodsworth has not been heard from or seen, much to the dismay of the antiquarian society who had already planned to offer the reanimated man a substantial sum for his clothes and any other artifacts he might have on his person. Poets initially inspired by Dodsworth's appearance in the modern world leave their work unfinished,

and “Mr. Godwin” abandoned his volume of history to obtain more accurate information from a man who had once lived in the past Godwin sought to record (“Roger Dodsworth” 43). “Roger Dodsworth” goes on to insist that a human body could indeed survive a suspended animation for hundreds of years, and that the “icy shroud” under which Dodsworth had lain preserved his body (“Roger Dodsworth” 44). The narrator then speculates as to what the first words of the reanimated man would have been, supposing that he would have first uttered a long prayer and then asked “If any news had arrived lately from England?” (“Roger Dodsworth” 45).

After learning that the current political atmosphere in England is dramatically different from the days of his life, Dodsworth mourns the loss of those he loved to the passage of time before “Necessity, tyrant of the world” forces him to “reconcile” his fate (“Roger Dodsworth” 47). Dodsworth initially finds the world much deteriorated from the one he once knew, and only when he adopts (and admires) modern dress does he begin to adjust. “His curiosity is insatiable; when he reads, his eyes cannot purvey fast enough to his mind” and Dodsworth continues to further his education with the knowledge of the modern world. After a page of philosophical musing from the narrator regarding the role of the soul and how “instructive” it would be if one’s mind could recall “what they had been” (“Roger Dodsworth” 47–49), the text concludes by bidding Dodsworth to return to the public to answer the inquiries of the living. Or, if “his ancient clay could not thrive on the harvests of these latter days,” finding no “affinity between himself and the present state of things,” that the “dead alive” Dodsworth may be buried with dignity (“Roger Dodsworth” 50).

Charles E. Robinson identifies the first report of the reanimated man occurring on June 28, 1826, in the *Journal du Commerce de Lyon*, with an English translation appearing four days later in London.⁴¹ “Testimonies” of the once-frozen man came from Shelley, Thomas Moore, William Cobbett, Samuel Rogers, Theodore Hook, and “Roger Dodsworth” himself (Robinson 20–21). A letter published under Dodsworth’s name in *John Bull*’s September 1826 issue features a statement from the reanimated man himself who claims to currently be living with Samuel Rogers and expresses the intent to suspend his reentry into society until the completion of his historical education. Rival magazine *New Monthly Magazine* penned another supposed correspondence with Dodsworth despite *John Bull*’s claim that a “severe accident” damaged Dodsworth’s writing hand. Not to be outshined, *John Bull*’s editor Theodore Hook took it upon himself to produce a final letter in which he declared himself “a lover of truth,” insisting upon Dodsworth’s continued existence and detailing the reawakening process he had undergone as evidence (Robinson 24–26). No physical evidence of the presence of a reanimated man in the early nineteenth century was ever produced. In September 1826 “Dodsworth” sent letters to the “hoaxing editor” of *John Bull* and further publications regarding the reanimated man took a satirical turn (Robinson 22–23). After thirty-seven years outside of the press, Roger Dodsworth returned to public attention in 1863 when Cyrus Redding published Shelley’s “Roger Dodsworth: The Reanimated Englishman.” The editor included a note with the publication indicating that the piece had been giving to him by Shelley “for a particular purpose, many years ago, and long before her decease. I did not use it for the purpose

⁴¹ Charles E. Robinson, “Mary Shelley and the Roger Dodsworth Hoax,” *Keats-Shelley Journal* 24 (1975): 21. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

originally intended, and therefore print it in another place than that in which it was originally intended to appear.” That original publication likely would have taken place in *New Monthly Magazine* where Redding was an editor and which was already covering the story (Robinson 25).

Compassion rather than satire colors Shelley’s take on the reanimated Englishman, and her intention in crafting the story reads not as entertainment, but philosophical enquiry. The author explores concepts of life and education through the displaced body of Dodsworth, the initially unwilling then eager participant an isolated version of the modern world. For the reanimated Englishman, learning is not a revelatory process, but a desperate one, as he struggles to survive in his new world. Robinson claims Shelley’s interest in the Dodsworth hoax came from her fondness for imagining how men from other eras would act in modern times (26), but another interpretation identifies the narrative as provocation of how history determines education. “Roger Dodsworth” is representative of Shelley’s call for social reform, Elisabetta Marino asserts, designed to “awaken” readers through a study of history and appreciation for the antique, a suggestive claim but one that also ignores the undead body at the core of the story.⁴² Shelley’s body of the past is not representative but literal. By inserting the undead into her work the author makes the past physical and purposeful in its ability to materially interact with the living. In doing so, Shelley calls attention to the bodies that interact with one another in the present. Dodsworth does more than provoke artistic and intellectual inquiry in the living. His own actions after reanimation portray reveal a desire for

⁴² Elisabetta Marino, “The themes of reanimation and immortality in Mary Shelley’s short stories.” *British and American Studies* 21 (2015): 28

wisdom so great that death only galvanizes its power. Through Dodsworth, Shelley explores the human condition, motivated by a desire to establish the importance of both experiential and conceptual knowledge to a meaningful existence.

The physical state of being between living and dead establishes a breaking of boundaries in this story. Dodsworth's presence becomes inspirational for the living characters in the story for it presents the potential for revealing secret wisdom of the past. The liminal state Dodsworth occupies as "dead alive" both reinforces and challenges modern scientific understanding. When Dodsworth's body is found by Dr. Hotham, the physician claims he is alive, but had entered into a frost-suspended animation. However, the narrator makes it a point to clarify that Roger "did not sleep" under the snow but rather "his breast never heaved, his pulses were stopped; death had his finger pressed on his lips which no breath might pass" ("Roger Dodsworth" 44). The lack of a pulse and absence of breath in his body suggest that Dodsworth was technically dead despite his description as being "suspended." Even when Dr. Hotham later notes the "calm" pulse of his "patient" it is easily to believe that the physician feels no heartbeat at all and instead explains away the undead phenomenon to halt a more frightened reaction. Death "stands wondering" when he is vanquished by Dodsworth's "resuscitation" ("Roger Dodsworth" 43–44) because Death had already taken the man into his arms. Death's "wonder" mirrors the reaction of the living characters who conceive endless "philosophic ideas" from which "Mr. Dodsworth's resuscitation naturally gives birth" ("Roger Dodsworth" 48).

As with *Frankenstein* and "Valerius," in "Roger Dodsworth" the actual method of reanimation of the body remains vague. Dodsworth returns to life "upon the application of the usual remedies" ("Roger Dodsworth" 43). The number of Shelley's readers who

would have known of such techniques cannot be quantified, but like her allusions to galvanism in *Frankenstein* (and outright mention of the practice in the 1823 edition) the evocation of “the usual methods” lends a sense of realism to the work. As declared by the Royal Humane Society’s ‘Society for the recovery of persons apparently drowned’ at the end of the eighteenth-century, all sudden deaths including stroke, convulsions, “suffocation by noxious vapours,” “strangulation by the cord,” and persons frozen could be brought back to life with the same methods.⁴³ When the Dutch branch of the Society claimed 150 people “have been redeemed from death in the space of a few years” Milan, Venice, Germany, Paris, and finally London and Westminster adopted their methods of resuscitating the “suddenly dead.” The British Society for the recovery of persons drowned even offered a reward for any attempts to restore life using the methods offered in their publication (Royal Humane Society 7).⁴⁴ Using this information of what constituted as the “usual remedies” in Britain, it can be presumed that having warmed and dried Dodsworth’s body his corpse would have been given rudimentary CPR and also have tobacco smoke flushed into his bowels accompanied by simultaneous rubbing of his flesh vigorously with a coarse cloth dipped in strong alcohol (Royal Humane

⁴³ Royal Humane Society. *Society for the recovery of persons apparently drowned. Instituted M.DCC.LXXIV*. London (1774?) 3. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁴⁴ The Society offered two to four guineas for any attempt to resuscitate “man, woman, or child, taken out of the water for dead” in London, Westminster, and their adjacent parts so long as the body had been under water for no more than two hours. The reward amount only raised to four Guineas if the resuscitation attempt was successful.

Society 3–12).⁴⁵ The Society for the recovery of persons drowned placed a two-hour time limit on capacity for a dead body to be restored (Royal Humane Society 3, 7). A man frozen for hundreds of years and incapable of breathing or pumping blood through his circulatory can reasonably receive the categorization of “undead.”

The narrator states that animation “can be easily suspended for a hundred or two years, as for as many seconds” a fact which “physiologists” would agree with, and given the “hermetic seal” provided by the frost, Dodsworth’s resurrection could logically occur (“Roger Dodsworth” 43–44). Shelley’s application of the term “hermetic seal” refers to a complete closure of all openings to the body by the snow/the cold. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term as “air tight closure of a vessel, esp. a glass vessel, by fusion, soldering, or welding; also applies in Surg. To a method of dressing wound.” First used in a 1663 sermon, the term found its first published appearance, according to the OED, in J. Bentham’s *Indications respecting Lord Eldon: including history of the pending judges’ salary-raising measure* (1825),⁴⁶ a text referencing among other things the corruption of

⁴⁵ The “rudimentary CPR” I refer to is detailed in this exert from the text: “Blow with force into the lungs, by applying the mouth to that of the patient, closing his nostrils with one hand, and gently expelling the air again by pressing the chest with the other” while another attendant should “throw the smoke of tobacco up by the fundament into the bowels, by means of a pipe or fumigator.” A bellows is also acceptable for this purpose in a pinch. A third attendant rubs the torso and arms with “coarse cloth or flannel dipped in brandy, rum, gin, or with dry salt” (12). It seems unlikely that Dr. Hotham would have been able to complete the task of resuscitating Dodsworth without the help of others given these instructions (and especially given that he had been dead for hundreds of years), but Shelley’s frequent suspension of scientific details and rational belief make such detail unnecessary.

⁴⁶ By Bp. J Taylor on the funeral of Abp. Armagh. *Oxford English Dictionary*

judges and the legal system.⁴⁷ Given the history of the term, we might conclude Shelley's use of it implies a scientific explanation for Dodsworth's undead state much in the same way she uses Galvani's experiments in electricity to add a sense of technical realism to her work. Her stories are devised to provoke contemplation of the state between life and death, and how the living might learn to comprehend such an idea. The reanimation of the "youthful antique" prompts the narrator to speculate about what constitutes life itself:

That which is totally secluded from the action of external agency, can neither have anything added to nor taken away from it: no decay can take place, for something can never become nothing; under the influence of that state of being which we call death, change but not annihilation removes from our sight the corporeal atoma; the earth receives sustenance from them, the air is fed by them, each elements takes its own, thus seizing forcible repayment of what it had lent ("Roger Dodsworth" 44).

Interestingly, there is no mention of what happens to the spirit or soul of Dodsworth's body, unsurprising given death's conceptualization as a change in states of being rather than "annihilation." By this reasoning, the undead body might be a monstrosity in that it is an unusual aberration, but the natural transition of things or bodies from one state of

⁴⁷ Jeremy Bentham, *Indications respecting Lord Eldon: including history of the pending judges' salary-raising measure*. (London, 1825), 46–47. Referencing what Bentham perceives to be corruption established in Parliament that allowed "the Judge of the several Courts of Record at Westminster to make regulations respecting the fees of the Officers, Clerks, and Ministers of the said Courts." The exact quote in its entirety is as follows: "The same hand, which, had no better interests than the public's been to be provided for, would have left loop-holes, through which the entire substance of the measure might be extracted, has, in this its darling work, as if by an hermetic seal, closed all such crannies."

being to the next, should not provoke fear or anxiety. Although the dead body's reanimation is horrific in its capacity to challenge ideas of the afterlife and the function of the corporeal body after death, its physical presence does not inspire fear.

Shelley's narrator presents Virgil's theory that every thousand years the dead return to life, their souls maintaining the same "sensibilities and capacities as before," which if true would "prove an instructive school for kinds and statesmen, and in fact for all human beings," but removes Dodsworth from the conversation ("Roger Dodsworth" 49). For Shelley, the idea of the everlasting soul is intriguing, but not useful for her intentions to promote education because it relies on the living idly waiting for some great revelation. This is where her living characters fail in their reaction to Dodsworth. Instead of allowing his presence to produce anything of value, they form half-conceptualized ideas that are abandoned when the undead man fails to present himself as a harbinger of universal wisdom. Dodsworth feels no obligation to the living, instead choosing to surround his undead body with beautiful material possessions as he reads voraciously, his solitary pursuit of knowledge punctured only by the occasional "royalist song" ("Roger Dodsworth" 47–48). The reanimated Englishman's retreat into intellectual isolation underscores a larger theme on the Romantic undead. The living cannot depend on the past to solve the future, but must instead allow it to stimulate their potential. The old ways of antiquity, of great empires romanticized in hindsight, do not serve Britain's advancement as a country. While artifacts from societies past might offer insight and further understanding, without considering the present, the future is ambiguous.

Dodsworth's "insatiable" curiosity keeps him occupied in the modern world, signifying the vital role of intellectual curiosity to all bodies. The narrator emphasizes

this noting, “The ideas that had taken possession of his brain before the accident, and which had been frozen up for so many years, begin to thaw and dissolve away, making room for others” (“Roger Dodsworth” 47). Only with the presence of existing literary knowledge can these spaces be filled and in doing so drive away the pain and shock of undead life. Shelley positions education and the recording of knowledge that is critical to conscious existence. In his new life, Dodsworth seemingly lacks the need for interpersonal relationships. He is content to allow Dr. Hotham to house and clothe him, but according to the narrative, engages in little interaction with the living man himself. Dodsworth is emotionally, physically, and intellectually fulfilled through his insatiable reading. Books, the textual remnants of moments past and present, give Dodsworth’s undead life meaning. Knowledge, for Dodsworth, resides not in communing and sharing ideas with the living, but through personal, private intellectual investigation. Like his undead body, the book is a physical artifact of the past, information made tangible. Shelley places value on the necessity of understanding one’s own self before attempting to connect to others, an interior identity that must be constructed away from the public realm.

Both the undead Dodsworth and his literary brethren Valerius represent not only Shelley’s dedication to questioning Romantic conceptions of life and death, but her unique approach in comparison to other authors of the period who craft undead characters. Dodsworth and Valerius’s appetites for intellectual and sympathetic education present the reanimated corpses as disgruntled scholars, bodies pushed unwilling into the modern world with seemingly no other purpose than to expand their own minds. The other texts explored in later chapters will show that the undead more often serve as teachers

themselves, disseminating lessons on what and what not to do as their terrifying bodies repel almost all whom they encounter. By grasping at the basics of intellectual education through literacy, language, and history, Shelley's undead try to give their lives meaning by becoming students of life itself. These two short stories demonstrate that Shelley's experimentation with life and death, knowledge and self-identity did not stop with *Frankenstein* but became a driving force toward identifying the purpose of life in her literature and her own construction of self. In presenting the amiable undead as students, Shelley demonstrates the folly of relying on the past to determine the future. Shelley's stories present self-identity as an ongoing process requiring the constant pursuit of knowledge.

The idea of an ambivalent undead, reanimated bodies who struggle more with crafting self-identity than any other pursuit, is a novel one. These corpses are only able to accomplish this feat because they can establish relationships with the living based not on terror or fear. Shelley's undead are lost souls, but they are not monsters. Where others, like her father Godwin, declare the idea of corpse reanimation something to "shrink" from, Shelley embraces the possibility of a second life as a chance to learn from the past and help future generations prepare for impending change by relying not on some wiser guiding force but on their own intellectual pursuits. Seeing these lesser-known stories alongside *Frankenstein*, we might see Isabell speaking for Shelley when she describes her respect for the undead: "*I did not feel fear or terror; I loved and revered him.*"

CHAPTER TWO

LOUDON'S ERUDITE MUMMY AND THE UNDEAD'S NECESSITY FOR BRITISH SUCCESS

"Well a Mummy is inspiring: there's spirit in a Mummy!"

-William Bale Bernard, *The mummy a farce in one act*, 1833⁴⁸

Frequently overshadowed by her husband's fruitful foray into horticultural and landscape design texts, Jane Webb Loudon's literary legacy remains largely unrecorded. Her first publication, a science fictional novel entitled *The Mummy!: A Tale of the Twenty-Second Century* (1827), has only recently gained traction in scholarship.⁴⁹ A three-volume novel set in the year 2126, *The Mummy!* is most often compared to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), which predates Loudon's text by nearly a decade. Loudon claims that the narrative in her novel was presented in a dream, mirroring Shelley's account of the origins of her celebrated work of science fiction.⁵⁰ Perhaps as a result, critics have not been kind to Loudon's novel. Lisa Hopkins dismisses *The Mummy!* calling it a "quasi-comic inversion" containing "very few hints at anything resembling the

⁴⁸ William Bale Bernard. *The Mummy a Farce in One Act*. (London: Duncombe and Moon, 1833) 54.

⁴⁹ Jane Loudon, *The Mummy!: A Tale of The Twenty-Second Century*, Vol. I–III (London: Henry Colburn, 1827). Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁵⁰ In the introduction to the novel, Loudon claims that the story was given to her in a dream by a winged spirit whom claimed "it is the Chronicle of a future age" containing "a hero totally different from any hero that ever appeared before" (Loudon 1: vi–vii).

ambiguities and emotional depths of *Frankenstein*.”⁵¹ Hopkins perceives Loudon’s seminal work as an insignificant, incoherent text created only because “she did not like what she read” (5).

But such critical conversation unhelpfully discourages serious readings of the novel and devalues attempts to treat Loudon as an influential Romantic author. This chapter will argue that *The Mummy!* is an insightful, complex tale whose use of the mummy Cheops as its undead moral center illuminates the early nineteenth-century’s preoccupation with acquiring knowledge. An exploration into Romantic Egyptomania with an emphasis on the mythology surrounding the mummified body, the novel utilizes the mummy as an undead corpse both terrifying and preternaturally wise. Loudon’s depiction of the Ancient Egyptian culture and the immense expansion of knowledge during that period is represented in the undead body of her character Cheops. Seemingly galvanized back to life by a young, overzealous natural philosopher, Cheops’s imposing figure lends his advice to both the protagonists and antagonists of *The Mummy!*. By conceptualizing the exotic, undead body as a superior moral instructor to the living British, Loudon asserts the importance of non-white cultures to the future of Britain.

In addition to offering an analysis of the text itself, the following chapter argues that Loudon’s aims of cultural and moral instruction can only be achieved with the help of an undead body. A dramatic symbol of past and present colliding, the undead body challenges the other characters of *The Mummy!* to re-evaluate their own motivations. One important change he suggests is an elevated level of respect for young women. Cheops

⁵¹ Lisa Hopkins, “Jane C. Loudon’s ‘THE MUMMY!’ Mary Shelley Meets George Orwell and They Go in a Balloon to Egypt,” *Cardiff Corvey* 10 (2003): 9. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

identifies the young girl Clara as the only individual stronger and nobler than any other living creature he encounters. The mummy's admiration for Clara situates her as the ideal being whom all should emulate. Although the complex political plot and rather dense language of Loudon's novel make it unlikely that she intended the text to serve as children's literature, the veneration of young women in the narrative suggests an alternative Gothic configuration. The innocent, female orphan becomes dependent on interior strength rather than the protection of exterior (usually male) forces. With the guiding hand of Cheops, the conclusion of the narrative positions Britain and new ally Ireland for global domination while still managing to ensure the happiness of the population. A delicate balance between power, politics, and popular opinions can only be realized, according to Loudon, if there exists a willingness to listen to foreign and past voices, both of which are found in the body of the undead Cheops.

Some readers in the nineteenth century appeared to be more willing to listen to such voices than others as varying reviews of *The Mummy!* reveal. Mimicking some of the current scholarly criticism of the text, Loudon's own contemporaries found the novel to be too ridiculous to be of value. In a scathing critique appearing in an 1827 edition of *The Monthly Review*, the anonymous columnist claimed "all the ingenuity consists in the author's having compiled three volumes, without allowing a grain of sense to form part of the composition." Going on, the critic describes the plot as being "treated with a practical development of stale newspaper jokes" and recommends that the readers should

save their time and ignore the work.⁵² This harsh criticism is contradicted by the popularity of Loudon's novel. Just a year after the first release of *The Mummy!* H. Colburn produced a second edition of the text in 1828. The novel even reached audiences outside of Britain, including Germany. As records from 1858 show, King Ernest Augustus of Hanover owned a copy of *The Mummy!* in his private collection.⁵³

Admiration for the narrative from the public continued throughout the nineteenth century and reviews improved dramatically. In 1871, a critic states "I have often wondered why this novel has never been reprinted, for its extreme originality would alone recommend it to the public taste."⁵⁴ Like scholars today, this reviewer noted the connection between Shelley and Loudon in referring to Cheops as "a second Frankenstein" ("The Mummy' and the Knitters" 19). The glowing review, published in *Once a Week*, goes on to claim the novel "grasped the idea of the astounding progress in mechanical invention which is being daily developed, and which is changing the aspect of so many fields of industry" ("The Mummy' and the Knitters" 20).⁵⁵ Perhaps the critic's pleas for another run of *The Mummy!* were heard. That same year *The Book Buyer* listed a new

⁵² "Art. XIII, *The Mummy! a Tale of the Twenty-second Century*. 3 vols. Small 8vo. London: Colburn. 1827," *The Monthly review*, Vol. VI (London: R. Griffiths, 1827) 411–12. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁵³ L. Nolte, *Katalog der Privat-Bibliothek Seiner Majestaet des Königs von Hannover* (Hanover: Schlüter, 1858) 383.

⁵⁴ "'The Mummy' and the Knitters," *Once a Week*, Vol. VIII (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1871) 19. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁵⁵ The reviewer's summary includes referring to Cheops as a tyrant who makes the other characters his "slaves" and controls the "destinies of the world (19). The analysis of this chapter will disprove this claim. "'The Mummy' and the Knitters." *Once a Week*. Vol. VIII (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1871) 19.

edition of the text in one volume, advertising this 1871 version as the “New and cheap edition.”⁵⁶ *The Mummy!* is also included in a publisher’s advertisement as part of the “Warne’s Companion Library” (1875) (*The Book Buyer*).

The popularity of *The Mummy!* and its multiple editions rejects the claim that Loudon’s success as an author was caused by her foray into instructive horticultural texts for women.⁵⁷ The assertion that Loudon’s fiction established her literary career challenges current critical assumptions about her legacy. For instance, Hopkins claims that after *The Mummy!* Loudon “concentrated entirely on gardening” (6). A proper study of her body of published work demonstrates Loudon’s continuing commitment to education and fiction even after her marriage. Her succeeding publications included an additional novel, an economic theory text, instructive children’s literature, and a travel narrative. These texts include such titles as: *Stories of a bride: by the author of The mummy* (1829);⁵⁸ *Philanthropic Economy; Or, the Philosophy of Happiness, Practically Applied to the Social, Political, and Commercial Relations of Great Britain* (1835);⁵⁹

⁵⁶ *The Book Buyer: A Monthly Review of American and Foreign Literature*, Vols. 5–6, (New York: Scribner and Company, 1871) 11. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁵⁷ See for example, *Young Ladies Book of Botany* (1838); *Gardening for Ladies* (1840); *Botany for Ladies* (1842); *The Ladies Companion to the Flower Garden* (1840–44).

⁵⁸ Follows protagonist Emily as her father tries to educate in a way that will “unite the knowledge and intellect of the one sex, with the softness and fascination of the other.” However, it is her housekeep who teaches her to read and sew, and eventually Emily is sent to her aunt’s home to raise and educate her (Loudon 7, 15–18). Loudon’s faith in *living* men to properly raise a female child is tentative to say the least.

⁵⁹ A self-described “little work” on “the organization of the social and political systems on the plans the most conducive to the happiness of all, it is written in the spirit

Facts From the World of Nature, Animate And Inanimate (1848);⁶⁰ *Glimpses of Nature, And Objects of Interest Described During a Visit to the Isle of Wight.... 2nd ed., with additions and forty-two illustrations* (1848);⁶¹ *Mrs. Loudon's Entertaining Naturalist: Being Popular Descriptions, Tales, And Anecdotes of More Than Five Hundred Animals* (1850).⁶² The many volumes Loudon published for the education of women and children demonstrate her dedication to the distribution of knowledge in a variety of genres.⁶³ The breadth of such knowledge and the research required to impart it emphasizes her devotion to public instruction.

Loudon's dedication to education is, in fact, evident from her first novel, *The Mummy!*. The text presents the reader with plausible inventions based on the scientific knowledge Loudon possessed. It showcases her understanding of the science in the Romantic period, with fantastical automatons and galvanized corpses included in the novel as results of scientific understanding. More importantly, Loudon provides her

of 'good-will to all'" (Loudon ii). Promotes universal education with the intention of producing sympathy and justice, a theme explored in *The Mummy!* as well.

⁶⁰ Intended to promote appreciation of nature in young audiences to elevate the mind.

⁶¹ A teaching text for "young persons in forming habits of observation" (Loudon iv) through the fictional experiences of a girl named 'Agnes Merton.' The narrator shares her name with Loudon's own daughter Agnes, whom accompanied her parents on a family trip shortly before John's death.

⁶² Introductory classification information for a variety of fauna, including fictional animals like the sphinx.

⁶³ Alan Rauch, *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians, Morality, and the March of Intellect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001) 67. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

readers with a moral education. Shelley's inspiration for Loudon is evident in her emphasis on technological advances as things that must occur in conjunction with advanced moral thought and in how she "encourages her readers to progress with the times by advancing their standards of moral and social behavior" (Rauch 89). Through the narrative Loudon instructs her readers that without an understanding of science as a tool of life rather than the driving force behind it, the social and moral responsibilities of a good citizen become secondary to the detriment of the nation and the soul. This lesson is demonstrated through the displaced body of Cheops who finds the innovations in science and technology produced since his death to be distracting humanity from its ethical and moral responsibilities. Examination of Cheops's interactions with the other characters of the novel and their reactions to his physical corpse reveals Loudon's attempt to resituate the human body as the ultimate machinery, an apparatus that cannot be entirely explained through science.

SUMMARY OF THE MUMMY!

Before progressing any further into the lasting cultural implications of *The Mummy!*'s themes, an account of the novel's complicated plot demonstrates the complexity of the ideas Loudon presents. Loudon's depiction of a future England in the novel sees a country that has reached peace under the rule of unwed female sovereigns. Their rule was a tradition established after a failed attempt at democracy. Having reached great wealth and prosperity as a country, the British satisfied themselves by first conquering the globe and ransacking it of all natural resources, then by establishing a system of universal education (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 1–9). However, war returned to

Great Britain. A retreat by the Irish in 2127 is immediately followed by a declaration of war from Greece and Germany (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 17–19). During this wartime, an omniscient narrator follows the lives of numerous characters, although the novel focuses primarily on six main protagonists: Edmund Montagu, a famous soldier; Edric Montagu, the studious younger brother; Elvira, the daughter of the Duke of Cornwall and potential heir to the throne; Rosabella, the other woman in the line of succession and niece of the Duke of Cornwall; King Roderick/Henry Seymour, the monarch of Ireland who disguises himself as Seymour to infiltrate British court; and Clara Montagu, the orphaned cousin of Edmund and Eric. The true action of the novel begins after a proposed union between Edric and Rosabella causes the man to flee to Egypt with his tutor Dr. Entwerfen,⁶⁴ the duo intending to reanimate a mummy using a strong galvanic battery (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 38–41; 83–87). At the tomb of the pharaoh Cheops, Edric succeeds in awakening the mummy. Edric faints when touched by the creature, which leads Cheops to escape and prompts the arrest of the two men as sorcerers (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 218–230).

The reanimation of Cheops creates a domino effect leading to the death of Queen Claudia and the entrance of London into a period of “gloom” as a direct result of the mummy’s presence and “the thought of supernatural agency” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 291). Elvira is reluctantly elected to serve as monarch, and a spurned Rosabella schemes to take the throne from her, ultimately convincing Edmund to abandon his unrequited love for Elvira and marry her instead. She then passes a law allowing queens to marry,

⁶⁴ The good doctor’s name in German literally translates to “design” making his role as an inventor and scientist a fitting profession.

securing both the throne and a husband. After usurping Elvira, Rosabella and Edmund rule as Queen and King until Cheops helps Elvira escape the country and flee to Ireland. She encounters King Roderick, recognizing him as ‘Henry Seymour,’ with whom she is besotted, and the couple marches through England. Rosabella is removed from the throne after it is revealed she is the bastard child of a servant who switched the royal daughter with her own. Now married, Elvira and Roderick are crowned King and Queen of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland. Edric marries Pauline, the true niece of the Duke of Cornwall, Edmund disappears, and Cheops returns to his tomb and permanent death.

MORALITY AND THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

Loudon’s narrative follows its characters across the globe, as does Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Although no characters in *The Mummy!* ever go as far as the Arctic, the protagonists of Loudon’s text travel frequently and in some cases, using extraordinary methods (moving houses, balloons). This “special expansiveness” denotes a larger cultural shift towards a “preoccupation with ‘inner space’” and metaphorically represents the crossing of boundaries taking place in Romantic thought.⁶⁵ The character who voyages the furthest is the mummy himself, Cheops. Brought back from death, Cheops has traveled from one world to another, one state of being to another. In *The Mummy!* the undead are the ultimate boundary crossers and ideal metaphors for the literal embodiment

⁶⁵ Christa Knellwolf King and Jane R. Goodall, eds. *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008) 49.

of social change by existing in the past and present simultaneously. Loudon chose the particular undead character of the mummy because of the explorations it has taken in its multiple lives.

Cheops's soul has traveled for 3,000 years in different bodies, making his experiential knowledge vast. Loudon prescribes to the Egyptian belief "that the Soul, after it had quitted the human Body, pass'd successively into the Bodies of different Beasts, Animals of the Earth, Birds or Fishes; and that after a Resolution of three thousand Years, it again animated the Body of a Man."⁶⁶ The two characters who reanimate Cheops in the narrative believe that only after 3,000 years will the souls of dead Egyptians be able to return to their mummified bodies (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 106). Upon returning from the dead, Cheops possesses knowledge of experience unknown to living humans. He gains the status of an educator simply with his rebirth. Loudon claims that knowledge "is power" (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 46, 65), yet there are different degrees of knowledge—some can be imperfect and "mistaken" and therefore misused, but "enlightened and widely diffused knowledge be still [a] greater power" (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 66). At the start of the novel, Loudon's protagonists possess only "imperfect" knowledge, lacking the self-awareness and experience required for true power. Because these characters only achieve enlightenment through Cheops's guidance,

⁶⁶ Charles Rollin, *The ancient history of the Egyptians; Containing I. A description of the several parts of Egypt, with the most remarkable curiosities, as the obelisks, pyramids, Lake of Mæris, Nile, &c. II. The customs, laws, religion and manners of the Egyptians. III. The history of the Kings of Egypt. Herein you have all that is curious or useful in Herodotas, Diodorus Siculas, Pliny, Pompoius Mela, Strabo, &c. Intended chiefly for the use of young students in the universities, and such gentlemen as design not to make antiquity their principal study. Written originally in French by M. Rollin, late rector of the University of Paris, professor of Eloquence in the Royal College, &c. Done into English with additional notes* (London, 1730) 47.

Loudon stresses the necessity of a wisdom accrued not only through the technical knowledge afforded by science and literature, but an understanding of human character as provided by living a virtuous life.

The Mummy! explores the complications of scientific imagination and its moral effect. The diffusion of knowledge at the beginning of the nineteenth century reflected a period of great change in all aspects of society. The tensions of the Romantic period are evident where “knowledge, as a cornerstone of progress, improvement, and civilization, answered well as a vehicle for moral growth” (Rauch 24). Obtaining knowledge became a symbol of progress and status, a way for the middle and upper classes to distinguish themselves while maintaining the illusion of equality, thus avoiding a repetition of the French Revolution in England. The procurement of knowledge existed for all people, not just the elite and “a growing population of readers, from all classes, recognized that some degree of social status could be gained through learning” (Rauch 22). With advancements in the printing and publishing industry the written word served as a particularly valuable tool for spreading all kinds of knowledge throughout the populace. Female authors of scientific texts published during Loudon’s childhood (Jane Marcet and Maria Edgeworth, for example) adopted a conversational style in their texts, placing women in the position of authority in such narratives through a dialogical exchange of education.⁶⁷ Loudon relies on narrative prose to educate. The authors of advertised educational texts, according to Patricia Fara, often “devised fictional settings to engage their pupils’ interest

⁶⁷ Patricia Fara, “Educating Mary: Women and Scientific Literature in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830*, eds. Christa Knellwolf, and Jane R. Goodall (England: Ashgate, 2008) 18. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

in scientific knowledge” (18). Loudon breaks from this mold by working to inspire her readers to learn through speculative fiction.

Some undoubtedly found her successful as demonstrated by John F.M. Dovaston in the *Magazine of Natural History and Journal of Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy, Geology, and Meterology* in 1832: “The fair authoress of *The Mummy* well and wisely observes that ‘There is an invincible feeling implanted by nature in the mind of man, which makes him shudder with disgust at anything that invades her laws.’”⁶⁸ Loudon’s reference in a nonfiction educational text shows her as a voice of intellect whose fictional work raised questions worthy of contemplation by the scientific community. Although Loudon’s narrative largely critiques the hypothetical moral consequences of science, the future world she creates does improve quality of life. *The Mummy!*’s titular character returns from the grave not to prove that technology is inherently problematic, but to demonstrate that prioritizing knowledge for knowledge’s sake over moral wisdom results in a collapse of ethics. This chapter attempts to answer why Loudon chose an ancient reanimated Egyptian to serve as the moral instructor for her narrative. The mummy’s unique place between life and death, male and female, teacher and apprentice, ancient and new, proves to be the perfect dichotomous construction of an ideal moral instructor, providing Loudon’s characters, and her readers, with the guidance they need to succeed in a changing world.

⁶⁸ John F. M. Dovaston, “Original Communications,” *Magazine of Natural History and Journal of Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy, Geology, and Meterology*, Vol. V, No. 24 (1832) 113.

Loudon's use of a mummy figure as the source for the construction of her undead character not only reflects the early-nineteenth century's growing fascination with Ancient Egypt, but challenges conceptions of Egypt's past culture as being destructively, immorally decadent. The Napoleonic campaigns in Egypt, Hopkins claims, served as inspiration for Loudon's Cheops (5), but the association of Ancient Egypt with grandeur had already been established in the early-eighteenth century. One such text by Charles Rollin published in 1730 details the considerable size of ancient Egyptian structures, painting these "most remarkable curiosities" filled with "wonderful art" as impressive and magnificent to behold (7). With such a long literary history it is unsurprising that by Loudon's lifetime, other literature displayed a similar reverence to the opulence of Ancient Egypt, but made efforts to justify such fascination by glorifying the culture's longevity through the artifacts and structures it produced. In François-René Chateaubriand's *Travels in Greece, Palestine, Egypt and Barbary, During the Year 1806 And 1807* (1814), the text notes that the "vanity" leading to the production of the pyramids can be overlooked given the Egyptians ability to withstand the "ravages" of time.⁶⁹ The excess of the Ancient Egyptians no doubt reminded the British of the recent events in France instigated in part by the excessive displays of wealth by that country's royal family. Therefore, texts showcasing the Egyptians prosperity are meant to be admired but not imitated, at least in theory. One brief glance at Bullock's Egyptian Hall in London proves otherwise. Loudon's adoption of the mummy and its history was not

⁶⁹ François-René vicomte de. Chateaubriand, *Travels In Greece, Palestine, Egypt, And Barbary, During the Years 1806 And 1807* (New York: Van Winkle and Wiley, 1814) 408. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text..

only opportune but also shrewd. The narrative's reflections on the corruption of wealth and complacency make the pursuit of moral knowledge at the core of the text a reworking of the history of Egypt. "Every thing is a tomb, with a nation that no longer exists" (Chateaubriand 407), so resistance to repeating the failures of the past is essential. The only thing stopping future Britain from falling into ruins is the embodiment of Ancient Egypt—the mummy.

The Romantic preoccupation with mummies seems unsurprising when viewed as an extension of the pyramids and the affluent culture that constructed them. Authors of Egyptian travel texts make a point to demonstrate that these impressive structures main purpose was to house the dead. Rollin simply states, "These Pyramids were Tombs," monuments of kings and "Mansions" for the body to reside in for "a long Succession of Ages" (8, 48). The sheer size of the pyramids shocked European visitors before they were forced to confront their purpose, but once realized the association of pyramids as bridges between life and death, past and future, become impossible to ignore. This revelation, as expressed by Chateaubriand, emphasizes respect. He says,

I confess, however, that at the first sight of the Pyramids, the only sentiment I felt was admiration. Philosophy, I know, can sigh or smile at the reflection that the most stupendous monument ever erected by the hand of man is a tomb but why should we behold in the Pyramid of Cheops nothing but a heap of stones and a skeleton? It was not from a sense of this nothingness that man reared such a sepulchre but from the instinct of his immortality. This sepulchre is not the boundary that marks the termination of the career of a day, but the entrance of a

life without end; 'tis an everlasting gate erected of the confines of eternity
(Chateaubriand 406).

Chateaubriand's description of the pyramids as "gates" underscores the capacity of the pyramids to open spectators to new worlds, including life beyond death. Additionally, his noting that these tombs are "entrances" not exits, signifiers of possibly not restraint, significantly changes the conversation to present an optimistic frontier. The mummy serves the same function; it is not only a corpse but a vessel, a body preserved for the immortal soul to return to—a promise of posterity. The body becomes powerful, requiring respect in life and death. Confronted with the realities of the body itself as revealed by new science regarding corpse dissection and changing perspectives of human anatomy, it is not hard to imagine the aw(e)ful promise Romantics like Loudon associated with corpses.

One result of these revelations is a desire to interact with the physical mummy itself, encounters that actually occurred in the real world through medical and scholarly texts, and the public presentation of real mummified corpses.⁷⁰ The fascination with the mummified corpse and its physicality prove that the undead were not only a conceptual

⁷⁰ Rollin details the mummification process as he understands it in great detail, and the early date of his publication (1730), laid the foundation for eighteenth-century understanding of the ritual. According to his account, there are three kinds of embalming, with the "more magnificent" reserved for those of high rank. This process included the removal of the brain, intestines, and entrails, which were otherwise seen as those things "susceptible of Corruption." The body was then filled with myrrh, cinnamon and other spices and wrapped in linen attached with the "thinnest Gum" before being covered with perfume. Through this method "the entire Figure of the Body, the very Lines of the Face and the Hairs on the Lids and Eye-bros were perserv'd in their natural Perfection" (Rollin 48-49). The ability to recognize facial features might explain the prevalence of mummies of the royal class appearing in texts like Loudon's where humanizing the undead is crucial to the narrative.

idea during the Romantic period but part of material culture. The mummy Loudon's readers would have been confronted with might not have been reanimated, but the importance placed on the body of the mummy both inside and outside of fiction challenges conceptions of life/death and time. Mere words paled in comparison to a confrontation with the actual object, and the market for mummified corpses of humans and animals soared in nineteenth-century Britain. In 1819, a mummy could be purchased for around four dollars.⁷¹ From existing accounts, it appears that only foreign, Egyptian mummies were examined during the early-nineteenth century. Attempts to identify the name and past social status of each mummy were made by an examination of the hieroglyphics⁷² and painted faces of the sarcophagi (if such casing was present), and by evaluating the type of mummification that occurred. Those corpses that received multiple sarcophagi, higher quality layers of bandages, or the presence of additional relics among the bandages such as amulets could all be clues to guessing the mummy's identity as well.⁷³

⁷¹ A.B. Granville, "An Essay on Egyptian Mummies; With Observations on the Art of Embalming among the Ancient Egyptians," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. 115 (1825): 269. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁷² The discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799 and the Philae obelisk (1822) ultimately led Jean-François Champollion to translate hieroglyphics for the first time in 1822, all events that contributed to the study of mummified Egyptian bodies.

⁷³ See A. B. Granville; John Hadley, "An Account of a Mummy, Inspected at London 1763. In a Letter to William Heberden, M.D. F. R. S. from John Hadley, M. D. F. R. S." *Philosophical Transactions (1683-1775)*, Vol. 54 (1794) 1–14; John Frederic Blumenbach, "Observations on some Egyptian Mummies, and the Arts Practiced by the Venders of them," *The New Annual Register: Or General Repository of History, Politics, Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, vol. 37 (1795) 124–25; John Frederick Blumenbach, "Observations on Some Egyptian Mummies Opened in London. By John Frederick

Mummies donated or sold to museums and private collectors were sometimes subjected to an aesthetic assessment. Small parts of the body would be unwrapped to determine if its condition and appearance were appropriate for display, a task frequently accomplished by unwrapping the head, which Day asserts as evidence of a “desire to individualize, humanize, even ‘greet’ the deceased.”⁷⁴ Unwrapping mummies became an immensely popular in public and scientific circles. On March 12, 1837 *The Champion* published an article summarizing Thomas “Mummy” Pettigrew’s public unwrapping of a female mummy. Beneath bandages of linen, the body appeared “hard, dry, and shiny.” Each leg was bandaged separately.⁷⁵ Another newspaper, *The Weekly True Sun* offered a different account of the same Pettigrew unrolling, noting that the event occurred “before an attentive and highly interested audience.”⁷⁶ Pettigrew profited from the cultural fascination with mummies and sold tickets to his necropsies.⁷⁷

Possessing pieces of the mummy and the things its body had touched gained particular importance. An American newspaper reprinted an article from Professor W.

Blumenbach, M. D. F. R. S. Addressed to Sir Joseph Banks, Bart. P. R. S." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 84 (1794): 177-95.

⁷⁴ Jasmine Day, *The Mummy’s Curse: Mummymania in the English-speaking world* (New York: Routledge, 2006) 29. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁷⁵ “Unrolling a Mummy,” *Champion* (London: 12 Mar. 1837): 207.

⁷⁶ “Unrolling a Mummy,” *Weekly True Sun* (London: 12 Mar. 1837): 1474.

⁷⁷ Kathleen L. Sheppard, “Between Spectacle and Science: Margaret Murray and the Tomb of the Two Brothers,” *Science in Context*, 25(4) (Cambridge University Press: 2012) 534.

Byrd Powell entitled “Tasting a Mummy—How to Embalm Bodies.”⁷⁸ As the title would suggest, Powell details an instance in 1829 or 1830 whereupon examining a female Egyptian mummy, the man cut a piece of muscle from the corpse’s chest and ate it “for the purpose of obtaining an accurate idea of its taste” (Powell 426).⁷⁹ Powell’s unusual account accentuates the desire of the public to not only see the mummy in person or encounter it in print but to possess it in order to gain control over the exotic body and the historical past.

Katherine K. Sheppard asserts that the public accessibility, and popularity, of mummy unwrapping turned the process into a “spectacle” and thus “pushing mummy studies slightly into the fantastical public realm” (534).⁸⁰ The prevalence of newspaper articles describing mummy unwrapping, along with medical publications on the subject defy Sheppard’s claim that before the Victorian period it was “difficult to place these unrollings outside the context of a private salon” (535). Loudon’s fictional narrative further contradicts Sheppard’s claim. The insertion of a detailed mummified corpse into

⁷⁸ W. Byrd Powell “Tasting a Mummy—How to Embalm Bodies,” *Western Medical Reformer*, Vol. I, No. 9 (London: 1857) 426–27. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁷⁹ Apparently the taste is akin to that of smoked venison, albeit more salty. W. Byrd Powell. “Tasting a Mummy—How to Embalm Bodies,” *Western Medical Reformer*, Vol. I, No. 9, (London: 1857) 426–27.

⁸⁰ The fact that the mummy became part of British cultural lexicon challenges Sheppard’s claim. An unnamed political commentator in 1855 names his column “Mummy Worship.” The critique concerns members of the lower class who “tired of progress, disgusted with reform” wish to end “self-government” and return to a monarchy. The title of the piece is a reference to the working-class’ nostalgia for a political past (“Mummy Worship” 1201).

The Mummy! made the figure well-known to an even wider audience.⁸¹ Whereas Loudon's mummy defies scientific reality as an undead body, Cheops actual depiction recalls the real-life accounts of mummified bodies in British culture.

We can further understand the importance of the mummified body and its cultural portrayal in A.B. Granville's 1825 essay on Egyptians mummies. He emphasizes the Romantic yearning for the personalization of mummies. He goes into great detail regarding the appearance of every body part and its wrappings, calling the neatness and complexity of the bandaging an "art." Like others, he paid particular attention to the face, noting one mummy's "perfect teeth" (Granville 270–93). Loudon adopted this scientific vocabulary in her depictions of Cheops. Not only does *The Mummy!*'s undead corpse have "snow-white teeth," but narrator described Cheops's body thus: "All was perfect" (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 217). "Perfect" appeared as an adjective to describe the mummified corpse in the publications of real physicians during the period (Granville 275, 277, 270–281). Some scientists would sever the mummified corpse into pieces, an act encouraging the separation of the human individual from the corporeal form.^{82 83}

⁸¹ The invention of photography later in the nineteenth century made the mummy more publically accessible. In France, one photography journal in 1899 reports, a trend arose where a living human subject would place their head on the neck of a decapitated mummy to look like the corpse bore their own image. "Mummy Photography." *The Photographic News*, Vol. XLIII, No. 181 (1899) 369.

⁸² T.J. Pettigrew, *Account of the Examination of the Mummy of Pet-maut-ioh-mes, Brought from Egypt by the late John Gosset, ESQ. and now in deposited in the Museum in the Island of Jersey*. (London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1838) 9.

⁸³ Some mummies would have the organs believed to be sacred to Ancient Egyptian religion (stomach, lungs, liver, and intestines) removed prior to the salting and drying portion of mummification. The mummy's body would therefore not have been whole as it was in life, but Loudon approaches the mummy as complete because its

Loudon's use of a body untouched by decay or the anatomist's scalpel challenges this compartmentalization. Although she adopts some common cultural diction of the mummified body she presents Cheops's undead corpse as an individual entity. His eyes and teeth are never mentioned in a sentence without some further illusion to the body itself, most commonly its large stature or domineering presence. Terror is produced because the characters in the narrative recognize the whole body as similar to their own. The value of the mummified body as a means by which to understand the past and the human body would have been obvious to Loudon's Britain as the above accounts of mummy dissection and display prove. For the living to acknowledge that all dead bodies, not just those with whom they had a personal connection with in life, were unique human individuals appears to have been more challenging. Unlike the "real" mummies confronted in museums and drawing rooms, *The Mummy!*'s characters are forced to recognize the corpse as a vessel of living knowledge, of a soul. Interaction between past and present cannot occur with investigation of the dead body alone, but in the recognition of its life experience and world in which it moved as a living human. Cheops's ability to speak and touch the other characters makes reality of his body as a one which houses intelligent, thoughtful wisdom harder to resist.

In using the name of a real Ancient Egyptian, Loudon further commits to her purpose of drawing the reader's attention to the humanity of the undead. Naming her mummy 'Cheops' above other pharaonic monikers seems logical given the Egyptian's reference in Chateaubriand's text, but of greater importance is that Loudon chose a real

exterior remains intact. However, only the richest members of society could pay for a complete mummification with organ and brain removal, so Loudon might only have had knowledge of the bodies that were preserved with organs intact.

person. *The Mummy!* is promoted as the “first major mummy story” by Day who also assigns Cheops into the category of “wise elders with the moral authority.” Mummies served as teachers in an age where political and social upheaval prevailed (Day 33, 39). In classifying Loudon’s text as a curse narrative in which the mummy is first seen with a sympathetic gaze only to become terrifying when its evil nature is revealed, Day diminishes any instructive elements Cheops represents. Day incorrectly summarizes the plot saying, “Cheops, awakened with electricity, travels to England to *usurp* its throne” (Day 39, 46; emphasis mine). This description disserves Loudon and suggests that Cheops is the villain intent on taking down the British government, an unfounded and misleading interpretation for those unfamiliar with the text.

Cheops’s intentions have nothing to do with elevating his own power but securing the future for British imperialism. In fact, his guidance of the characters is an attempt to atone for his own sins by promoting the ascension of rulers worthier than himself (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 308–311). In doing so he improves the lives of the living and paves the way for a bright future for England. Much in the same way Thomas Young used his translation of the Rosetta stone as a way to solidify Britain’s claim as a global power, Loudon’s moral diatribe secures the country’s moral superiority. In *An Account of Some Recent Discoveries In Hieroglyphical Literature And Egyptian Antiquities* (1823), Young claims that his discoveries are unique and “had never been established and placed on record, by any other person, dead or alive” until his publication.⁸⁴ Among his motives

⁸⁴ Thomas Young, *An Account of Some Recent Discoveries In Hieroglyphical Literature And Egyptian Antiquities: Including the Author's Original Alphabet, As Extended by Mr. Champollion, With a Translation of Five Unpublished Greek And Egyptian Manuscripts* (London: J. Murray, 1823) 14. Subsequent references cited

for publication was a desire to secure “for my country, what is justly considered as a desirable acquisition to every country, the reputation of having enlarged the boundaries of human knowledge, and of having contributed to extend the dominion of the mind of man over time, and space, and neglect, and obscurity” (Young x). Loudon’s reliance on instructive texts on Egypt from authors such as Young, Chateaubriand, and Rollins undoubtedly informed her own intentions. Driven from the desire to expand knowledge for posterity, understanding, national pride, and human improvement in general, Loudon constructs the undead Cheops to serve as her champion because he symbolizes the power of experience without the distraction of personal gain.

Cheops is the harbinger of knowledge. Loudon’s narrative does not revolve around the white European characters’s prescriptions of meaning onto Cheops’s body although it is problematic that Loudon, as a British subject, falls into the category of colonizer. Cheops crucial role to the narrative counteracts imperialist stereotypes. As the ultimate educator in the novel, he teaches the white men and women of the text how to be better people, an interesting reversion of power roles typically associated with foreigners. The commodification of Egyptian luxury in the Romantic period usually results in the adaptation and naturalization of the assimilated object.⁸⁵ Associated with grandeur and opulence, Ancient Egypt became synonymous with exotic luxury. The goods produced to mimic the artifacts of Egypt’s empire were crafted in the West. China printed with Egyptian patterns, sphinx figurines, cameos of Egyptian gods, and decorative canopic

parenthetically in the text.

⁸⁵ Diego Saglia, “Consuming Egypt: Appropriation and the Cultural Modalities of Romantic Luxury,” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 24.3 (2002) 318. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

vases were among the goods produced for Western consumers (Saglia 321–22). The appropriation of Egyptian culture to suit Western needs and cultural habits demonstrates imperial dominance, a way to further control other communities by converting their history to better suit their own—and for a profit. However, the control Cheops has over his own body prevents a similar integration. Cheops literally cannot assimilate because of his undead status and capacity to move between the boundaries of life and death, meaning his impact on the British characters of the narrative comes *from* his otherness, not in spite of it. Though scholars like Day assert that Europeans of the nineteenth century felt that they alone could interpret the past using their (presumed) superior knowledge (30), the inclusion of Loudon in such discussions offers another way of interpreting the adoption of foreign objects by the British Romantics.

British cultural construction of Ancient Egypt during Loudon’s lifetime emphasized the immensity of the objects the earlier culture created, and in *The Mummy!* these ideas are transcribed to the body of Cheops. In the nineteenth-century, Egypt was conceptualized as culture obsessed with grandeur (including massive architecture) and excessive consumption. The markedly large decorative style the British appropriated associates Egyptian gigantism with “deformity and monstrosity” (Saglia 318–324). Cheops’s bodily architecture is no exception. Characters in the novel often describe him as “tall,” of “athletic stature,” and possessing a general aura of “supernatural grandeur” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 298–99, 306). He is not without his charms however, remaining a well-preserved and lifelike corpse: “All was perfect as though life still animated the form before them, and it had only reclines there to seek a short repose. The dark eyebrows, the thick raven hair which hung upon the forehead, and the now-white

teeth seen through the half open lips, forbade the idea of death; whilst the fiend-like expression of the features made Edric shudder” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 217). Like the temples and pyramids of Ancient Egypt, Cheops is terrifyingly beautiful. The mummy possesses almost a sublime effect for those who encounter him cannot pull away from. Loudon’s characters admire Cheops perfect form, noting: “His athletic stature, his dark swarthy complexion, and his strongly marked features” before looking into his eyes and seeing their “fearful lustre” and the “horrid glance of eternal hatred” that can “freeze their blood (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 288, 298-99). Cheops appears attractive from a distance. Only upon seeing his eyes and body up close are the other characters able to recognize that he is undead, and only then does fear dominate their thoughts. Cheops’s “deformity” comes not from his body itself, but by its reanimated state, the same thing that gives him power. However, though viewed as supernatural and terrifying, he does not repulse other characters. Instead he appears as “a destroying angel, spreading consternation as he went, and all he met flying horror-stricken from his sight” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 295). In a fiery entrance from the sky, the balloon crashes into a large London crowd at almost the same moment of the current queen’s death. Cheops seems to be a heaven-sent creature determined to seek ought the unjust among the living (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 283–86). Observed as an angelic (although vengeful) figure rather than a demon, *The Mummy!* constructs the undead monster as divine and purposeful, justifying its presence as a lesson from God rather than a punishment. Loudon’s Mummy is the ultimate “intimate connection between Egyptian ornamentation and the sublimity conjured by images of death” (Saglia 321). The infiltration of an actual corpse rather than a decorative vase into the British home represents the potential benefits of colonialism by signifying the past’s

capacity to illuminate the revisions required for a secure future.

Cheops embodies the knowledge of the past. An undead intellectual prophet, his presence in *The Mummy!* reveals the true nature of each character in his private conversations with them by encouraging the individuals to disclose their true motivations out loud, therefore allowing for the guarantee for British success. Although Cheops's undead body at first "appears threatening and fearful, what he actually offers people is help, and he also appears to possess a near-omniscience which allows him unfailingly to diagnose what kind of help is needed in each individual case" (Hopkins 9). Arguably this "near-omniscience" is a learned device; his past life grants Cheops knowledge of experience the living cannot replicate. Edric says as much himself when discussing his desire to reanimate a corpse: "If the idea be correct, that the soul leaves the body the instant what we call death takes place, how can these instances of resuscitation be accounted for?...It cannot surely remain in a dormant state and be reawakened with the body; for this would be inconsistent with the very idea of an incorporeal spirit" (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 37–38). The Christian belief in everlasting life and heaven cannot exist without the capacity to believe that bodies are vessels to an immortal soul. Undead bodies emphasize the importance of corporeality for this truth to be revealed. Edric's tutor and the family priest Father Morris ensures his charge that if a corpse with "reasoning faculties in full perfection" was to exist, any doubt regarding the "incorporeal spirit" would be erased (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 38). Simply summoning the spirit of Cheops as a ghostly form is not only impossible, but irrelevant. Without the human body to return to, his wisdom cannot be passed down. The undead physically bring the past to the present, walking and talking amongst their students.

Knowledge literally powers Cheops. At first it is assumed the knowledge is scientific, for the characters initially believe that scientific experimentation causes his resurrection. Even when this is proven to be false, Cheops only find the motivation to walk among the living because he believes his personal experiences can better inform those who power the nation. Edric uses a galvanic battery to awaken the mummy, carrying it by air balloon from Britain to Egypt.⁸⁶ Although Cheops's eyes "open with the shock" the Pyramid itself shakes and light flashes around the room (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 218), suggesting that something more powerful is at work. When he does awake, Cheops's knowledge of the past, of the grave, and of the moral potential of humans drive him to continue to engage with the living. He uses his undead body as a tool. Although Eric Wilson claims mummies are androids created by humans to repair the "painful rift between mind and matter, knowing and being" to serve as "mechanistic doubles untroubled by the awareness of self."⁸⁷ Cheops's experience of reanimation challenges these assumptions. For the mummy of Loudon's narrative, the reuniting of body with mind is excruciating. Cheops recounts, "horrible were the sensations that throbbed through every nerve as returning consciousness brought with it all the pangs of his former existence, and renewed circulation thrilled through every vein" (Loudon, *The*

⁸⁶ Other scholars have addressed the history and social significance of galvanism far more effectively than I could hope to replicate giving the constraints of this project. For those interested in its influence on Loudon and other nineteenth-century authors, consult *Frankenstein's science: experimentation and discovery in Romantic culture* by Christa Knellwolf and Jane Goodall, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s* by Sharon Ruston, and "Pioneering Contributions of Benjamin Franklin and Giovanni Aldini" by Tom G. Bolwig and Max Fink.

⁸⁷ Eric Wilson, *The Melancholy Android: On the Psychology of Sacred Machines*. (Albany: State University of New York) 2.

Mummy! 1: 250–51). The pain the mummy feels in his nervous and circulatory system indicates an intimate understanding of his own body. Loudon's undead creature does not walk the earth nebulously; he literally feels every pulsation of his heart and every step he takes. Cheops's retained connection to his body is so strong that he initially does not even realize he is dead until he sees the wrappings covering him (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 253).

With this understanding of his body as a reanimated corpse, comes an acceptance of its monstrous power to demand respect. Part of the reason Cheops is privy to the private lives of the other characters is because his body demands attention. Even before he speaks, the mummy's body influences those around him. As Cheops stalks through London, all flee from his path, only to return to watch his retreating back (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 295–6). Something undoubtedly compelling arises from Cheops's appearance, and the living are attracted to him regardless of their fear. Cheops represents the “painful rift” between mind and body Wilson identifies, but his self-awareness is far from “untroubled.” The pain Loudon's mummy feels is more acute than anything a living human could experience. Part of Cheops's wisdom comes from the uncomfortable presence of his body, both to his own mind and to those with whom he interacts.

Such preoccupation with the body indicates a Romantic anxiety about understanding life. The study of “bodies” as portrayed in literature and medicine in the Romantic period connects poetry and medicine in a conceptualization of the material body as “key” to understanding both fields.⁸⁸ All Romantic literature, James Robert

⁸⁸ James Robert Allard, *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007) 5. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

Allard argues, contains a pervasive idea of “body consciousness” or “an awareness of oneself and others as physical, embodied beings (a consciousness of bodies) and an awareness that such perception happens through the body (a *bodily* consciousness)” (Allard 9–10). The undead *are* embodiment. Loudon’s Cheops illustrates the power of “body consciousness” utilized by the mummy himself. He represents the consciousness of physical desires all undead bodies in literature display. Cheops’s desire manifests in a physical and philosophical need to educate the living.

Loudon quickly establishes that the knowledge possessed by the living at the start of the novel is inadequate. Education has become universal, but the education offered has hindered the country. All citizens receive schooling, but the working classes still fail to progress from such teaching: “It was impossible for those to study deeply who had to labour for their daily bread; and not having time to make themselves masters of any given subject, they only learned enough of all to render them disputatious and discontented” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 4). Widespread schooling denied the upper classes the feeling of superiority and exclusivity, leading to a revolt in social manners. The upper echelon now use “an excessive plainness and simplicity in his language; so much so, indeed, as sometimes almost be degenerate into rudeness, in order that it might clearly be distinguished from the elaborate and scientific expressions of the vulgar” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 53). Appearing unintelligent indicates wealth and privilege, and intellectuals have become something of a satirical caricature. Ultimately, the country consists of a population whose “heads were filled with words to which they affixed no definite ideas, and the little sense Heaven had blessed them with was lost beneath a mass of undigested and misapplied knowledge” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 1: 4). *The Mummy!* ponders whether

or not the advances of technology and knowledge allow for the maintenance of morality. As the narrative proves, Loudon believes that humanity's future exists in a world of great invention, yet strong moral decline. The novel contains electrical machines to create and catch rain (1: 27), a rudimentary mirror holoscreen (1: 30), moveable houses (1: 41), automaton birds (1: 254), flying robotic horses (1: 270), and robotic prison guards indistinguishable from humans (3: 98). Yet none of these incredible inventions prevent the country from falling into chaos—Cheops does.

Loudon's world is one in which "human knowledge is distinctly secondary to moral values,"⁸⁹ but who is to say that moral values do not constitute a type of knowledge? The lessons the undead provide require not only the reanimated body's past experiences, but a physical encounter with that body itself.⁹⁰ To hear accounts of the mummy or engage with him through sight alone only inspires fleeting terror but interacting with Cheops through language and touch is revelatory, which demonstrates the corporal necessity of the resurrected body. When Cheops attempts to educate Lord Edmund on the folly of pursuing glory and fame as he did, cautioning the man that trusting in one's own strength will cause his downfall, the "deep thrilling voice of the Mummy" upon his ear strikes him as "a warning from the grave" (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 2: 44–45). The sensory experience of hearing the undead creature's "hollow sepulchral

⁸⁹ Alan Rauch, *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians, Morality, and the March of Intellect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001) 62. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁹⁰ The fictional books that feature these narratives function as the physical "body" for the reader. The living audience encounters the undead through the tangible text, which facilitates the acquisition of the wisdom of the undead through the physical experience of reading.

voice” and “gazing” at his body creates “a strange feeling” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 2: 46–48). The living body requires corporeal interaction to actually be effected both body and mind by the undead. Knowledge of Cheops’s body evokes bodily knowledge in the characters, and this experience cannot be forgotten. The mummy’s reliance on physical touch in some of his most important interactions is explained by the necessity of corporeality to understanding. When Father Morris swears allegiance to the mummy, Cheops demands his hand to “seal our compact” and upon clasping the priest’s hand in his “iron grasp” “an icy chill seemed to creep to Father Morris’ heart” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 2: 34). The narrative reveals that Father Morris is hardly an innocent character: he poisoned Queen Claudia, secretly fathered Rosabella, tries to kill Elvira, and finally murders the mother of his child (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 278–93). His feeling upon touching Cheops has nothing to do with the mummy’s morality but his own. The mummy reveals the priest’s true nature as a warning that Father Morris obviously does not heed. Even when the priest tries to repent he is “unable to resist the feelings” of desire for “wealth and dignities” when Cheops reminds him of his previously expressed intentions (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 2: 79–81). Cheops does not cause Father Morris to do harm, but forces the man to look at his own damning desires.

Cheops makes an excellent counselor for those with purer intentions as well, but he only recognizes young women as worthy of praise. Clara flees the mummy, only for his “hand of iron” to hold her back and “an icy chill shot to her heart” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 202). Like Father Morris, this physical contact causes a great revelation. Clara tells Cheops she will sacrifice her own life to save Queen Elvira. When the mummy speaks to her, it is not to warn her or chastise, but praise her declaring: “I have marked

you attentively, —and as I do not know any individual possessing more strength of mind and personal courage than yourself, I have fixed upon you to be my attendant in this enterprise” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 201). The only person Cheops trusts is this young girl, a symbol of the future of England. Unlike her older counterparts, she is not driven by any “misapplied knowledge” and possesses qualities even the undead find admirable. She alone can touch him without fear, clinging “tightly to the Mummy’s arm for protection” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 213). Her pure heart suggests that her superior moral knowledge garners her respect. At one point she even rushes to save the Mummy, feeling an “inexpressible agony” at the thought of him in danger (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 213). Unlike many other depictions of young women and the undead during the Romantic period, some of which will be addressed in the following chapters, Clara is not compelled by romantic or sexual desire of any kind to rush to aid the mummy. She in some ways is his superior, possessing purity, bravery, and an empathy that placates even the undead Cheops.

By making a girl the true heroine of the novel, Loudon elevates the potential of young women. Much in the same way many of her scientific publications targeted women for education, *The Mummy!* cleverly approaches fiction with the same intent. Although Cheops does not hold the same esteem for Elvira that he does for Clara, he helps her take the throne because her benevolent leadership and kindness are not learned from his teaching, but inherent qualities she possesses. Elvira and Clara are the only two characters in the novel to receive a loving gesture from the mummy. Upon securing their safety, Cheops bids them farewell and kisses each on the forehead: “Both shuddered at the touch of those cold marble lips, and an icy chill ran through their veins, as the fearful

conviction that their companion was no earthly being thrilled in their bosoms” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 217–18). Given that “even the strongest minds dread supernatural horrors” (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 218) this blessing received little welcome, but the girls do go on to achieve great happiness by the end of the narrative. Furthermore, both marry for love and presumably go on to bear children—creating a new generation of British subjects who have all been “blessed” by the mummy. Cheops’s lessons will not be lost, his approved disciples propagating the land with offspring knowledgeable in morals as well as intellect.

Only after guiding Elvira and Roderick to the throne, repairing the monarchy, and driving Edic and Clara to marital bliss with their respective spouses, does Cheops deem it time return to his tomb. Whereas the female sex has already past his tests as demonstrated by Elvira and Clara, men must also prove their worth. Cheops summons Edric to the pyramid for his assessment. At first, the Mummy remains unimpressed with the young man because of his demands to know the answers to the universe. Cheops deems such questions unworthy of comprehension of living humans. He alone can comprehend this knowledge because in death he gained the wisdom of the grave. Enraged that Edric still seeks to know “the secrets of the tomb” Cheops lectures:

Weak, silly worm! are you not satisfied then? How would this knowledge avail you? Has any thing but misery attended your former researches? And can any thing but misery attend the knowledge you now covet? Learn wisdom by experience! Seek not to pry into secrets denied to man! If you wish still, however to be resolved in your doubts, behold me ready to satisfy them; but I warn you, wretchedness will await upon my words (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 307).

It is not that Cheops lacks the answer to the questions Edric poses, but that it should not be man's desire to seek them in the first place. Cheops's final lesson, and true purpose for reanimation, is to teach the living that some wisdom must remain hidden. Like the message in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, some knowledge is too powerful for mortal comprehension and can only result in distress. The undead function as mediators between the known and the unknown. They are willing to share their experiential knowledge and the clarity that comes from reflecting on a previously experienced existence, but part of that revelation comes with the wisdom that not all questions need answering. The mummy confirms as much when he reveals to Edric the purpose for which he became undead: "Permitted for a time to revisit earth, I have made use of the powers entrusted to me to assist the good and punish the malevolent. Under pretense of aiding them, I gave them counsel, which only plunged them yet deeper into destruction, whilst the evil that my advice appeared to bring upon the good, was only like a passing cloud before the sun" (Loudon, *The Mummy!* 3: 309). The humans he advises fall prey to their own desires, their devotion to procure knowledge for the sole benefit of themselves damning them. Only the "morally knowledgeable," those who have proven they cannot be distracted by earthly pursuits by opting instead for those traits that will serve them in the next life go on to reproduce.

The evaluation of Loudon's portrayal of Cheops as educator defies Rauch's claim that "Loudon never makes the Mummy's actual purpose clear, and we learn little about him except that the sinister somehow find his presence comforting" (Rauch 70). Cheops's reanimated corpse serves as the moral compass for the living, acting as matchmaker and teacher to those who deserve to populate and lead Great Britain. The characters in the

novel who suffer meet their fates not because of any intervention by Cheops but because “Morality, for Loudon, can sink no lower than when an individual refuses to see that cause and effect are linked. Such individuals deny, at once, both the value of moral judgment and the logic of knowledge” (Rauch 70). The Mummy provides the apparatus through which consequence is understood. Ultimately, he cannot change those bent on destruction, but instructs those who are already morally superior to embrace their noble desires for the greater good. The importance of Cheops’s body and its impact on the living demonstrates how thoughts must become actions because the soul is tied to the body in life and therefore must be used as a vessel for good.

In this way, *The Mummy!* supports Allard’s theory that conceptualizations of bodies and bodily display as both problematic and full of potential are part of “Romantic Ideology” even outside of medical and scientific fields (Allard 43). Because bodies are “not simply either a ‘biological mechanism’ or an aesthetic metaphor but both simultaneously and indivisibly: a product and produce of language, knowledge, and authority” (Allard 10), Cheops not only serves as an educator in the text, but outside of it. In the text he uses his body and the knowledge it contains to guide the living toward a more positive future, and the novel itself provides a moral lesson that is also a product of language (the text), knowledge (Loudon’s thoughts), and authority (a published work).

Learning through the experience of others saves oneself from repeating the mistakes of the past, as Cheops corporeally demonstrates in the novel. Rollins notes that mummies in particular demonstrate this lesson, commenting that viewing their preserved corpses:

lets us see the Care that the Egyptians took of their dead Bodies. Their Acknowledgments and Gratitude to their dead Relations were immortal. Children, by seeing the Bodies of their Ancestors thus preserv'd, recall'd to mind those Virtues for which the Publick had honour'd them, and was excited to a Love of those Laws which such excellent Persons had left for their Obedience and Security (49).

It is no wonder then that Loudon chose a mummy for her undead messenger. To strive for respect and honor through the generations is the ultimate goal her characters hold with the knowledge they come to possess. Loudon's own life's work reflects a belief that the future of England could only be secured when its subjects pursue education with a purpose—to leave an honorable legacy for self and country. *The Mummy!* is not only an integral part of this objective, but the catalyst for it. Loudon's undead Cheops demonstrates the importance of fiction to the development of the British nation, and in particular, of the reanimated body to the instruction of its people.

CHAPTER THREE

BODILY AGENCY AND FEMININE INSIGHT IN CHARLOTTE DACRE'S UNDEAD POETRY

*"Time will dim those lust'rous eyes;
The dart of Death resistless flies:
Turn, fair daughter, and be wise!
All is misery, grief, and shame,
Pleasure lives not but in name."*

– Charlotte Dacre, "The Triumph of
Pleasure," 1805⁹¹

*"Of all the arts of life, that of giving useful instruction to the human mind, and of
rendering it the matter of its affections, is the most important."*

– Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on
Education*, 1790⁹²

Whereas the previous two chapters argued for the intellectual and moral wisdom the undead convey, this chapter marks a decided shift in the dissertation to address the erotic elements of Romantic undead. These iterations of the monster epitomize the carnal wisdom contained in their reanimated bodies. Jane Loudon and Mary Shelley created undead characters as morally superior educators of the past, the corpses's ancient bodies holding wisdom that the living could never hope to replicate but desperately need. Charlotte Dacre's undead beings hold an alternative wisdom reliant on the realities of corporeality as told through the destructive potential of sexual desire. Dacre confronts female sexual craving through her poetry's depictions of hapless women drawn to death in their pursuit of carnal knowledge. The men who prey on these females are reanimated

⁹¹ Charlotte Dacre, "The Triumph of Pleasure," *Hours of Solitude*, Vol. 1. (1805) Lines 46–50.

⁹² Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education.: With Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects*. By Catharine Macaulay Graham (London: C. Dilly, 1790) i.

bodies, skeletons that walk and flesh-eating, blood-sucking fiends. Dacre is unique among female authors of the undead during the Romantic period. Not only are her female protagonists wantonly sexual and driven by physical desire but her volume of poetry, *Hours of Solitude*, features both male and female undead characters. This chapter will explore Dacre's conception of the literary vampire and position all of the undead bodies she creates as edifying explorations regarding changing ideas about the female body at the beginning of the nineteenth century

Dacre's female undead, although terrifying, are beneficent, a feature that differentiates them from other portrayals of monsters in Romantic Gothic literature. Only her male undead voraciously prey on the passions of young women. Published in 1805, *Hours of Solitude*⁹³ contains poems *The Orlando Project* thematically arranges as the macabre, the whimsical, the gloomily natural, the exotic, or the pathetic.⁹⁴ The "macabre" poems are particularly relevant given their obvious Gothic influence, but of greater importance are the poems that contain physical undead characters. Unlike the other poems in the collection, which feature ephemeral creatures, "The Skeleton Priest, or The Marriage of Death" and "The Aerial Chorus, or The Warning" warrant analysis here because they clearly incorporate corporeal, reanimated bodies. Dacre uses these two entries of the undead in her volume of poetry to accentuate the significance of female-to-female education, and to emphasize the very physical consequences of sexual desire.

⁹³ Charlotte Dacre, *Hours of Solitude: A Collection of Original Poems, Now First Published*, Vol. I (London: J.F. Hughes, 1805). Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁹⁴ "Entry on Charlotte Dacre entry," *The Orlando Project* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Unlike other authors of the undead, Dacre creates didactic literature through reliance on the powerful bonds between women and their uniquely female experiences.

Comprised of four sections, this chapter begins by inspecting Dacre's position in literary history both during the Romantic period and in current scholarship. The conclusion of this assessment asserts that Dacre was more well-known and influential than has previously been believed, and that her contribution to the literary history of the vampire as well as her utilization of the undead as an educational tool should be recognized in order to form a more complete perspective of Gothic literature in the Romantic period. A synopsis of "The Skeleton Priest" then facilitates an evaluation of the poem as an encouragement for women to regulate their own desires in order to remove them from the control of men, a concept Dacre makes original by exploring the sublime potential of the female undead body. Next, a summary of "The Aerial Chorus" is used to verify the claim that Dacre constructed the first original male vampire story in Western literature with the poem's publication and outlines how this invention glorifies female wisdom as a resolution for uninhibited sexual desire. Finally, the chapter concludes by addressing how both "The Skeleton Priest" and "The Aerial Chorus" work together to promote the powerful potential of shared female experience to help women negotiate life in a patriarchal society.

CHARLOTTE DACRE: AN UNRECOGNIZED LEGACY

Despite Dacre's powerful influence to other Romantic authors, her poetry receives little academic attention. Most scholarship on Dacre situates her either in relation to the men in her life or tries to make sense of her Gothic works as belonging to

either the “feminine” or “masculine” versions of the sublime, with scholars usually locating her work somewhere in between the two. Most analysis results from probing Dacre’s most famous novel, *Zofloya; or, The Moor* (1806), a text used to challenge expectations of the female Gothic. The cruelty and liberal sexuality of the book’s main character Victoria, as well as the racial implications of a literal black Devil, seem to confound scholars who try to place Dacre in relation to other authors of the period.⁹⁵ Andrew McInnes positions Dacre alongside Mary Shelley and asserts that both authors “play with gendered expectations” of the Gothic genre to “probe anxieties about gender and genre.”⁹⁶ McInnes makes this claim with examination of *Zofloya*, ignoring Dacre’s *Hours of Solitude*. Analysis of Dacre’s poetry however, proves the author’s dedication to challenging “gendered expectations” long before her most famous text, and demystifies her literary presence by positioning her Gothic voice in vampire and feminist literary history.

Dacre’s emphasis on “the Burkean sublime and on an eroticized love beyond the grave,” as Douglass H. Thomson claims, earned her recognition from scholars who

⁹⁵ See, for example, Christine Crockett, “Medical Gothic: Genre and Gender Bending in Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya*”; Elena Emma Sottillotta, “Diabolical Crossings: Generic Transitions Between the Gothic and the Sensational in Dacre and Alcott”; Dale Townsend “Gothic and the ghost of *Hamlet*”; Douglass H. Thomson, “The Gothic Ballad”; Sue Chaplin, *Law, Sensibility, and the Sublime in Eighteenth-Century Women’s Fiction: Speaking of Dread*, 139–142; Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Woman of Romanticism*, 111–153; Carol Margaret Davison “Getting Their Knickers in a Twist: Contesting the ‘Female Gothic’ in Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya*”; Michael Scrivener, *Jewish Representations in British Literature 1780–1840*, 95–158; and Duncan Wu, *Romantic Women Poets: An Anthology*, 358–62).

⁹⁶ Andrew McInnes, *Wollstonecraft’s Ghost* (Taylor and Francis, 2016) 134.

identify the author as “innovative” and “proto-Romantic.”⁹⁷ The assessment of Dacre as “proto-Romantic” seems absurd given her dates of publication, which proceed other “male” works with similar content.⁹⁸ The distinction appears gendered, a concession Thomson admits when he recognizes Dacre’s poetry has been lost in favor of the work of male authors (85). Dacre’s work may most persuasively be read through Beth Lau’s “Fellow Romantics” theory outlined in the Introduction of this dissertation. As a female author evoking the concept of the Burkean sublime and imagining life beyond the grave early in the nineteenth-century, Dacre disrupts categorizations of the Gothic as either “male” or “female.” The undead are uniquely situated to represent this conflict given their displacement of seemingly fixed dichotomies.

Through an exploration of the undead characters in Dacre’s *Hours of Solitude* and the ways in which they confront Romantic ideals of female agency as expressed through the physical body, this chapter addresses the role of female desire in the distribution of knowledge. Although Dacre does not employ the term to describe her ghoulish fiends, they possess the characteristics of the classic vampire motif including their affinity for nighttime hunting, feeding on blood and flesh, ties to the occult, and overtones of eroticism. Dacre not only constructs the first literary vampire, but she succeeds in producing the sublime in the body of an undead woman. Her emphasis of the potential life-saving power of female interaction represents increasing importance of female

⁹⁷ Dale Townsend, “Gothic and the ghost of *Hamlet*.” *Gothic Shakespeares*, Ed. John Drakakis and Dale Townshend (Routledge: 2008) 85. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

⁹⁸ For example, Samuel Taylor Coleridge includes undead characters in both “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” and “Christabel,” the later with decidedly erotic undertones, yet few would be hard pressed to call him “proto-Romantic.”

relationships in the nineteenth century. The significance of women's wisdom in Dacre's work is inherently tied to construction of the first vampire, which suggests a feminine/feminist history previously ignored in undead studies.

These claims rest on Dacre's direct acknowledgment of female sexual desire, a recognition that would have been an anomaly in the early nineteenth century. Understanding the author's construction of Romantic-period female characters cannot occur without an examination of both the male and female sexed body. Sex or "the body," terms Thomas Laqueur uses interchangeably, was once the epiphenomenon, not gender.⁹⁹ Seen as a cultural category, gender (the designations of man and woman) was "part of the order of things," as Laqueur contends. Whereas modern scholars naturally reject the idea that males and females are of the same sexual morphology, before the 17th-century, the "one sex model" denoted that men and women were sexually identical except for the location of genitalia: the female's internal, the male's external (Laqueur 8). Sex, therefore, is a modern invention. Naturally, those living in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries developed alternative ideas about the human body in response to the abandonment of the one-sex model were aided by the increasing recognition of the importance of female reproductive organs.¹⁰⁰ Abbé Lazzaro Spallanzani (1729–1799) contributed significantly to this shift when his successful artificial insemination of a female dog proved neither pleasure nor the penis were required in the creation of life.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1992) 8. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁰¹ Ernesto Capanna, "Lazzaro Spallanzani: At the Roots of Modern Biology," *Journal of Experimental Zoology*, 285.3 (1999) 189–90.

Spallanzani's "ovism" theory emerged when experiments with seminal fluid showed the conception of life required female reproductive organs not the meeting of sperm and inert menstrual blood as previously believed.¹⁰² This work challenged male biological superiority and gave sex a function beyond reproduction alone, concepts Dacre explores in her poetry.

Dacre's decision to include both male and female undead bodies in her poetry challenges constructions of gender. The undead woman in "The Skeleton Priest" is in direct conflict with the male undead figure. Her body, bloody but beautiful, contrasts the grotesque, skeletal form of the "living" Death. The undead "fiends" (13–16) in "The Aerial Chorus" threaten the fragile living flesh of an unnamed maiden. In both poems, Dacre raises questions about male and female bodies and desires. She not only acknowledges their existence, but focuses on their destructive potential. Dacre's undead characters and their lovers pursue what Richard C. Sha would call perverse sex, or the acceptability of the act of sex as pleasure without function.¹⁰³ With concepts of passion and desire increasingly recognized at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as Dacre's poetry demonstrates, the public recognition of sex as a vector for pleasure outside of its reproductive function gradually became acknowledged. One's sexual nature was not only a method of species continuation, but erotic physical unions offered potential for infinite variety and exploration.

¹⁰² "Abbé Lazzaro Spallanzani," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 178, No. 2, 1961) 257–58.

¹⁰³ Richard C. Sha, *Perverse Romanticism: Aesthetics and Sexuality in Britain, 1750-1832* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) 2. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

Hours of Solitude complicates claims like Craciun's that categorize Dacre's work as containing "sexually conservative and even misogynistic prescriptions to avoid the dangers of sexual indiscretion" (111). Craciun makes this assertion exclusively using *Zofloya* for evidence. Although Dacre's work does feature female sexual desire as destructive, Craciun's assessment is only fair if poems like "The Skeleton Priest" and "The Aerial Chorus" remain unexamined. Analysis of the author's undead characters challenge Craciun's conclusion that Dacre was "no feminist" (113). Although Dacre's portrayal of female sexuality can be classified as negative when looking at the horrific fates of some of her characters, as a woman addressing sexual desire, Dacre challenges patriarchal regulation. Contemporary readers cannot equate modern feminist notions with those emerging in the early nineteenth century, a claim Carol Margaret Davison supports. Davison says, "It can be difficult for critics to divest themselves of their contemporary lenses and recognize two key things: first, that 'feminist' awareness did not occur overnight—what appear to be small steps from a retrospective distance were, in fact, major milestones at the time."¹⁰⁴ Analysis of the undead in these poems demonstrates Dacre's proto-feminist agenda as exhibited by the heraldic female characters she constructs. Dacre's use of the undead serves as an epistemological tool giving insight into the female sexual experience and the productive, redeeming potential of female knowledge. The proposition of female intelligence shared between women challenges our

¹⁰⁴ Carol Margaret Davison, "Getting Their Knickers in a Twist: Contesting the 'Female Gothic' in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*," *Gothic Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (May 2009): 32.

reading Dacre as misogynist. On the contrary, for her application of female driven education elevates the cultural and intellectual potential of relationships between women.

Since Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures and Moral subjects* (1792) argued for the value of formal female education, investigations emerged regarding what role women should play in the process. Wollstonecraft herself wrote the text with a declared purpose of "persuad[ing] women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body,"¹⁰⁵ calling on fathers and mothers to begin such instruction (45). Wollstonecraft's treatise on female education lauds the importance of mothers to the education of children (195–98, 251), particularly their daughters. From their infancy, Wollstonecraft argues, women are "taught by the example of their mothers" (17). With these claims and Wollstonecraft's lambasting of male authors for their promotion of a frivolous education for women that neglects their status as "human creatures" (1), the claims presented in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* inherently depend upon education not only for women, but between women. Dacre's poetry expands upon the foundation Wollstonecraft established, offering her Gothic literature as a means of didactic communication, positioning her female characters in models of the teacher-student dynamic. When coupled with the "small step" of crafting these female characters with active sexual appetites, these poems mark a significant innovation in Romantic literature where eighteenth-century philosophy and experimental genre writing unite.

¹⁰⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures and Moral subjects*, second ed. (London: J. Johnson 1792) 4. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

The beginning of the nineteenth century marked the first time a female poet could acquire a significant place in the literary market, as Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Cecilla Pietropoli demonstrate in *Romantic Women Poets*.¹⁰⁶ Dacre's appropriation of the "masculine" Romantic sublime in poetry further accentuates the author's status as a proto-feminist, an overlooked detail when scholarly analysis relies on her novels alone. Female verse writers often usurped the traditional romance plot through the insertion of violence, although Diego Saglia asserts this narrative addition is "more often than not directed at men" (156). In yet another example of her occupation in liminal space, Dacre's poems explore violence against women, featuring suicide, blood, and death. Many of the poems in *Hours of Solitude* feature women subject to aggression,¹⁰⁷ and both "The Skeleton King" and "The Aerial Chorus" depict women meeting violent, even bloody ends. Unlike other Gothic works of the period¹⁰⁸ these naïve female protagonists are offered salvation should they heed the advice of a more knowledgeable woman.

Dacre's application of both male and female undead bodies with metaphorical and graphic imagery is not the only place she defies expectation about the human form. The author's construction of her own public image challenges convention. Inclusion of a portrait of the author in *Hours of Solitude* rejected early-nineteenth century standards. At

¹⁰⁶ Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Cecilia Pietropoli, "Introduction." *Romantic Women Poets: Genre and Gender*, eds. Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Cecilla Pietropoli (Editions Rodopi B.V., 2007) 1. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁰⁷ See "Love and Madness," "Julia's Murder," "The Maniac," "Song of Melancholy," and "The Lass of Fair Wone." Instances of violence inflicted upon a male character are found in "The Murderer" and "The Orphan's Curse." "Moorish Combat" features violence against both genders.

¹⁰⁸ See *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Anne Radcliffe; *The Monk; a Romance*, Matthew Gregory Lewis; *Vathek*, William Beckford.

the time, female poets “self-deprecatingly” and even “comically” disguised their physical appearances, Christine Gerrard argues, “as if to avert the voyeuristic scrutiny of male readers.”¹⁰⁹ The eroticized ideal of female beauty flaunted in Dacre’s *Hours of Solitude* portrait decidedly collapses this theory. The image of “Rosa Matilda” shows none of the “self-deprecating” distortions Gerrard assumes depicting Dacre dressed in a low-cut gown, her long neck on prominent display. The woman in the portrait possessed large eyes, rosebud lips, and her nipples are visible threw her gown. Upon examining *Hours of Solitude* one reviewer from *The British Critic* (1806) remarks that “Miss Rosa” must have other goals in mind than “having her poetry admired.” The same reviewer later concedes that although the poetry is lacking the portrait accompanying the book is attractive.¹¹⁰ The admiration to her beauty rather than her poetry exhibits the reviewer’s attempt to undermine Dacre’s reputation as a serious author.

Further critical attempts to discredit Dacre’s poetry did little to curb her success as Duncan Wu, Michael Scrivener, and Crisafulli and Pietropoli confirm. Though critically disdained, Wu confirms, Dacre was in fact a popular author.¹¹¹ In 1872, *Notes and Queries* credits her with beginning the school of “La Crusca,” and states her poetry is

¹⁰⁹ Christine Gerrard, “Eighteenth-century women poets.” *The Cambridge History of English Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 371. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹¹⁰ “Art. 13 Hours of Solitude. A Collection of Original Poems, now first published. By Charlotte Dacre, better known by the Name of Rosa Matilda. In two Vols. 12 mo. 14s. Hughes., &c. 1806,” *The British Critic*, Volume 27 (1806) 429. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹¹¹ Duncan Wu, *Romantic Women Poets: An Anthology* (Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997) (358–62).

“far above mediocrity.”¹¹² Until this Victorian praise however, criticism of Dacre in the press remained scathing. A defense of novels appearing in the 1809 volume of *Walker Hibernian Magazine, or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge*, includes Dacre not as an author who exemplifies the genre but one whose works “tend only to delude the youthful imagination, and to lead the judgment astray.”¹¹³ Any talent displayed in *Hours of Solitude*, according to *The British Critic*, is eclipsed by the sheer number of poems the two volumes contain: “she has not been instructed, how much a few productions of high finish, are preferable to a number of unequal effusions” (“Art 13” 429). Critics from the *Monthly Mirror* (1806) were less generous, lambasting the author when they suggest to “Miss Dacre” that this new volume of poetry will appeal only to those who already enjoy her work, a decided insult.¹¹⁴ A wider audience might have been reached had the author “consulted” with the editors of the journal first, and therefore avoid verses falling merely “above mediocrity.” However, had she inquired, the editor’s advice to Dacre would have

¹¹² *Notes and Queries*, Series 4, Vol. 10 (July–December 1872) 213. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹¹³ R.S.E, “Novels and Novel Writing.” *Walker Hibernian Magazine, or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge* (Rich Gibson, 1809) 91. Any interpretation of R.S.E.’s critique should include a healthy skepticism given his biased, misogynistic views towards all women writers. R.S.E. writes that female authors, in particular, are the worst perpetrators of delusional novels, for they “forget the relative duty which they owe to their own sex, as to practice, with unblushing effrontery, vice in its most allure form.” R.S.E “Novels and Novel Writing,” *Walker Hibernian Magazine, or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge*. (Rich Gibson, 1809) 91–92.

¹¹⁴ “Hours of Solitude. A Collection of Original Poems, now first published. By Charlotte Dacre, better known by the Name of Rosa Matlida, 2 Vols. 14s. Hughes. 1806,” *Monthly Mirror: Reflecting Men and Manner*, Vol. 21 (1806) 392. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text. The publication the reviewers refer to here is most likely Dacre’s 1798 publication *Trifles of Helicon*, a collection of poems co-authored with her sister Sophia and published under her real name Charlotte King.

been to keep “all future disclosures to her Muse, in the ‘hours of solitude’ and secrecy” (“Hours of Solitude” 392–93).

Critical resistance of Dacre’s work by her critical contemporaries can be explained as a prejudiced dismissal caused by her controversial love life as a mistress and status as the daughter of a well-known Jewish man. Yet the King family’s presence in the lives of other noted authors of the Romantic period suggests that Dacre’s position in Romantic society might not have been as obscure as Romantic critics would have their readers believe. As Katharine Rogers acknowledges, “Unexceptionable morality overshadowed literary quality in a woman author, especially since she was not expected to meet the same standards as a man.”¹¹⁵ Dacre’s life did not reflect the moral standards of the time. Perhaps then it is unsurprising that her kin held strong ties to other controversial writing families of the Romantic period, most notably the Shelley-Byron circle.

Born Charlotte King in the early 1770s, her father Jonathan King made his living according to Wu as “money-lender, black-mailer and radical writer” (359). Some accused King of being a wife-beater, as well as philanderer, and at least some of King’s infidelities are documented, including an affair with Jane Brinsely, Lady Lanesborough that ultimately led to his divorce (Wu 359). Other acquaintances of King described him as hospitable and kind. William Godwin and King were friends, literary scholar Michael Scrivener claims, sharing meals and tea and visiting one another’s homes. Examination of Godwin’s diaries between the years 1793 and 1807 show that he and King met 44 times

¹¹⁵ Katharine M. Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (University of Illinois Press, 1982) 24.

on social calls or business meetings. The two men shared 111 meals together during that same period.¹¹⁶ Godwin's diaries record calls from the "3 Kings" (March 7, 1797), and the "Miss Kings" (Feb. 28 and April 3, 1798), establishing that Godwin also met King's daughters. His wife, Mary Wollstonecraft might also have met Dacre at a young age. Godwin's entry for September 21, 1796 includes "Dine at Reveley's; adv. C King. chez elle,--." "Adv." As the editors of *The Diary of William Godwin* note, "adv." is Godwin's abbreviation for a meeting where "he unexpectedly encountered the person at a meal or meeting or at an event." They also note that "chez elle" indicate a trip to Wollstonecraft's home. Therefore, the September 21 entry suggests Godwin unexpectedly met Dacre at Wollstonecraft's home (*The Diary of William Godwin*), implying that the two female authors were close enough to merit house calls.

King's criminal activities would ultimately cause a rift in his friendship with Godwin, a shift visible in the drastic decline of entries Godwin's diary mentioning King.

¹¹⁷ ¹¹⁸ Interestingly, the final meal the two men share on May 21, 1807 is the only time

¹¹⁶ *The Diary of William Godwin*, (eds) Victoria Myers, David O'Shaughnessy, and Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford Digital Library, 2010). <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹¹⁷ Michael Scrivener, *Jewish Representations in British Literature 1780–1840* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 95–97. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹¹⁸ That both men fathered progressive female authors of the Romantic period is intriguing. Even more so when considering that both Mary Shelley and Dacre would go on to produce narratives including reanimated bodies, an intriguing connection that hoped to be explored in future work.

Godwin's daughter, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,¹¹⁹ joined the gathering (The Diary of William Godwin). As another progressive female author of her time, the familial overlap in Shelley and Dacre's lives provides an interesting link to the study of Gothic and Romantic literature in the questions it raises about the influence of this literary circle. While evidence of any correspondence or meeting between Shelley and Dacre has yet to be discovered,¹²⁰ Godwin's diaries reveal that at least he was aware of Dacre's literary aspirations. His entry on November 28, 1793 notes his reading for the day includes the "K's ms." (The Diary of William Godwin). Charlotte and her sister Sophia King did release a collection of poetry some years later entitled the *Trifles of Helicon* (1798),¹²¹ the first professional publication for either sister, and Godwin's notation may indicate he read the manuscript. This would suggest that Dacre's earliest published writings may have been recognized by important authors of the period, thus making her publicly known earlier than scholars have previously assumed. Godwin's diary further reveals the importance of Dacre's self-crafted authorial image. The October 14, 1812 entry reads "Greece, çala. Gondibert, C. V. Shelleys & E Hitchener dine; adv. Hogan (stewardship & Rosa M); read Antonio." Given Godwin's past associations with Dacre, this notation

¹¹⁹ Other intimate members of Mary Shelley's life interacted with Jonathan King. Lord Byron and Percy Shelley both borrowed money from King on at least one occasion (Scrivener 138).

¹²⁰ My next project will pursue this connection in earnest as I look for evidence of any direct connection between the two women.

¹²¹ *The Orlando Project's* entry on Dacre asserts that the sister's dedication to Jonathan King and appreciation for his attention to their education "was clearly designed to show support for their father." This is a compelling claim, but I cannot solely attribute sympathy for their father as the sister's desire for publication particularly as both women continued their writing careers.

might indicate that “Rosa M” or “Rosa Matilda” now indicates King’s daughter. If true, this shift in Godwin’s recording of and perhaps conceptualization of the woman he came to know as a popular author indicates an increasing public respect of Dacre.¹²²

Dacre’s literary presence merited the attention of at least two other well-known Romantic writers, Lord Byron and Thomas Moore, both of whose public acknowledgements of her work alternated between contempt and begrudging praise. *Hours of Solitude*, according to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, directly influenced Byron’s 1807 *Hours of Idleness*, but the author was quick to publicly criticize Dacre later. In Byron’s 1809¹²³ *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers; A Satire* he includes a footnote referencing “lovely Rosa.”¹²⁴ The full notation reads “This lovely little Jessica, the daughter of the noted Jew K—, seems to be a follower of the Della Crusca School, and has published two volumes of very respectable absurdities in rhyme, as times go; besides sundry novels in the style of the first edition of the Monk” (Byron 58). In private correspondence, Byron expresses a more disparaging opinion of Dacre as a private letter to Mr. Murray on April 11, 1814 reveals: “Alter ‘*potent*’ spell to ‘*quicken*ing spell:’ the first (as Polonius says) ‘is a vile phrase,’ and means nothing,

¹²² By this time, Dacre had published four novels in addition to *Hours of Solitude*, *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer* (1805), *Zofloya* (1806), *The Libertine* (1807), and *The Passions* (1811).

¹²³ Dacre responded to this criticism, saying his “Lines to a Lady Weeping” displayed Byron as “deformed in mind and body” (“Entry on Charlotte Dacre”).

¹²⁴ Lord Byron George Gordon, *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers; A Satire*, 2nd ed., (James Cawthorn, 1809) 58. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

besides being commonplace and *Rosa-Matilda-ish*.”¹²⁵ Byron’s comment that Dacre’s poetry is both “very respectable” yet “absurd” and overly dramatic highlights the contention others likely felt for her literature, a discomfort caused by Dacre’s utilization of both the traditionally male-associated Burkean sublime and an unabashed female perspective.

Thomas Moore and Lord Byron’s correspondence also included analysis of Dacre’s literature, as Moore notes in his volume *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: With Notices of His Life*. A letter written by Byron on April 20, 1814 references a previous claim Moore teasingly made naming Dacre the author of the poem “Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte.” Moore’s footnote reprints a portion of his own letter to Byron:

‘Have you seen the ‘Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte?’—I suspect it to be either Fitzgerald’s or Rosa Matilda’s. Those rapid and masterly portraits of all the tyrants that proceeded Napoleon have a vigour in them which would incline me to say that Rosa Matilda is the person—but then, on the other hand, that powerful grasp of history,’ &c. &c. After a little more of this mock parallel, the letter went on thus:—‘I should like to know what you think of the matter—Some friends of mine here *will* insist that it is the work of the author of Childe Harold,—but then they are not so well read in Fitzgerald and Rosa Matilda as I am (243).

Moore associates Dacre’s narrative voice with “vigour,” possessing a proficiency of style and mastery of poetry enabling others to misidentify her work as belonging to Byron

¹²⁵ Thomas Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: With Notices of His Life*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray Albemarle Street, 1873) 248. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

himself. He makes the suggestion that Dacre might not be the author only because of the historical knowledge the text suggests its author possesses. Moore assumes women are incapable of possessing such knowledge. Byron does not take kindly to his comparison to the female Gothic poet, even in jest, reassuring Moore that those who believe he could write such “cursed nonsense” are incorrect (Moore 248). The exchange underscores the tension surrounding Dacre’s literature; Moore’s comments reveal him to be an avid reader of Dacre’s work and Byron’s expressions of frustration, and anxiety, at being compared to the female author juxtapose the popularity and critical condemnation her publications earned. Despite a clearly widespread audience, the reluctance of readers to praise Dacre’s work despite admiring some of its aspects displays a cultural discomfort, at least by men, of the themes and styles the author incorporates.

A result of this opposition is found in the intense scrutiny Dacre publicly faced as “a Jewess” (*Notes and Queries* 213) and adulterer, two attributions considered deviant during the period. Dacre’s love life became a matter of intense scrutiny as members of the public considered her actions to be wanton. Dacre had three children, William, Charles, and Mary born between 1806 and 1809. All three children were not baptized until June 1811, four years before she would wed the children’s father, Nicholas Byrne, upon the death of his first wife (Wu 361).¹²⁶ Attempts were purposefully made to circumvent the effects of Dacre’s relationship on her career. *Trifles of Helicon* (1798) marks the only time a major work would bear Dacre’s birth name. Published seven years

¹²⁶ The proximity of their first child William’s birth (1806) to the publication of *Hours of Solitude* might illuminate some of the poems in the collection that feature mistresses abandoned by their lovers and the pain of love and passion. This is a project I hope to explore at a later date.

later, the 1805 *Hours of Solitude* is dedicated to wealthy poet and member of Parliament, John Penn. Scrivener believes this dedication is an attempt to associate ‘Charlotte Dacre’ with legitimacy and respectability to distance the volume from ‘Charlotte King,’ daughter of a nefarious Jew and mistress to a married man (140–41). The title page of *Hours of Solitude* reveals two pseudonyms exposing ‘Rosa Matilda’¹²⁷ as ‘Charlotte Dacre,’ protecting the author’s legal name from further stigma as a known Gothic poet. Some scholars, including the writers of the ‘Charlotte Byrne’ entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, believe the adoption of this new pseudonym an attempt by the author to adopt an aristocratic image. The volume’s dedication protects the text from any of the infamy associated with Dacre’s own life.¹²⁸ These attempts appear to have been largely successful until Lord Byron exposed her identity in 1809.

Much like the undead characters in *Hours of Solitude* claim new, more powerful identities through their reanimation, Dacre’s desire to separate her life from her work represent a rebirth. As a nontraditional female Gothic author, Dacre’s work symbolizes her independence and offers her an avenue to challenge popular conceptions of

¹²⁷ Charlotte first used the pseudonym “Rosa” with the publication of four poems in the 1804 *Political Register* (“Entry on Charlotte Dacre”).

¹²⁸ I have decided to refer to Charlotte by her chosen literary name, Charlotte Dacre, in lieu of her birth name (Charlotte King), married name (Charlotte Byrne), or pseudonym (Rosa Matilda) in part because I wish to honor her identity as a writer. All of the work after 1805 including the *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer* (1805), *Zofloya* (1806), and *The Libertine* (1807) are attributed to ‘Charlotte Dacre.’ Additionally, a first-edition copy of *Hours of Solitude* from the Women Poets of the Romantic Period Collection, held in Special Collections & Archives at the University of Colorado Boulder Libraries, WPRP 24 bears the following signature on the dedication page: “Signed Charlotte Dacre author of the ‘Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer.’” This signature leaves me to believe that Dacre desired all literary associations to appear in conjunction with that name.

femininity and sexuality. Her creation of the vampire trope marks her departure from conventional representations of predatory men by literally transforming them into life-sucking monsters. These violent, undead men prey not only on the desires of young women but literally consume them body and soul. Wu refers to some of Dacre's poems as "skin-crawling gothicry" (360), an analysis that offers multiple interpretations. Whether the reader finds the work cringe-worthingly awful or dreadfully frightening, Dacre's work provokes a bodily response akin to the physical symptoms affecting her characters. Analysis of "The Skeleton Priest" and "The Aerial Chorus" reveals that these provocations are intentional; Dacre uses the undead to illustrate both the destructive and redemptive capacities of the physical body.

"THE SKELETON PRIEST, OR, THE MARRIAGE OF DEATH"

Dacre's cautionary tale of desire and death begins when Irene sneaks from her chamber at midnight into a windy, moonless wilderness to meet her betrothed, Orlando. A disembodied voice halts Irene's journey temporarily, but the love-struck woman carries on. Upon taking only three steps, she realizes "a lady, whose dress was more fair than the day" pursues her (35). The Lady informs Irene that the road she walks is "the same as your own," and warns Irene to stop her journey, claiming "*The bride of Orlando you hasten to be, / But that is an hour you never say see*" (40–41). At this moment Irene realize the Lady's chest is bloodstained and that she carries a "mouldering skull" and a lantern. The Lady continues to relay her advice in cautioning Irene that the journey to be Orlando's bride "*may end in the tomb*" (54). Despite the Lady's continued attempts to deter her, Irene still refuses to abandon her lover. The Lady even reveals Orlando is

already married and has committed a great crime for which “his soul must be paid” (66). The Lady begs Irene to return home, or the unbreakable bond Irene makes will be “*cemented by blood*” (76).

Irene ignores the Lady’s advice, her desire for Orlando outweighing her fear, and her trek to meet him continues. Upon reaching her betrothed, Irene notices Orlando’s arms are colder than ice, his voice changed, and his features obscured. Orlando scoffs at Irene’s account of the Lady, promising her a castle after they wed. The couple approaches the vessel that will bear them to the wedding, and Irene is shocked to discover its ghostly appearance. The ship supports sails made of vapor and bears no visible crew, and Irene finally senses dread as Orlando brings her onboard. When the couple reaches the opposite shore Orlando forces her down a “rocky descent.” Irene’s “feet and bosom were cruelly rent, / And blood did each footstep pursue” (131–32). The perilous journey ends at an altar, a priest waiting to conduct the ceremony. Only after Irene joins hands with Orlando does the priest cast his robe aside to reveal “what horrors beneath! / The *skeleton priest* was not other than *Death*, / Whom the maiden in marriage had join’d” (135–38). The Skeleton Priest reveals Irene has in fact wed Death, the creature claiming “Orlando no longer—dissolv’d is the spell/ Thy nuptial rejoicing must be a death knell” (142–43). Again the Lady appears to inform Irene that she too was once Orlando’s wife, but he murdered her to pursue Irene. The poem concludes with the Skeleton Priest seizing Irene and the two sinking “together” from the world (146–156).

The tension between body and mind are made apparent with Dacre’s emphasis on the act of physical touch as revelatory yet reproachful. Irene’s fate is only sealed when she physically interacts with Death disguised as Orlando, and later in his true form of the

Skeleton Priest. When Irene and Orlando embrace before boarding the ghost ship, his cold touch, “hollow” voice, and “chilling despondence” cause “a mistrust” Irene had never before experienced (106–08). Irene’s own body alerts her to Orlando’s inhuman nature, a corporeal warning her mind chooses to ignore. The real Orlando is hidden from Irene, as the Lady informed her, and her body attempts to relay this truth. When the Lady said Orlando “wanders despairing alone:/ His crime is his torment; by demons possess’d/ He gloomily wanders, deprived’ of his rest, / In a desert by mountains o’ergrown” (69–72), she emphasizes his crime’s physical toll. Orlando became a body for Death to control, a fate the lady wishes to spare Irene.¹²⁹ Irene disregards the Lady’s warning, but her body remembers. Her body shrinks from Orlando and his boat, and leaves a bloody trail to Death’s altar in a “cruel” attempt to keep Irene from relinquishing bodily control. Ironically, the freedom Irene squanders over her body and soul is the very thing she originally pursued. Although she claims to be driven by desire and love to Orlando, the decision to flee her paternal home suggests a longing for personal liberty. Even though she is driven by desire, every step of Irene’s journey is a decision of her own, a pursuit of physical love that ultimately sentences her to the grave.

Unlike Irene and her husband, the Lady had no control over her death because her life was taken from her because of her husband’s lust. Only after reanimation does the

¹²⁹ This imagery conjures allusions to the Wandering Jew motif not unlike the ancient mariner of “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” published by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). The popular narrative figure appears in Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796), Charles Maturin’s “Melmoth the Wanderer” (1820), and Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *The Wandering Jew* (1887). The Wandering Jew figure was even “seen” in real-life as Gustave Doré’s 1872 text claims, listing the most recent sighting of the figure occurring in 1774 (15). Gustave Doré, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew: A Series of Twelve Design*, second edition (G. Gebbie, 1873) 15.

Lady become master of her own body. Orlando thinks he has mastery over her, his assumption of power demonstrated when he murders his wife. The knowledge death provides grants her control over her own physicality, including her ability to speak freely. As her attempts to counsel Irene illustrate, the undead Lady utilizes this power to encourage living women to learn to control their own bodies by regulating desire. The Lady's warnings evoke corporeal imagery, her words emphasizing the physical power Irene will relinquish in her pursuit of Orlando. The Lady says to Irene that any union with Orlando will be "*cemented by blood*" (76) and that "*Your blood as the forfeit to pay*" (84). Irene will have to die to unite with Orlando, giving her body to the tomb in an ultimate relinquishment of control. Unlike the Lady's own reanimation, which occurs outside the narrative, Irene's death appears to occur aboard the ghost ship. Upon reaching the opposite shore the narrative refers to Irene as "the heart-frozen maid" (128). Irene arrives at her wedding in a liminal state, neither alive nor dead. After her union with Death she "can no more depart" death/Death and return to the living world, "the numbness of death" having "crept round her heart" (151–56). Although the poem does not inform the reader what happens to Irene after this point, it is assured that a male presence controls her body, a restriction the Lady does not suffer. Given the Lady's undead pursuits, one can argue that she returned from the grave on her own volition, reanimating her own body because of a longing to educate women. Her veiled warnings to Irene serve as a lesson in their ambiguity. The Lady wants Irene to ask her more questions that would clarify her message because that would mean the living woman actively chooses to seek knowledge and become a willing participant in the lesson. To reveal the Lady's murder too soon in the narrative would also fail to serve Dacre's

purpose. Not only does the intrigue and mysterious history of the Lady comply with Gothic tropes, but the poem itself functions as a lecture for the readers. If Dacre made the Lady's initial warnings well-defined, her audience would not learn the perils of failing to heed female advice, or to at least question it in order to construct an independent opinion.

The Lady represents Dacre's attempt to valorize female knowledge in "The Skeleton Priest" while displaying the power women can have over their bodies, an authority so immense it conquers death. Irene's character, however, cautions readers to never allow a man to obtain this control. Irene's existence between life and death is the direct result of her inability to read her body properly, and allowing instead for men to transcribe it meaning. Although it is unconventional to categorize Irene as an undead being to do so positions her even more dramatically as a foil to the Lady in addition to enhancing the mythological allusions present in the poem.¹³⁰ Irene has lost her life and her agency to Orlando/The Skeleton King, a consequence Dacre evokes in her character's journey across the water. The narrator of "The Skeleton Priest" makes it clear that Irene is alive when she boards the ghost vessel and only after it carries them across the waves "swifter than fancy" do any signs of Irene's death emerge. Orlando only takes charge of "his terrified bride" after she boards the ship, and upon "reaching the opposite shore, he "convey'd/From the vessel of shadows the heart-frozen maid" (121–128). Death is Irene's unbreakable oath. She can arise, undead as a corpse bride, but she can never destroy the bond between her and her ghastly husband. Dacre uses Romantic Hellenism

¹³⁰ A Romantic fondness for Greek imagery connects Irene's journey across a body of water on a ghost ship to the ferrying of the dead across the river Styx, therefore, seems plausible. Styx, one of the five rivers of the Underworld, is known as "the river of the unbreakable oath by which the gods swear." Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1942) 43.

as Ferris describes, “not just as a means of reflecting upon its modernity but also as a means to pose questions concerning the conflicting roles played by judgment and freedom in the realization of modernity” (9). Irene is the modern woman, confused and searching, but capable of making her own decisions, even if they are poor ones. Although her judgment is questionable, she is allowed the freedom to choose her fate. For Dacre, modernity means allowing women to make their own mistakes. She teaches readers that freedom can be dangerous, but it is still worth having if it allows others to learn from one’s mistakes. Implicit in this message is that women must seize the freedom to turn to one another for wisdom, and ask questions to better inform their own lives.

While the Lady’s power over her own body is significant the dominion it has over others remains of equal importance. Her depiction as a figure capable of producing a sublime experience demonstrates Dacre’s ability to construct a reference to the Burkean sublime. Other scholars, including the editors of the Orlando Project, have noted her capacity for what is traditionally defined as “masculine horror” in her other prose works, but not her poetry.¹³¹ This oversight neglects Dacre’s aim to incorporate Gothic horror throughout all of her writing. “The Skeleton Priest’s” Lady embodies sublime terror. Edmund Burke defines the source of the sublime as: “Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any form terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, it a source of the *sublime*” (47), a fitting description of the emotions the Lady induces in Irene. Irene

¹³¹ The Orlando Project’s database entry on Dacre’s refers to the *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer*’s dedication to Matthew “Monk” Lewis as “a manifesto of allegiance not to feminine terror but to the full-blown masculine horror Gothic.” “Charlotte Dacre entry.” *The Orlando Project* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

first experiences the Lady's presence as "a terrible sound," a voice that immediately causes her to tremble (18–19). Unlike the precipice she "shrink[s]" from in "mute horror" (16–17), Irene senses danger in the Lady, but is not immediately at its mercy. When the Lady appears physically, Irene confronts her "But enhorror'd withdrew from the sight," an act which the Lady reprimands her for saying "You start, lovely maiden! What folly is fear!" (49). Even though the undead woman holds a skull and has a chest stained with blood, Irene does not fear for her life when interacting with the Lady. The sublime can only occur when there is an "idea" of danger and pain, but not its immediate threat (Burke 71). The Lady transcends Irene's comprehension because although she terrifies her, the woman does not pose a direct threat. This directly contrasts her relationships with Orlando who causes Irene's death, and the Skeleton Priest who traps her in marriage to Death. As a body between life and death, the Lady defies understanding. Perhaps Irene can experience a sublime encounter with the woman because of the character's liminal state; in provoking "ideas of pain and danger" with her "mouldering skull" (46) and "pale visage" (62) the Lady represents death, but she is not *Death* (he is to come later). As Burke claims, "When danger and pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful" (48). The obvious modification here is the undead body. Neither alive nor dead, familiar but foreign, the reanimated human corpse presents the appearance of death without actually resigning to it entirely.

The Lady as undead, sublime figure gives her a fair amount of power, an ability strengthened by the control she holds over her own undead body. Unlike the possessed Orlando or even the Skeleton Priest whom is forced to use spells to conceal his true form,

the Lady walks unbound by physical constraints. Not only can she exist as a powerful, disembodied voice (18, 23) but she can manifest as a recognizably female human form. This ability at first appears more akin to that of a ghost, and admittedly, in the poem the Lady is referred to as a “spectre” (146). According to *A Dictionary of the English Language*, the spectre is an “apparition; appearance of persons dead...Something made preternaturally visible.” Dacre’s Lady is not an illusion of a body. Dacre emphasizes the physicality of the character’s form. This lady can touch things, carrying a lamp and skull (46–48), and appears with the pallor associated with death and corpses. Even more significantly, her body is physically solid enough produce audible footsteps and to “walk alongside” Irene (36–38). No clues in the text suggest the Lady has any phantasmic qualities. Making the lady a corporeal undead being instead of a phantom enhances Dacre’s notion that the female body concretely asserts its presence. Much like the desires of Irene for Orlando that lead her to the tomb, the Lady’s body pushes forward even in death, rising from the grave corporeal, whole, fully fleshed out and ready to act. Her body utilizes its corporeality to seek out women to instruct, making her reanimation purposeful in the body’s ability to educate.

Other female poets of the Romantic period did evoke nature and terror in similar ways to their male counterparts, as John G. Pipkin contends (608),¹³² as demonstrated by the work of Dorothy Wordsworth, Mary Robinson, and Charlotte Smith.¹³³ Dacre,

¹³² John G. Pipkin, “The Material Sublime of Women Romantic Poets,” *Studies in English Literature*, Vol. 38, Issue 4 (1998) 608. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹³³ For example, Dorothy Wordsworth’s “The Floating Island,” Charlotte Smith’s *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784), and Mary Robinson’s *Poems* (1775).

however, remains unique in her decision to use a female body to promote this response.¹³⁴ Though other scholars have noted the presence of the sublime in Dacre's novels,¹³⁵ the undead characters in Dacre's poetry are unburdened by gendered conceptions of sublime power. Unlike the undead characters in the other carnally driven texts of this dissertation, "The Little Dead Woman," *Wake Not the Dead*, or "The Aerial Chorus," the Lady presents real danger, but she may also offer salvation.

To properly understand the role of female poets in the Romantic period, as Pipkin claims, one must acknowledge "the gendered tropes of the sublime which circumscribed the aesthetic possibilities of female authorship." These tropes are most concisely understood by equating the female experience of the sublime as "unnatural" (Pipkin 597–98). Irene's experience with the sublime Lady qualifies as bizarre, as any congress with an undead corpse would. By giving this undead woman full autonomy over her own body and in doing so producing such delightful terror, Dacre challenges the gendered tropes of the sublime. The power held in the undead body of Orlando's deceased wife forces Irene to turn inward and assess her passions in an unconfined moment of personal reflection. That Irene's conclusion from such musing is to continue to pursue Orlando despite the

¹³⁴ Craciun also believes the Lady figure is undead, although she uses the term "revenant." However, Craciun also asserts that Orlando is a "vampyre" (116), an interpretation I oppose not only because he does not drink blood or siphon energy, but also because Dacre clearly evokes vampyre imagery in the flesh eating, blood sucking, fanged "fiends" of "The Aerial Chorus," which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

¹³⁵ See Sue Chaplin's assertion in *Law, Sensibility, and the Sublime in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction: Speaking of Dread* that the character of the Moor in Dacre's *Zofloya* creates "feminine sublime power which provokes a submissive masculine response" (139).

risk to herself is no failure on the part of the Lady, but rather indicates the independence Dacre values above all virtues.

“THE AERIAL CHORUS”

Although this iteration of undead poetry from *Hours of Solitude* features male undead characters, “The Aerial Chorus” continues Dacre’s inclination of reinforce the power of female-female education. Narrated by an unseen chorus, the poem outlines the events that will happen to a young virgin if she pursues a man named Morven. The unnamed maiden, referred to only as “Lady,” is traveling through a “dang’rous wood” to meet Morven, and the chorus warns her that on the “blood-besprinkled” path “Evil lurks, the injure good” (3–4). If the Lady continues on her journey, she will die for “Fiends, assembling in your way, / Long to feast upon your heart” (15–16). These “Fiends” have the power to brew a “horrid charm” that will make her unable to flee, leading them to “riot” on her blood, drinking from her bosom, and ultimately “eat her heart” (17–48). The chorus assures the maiden of her fate, claiming “I [too] was once a virgin fair” until seduced by Morven and presumably suffering the grotesque fate described (41–44). The poem ends with the chorus pleading the Lady to “in haste depart” (46).

Morven and the other “fiends” not only possess the power to brew potent potions and charm the female sex with disarming “magic words,” but the narrator explicitly states the fiends will “drink” from the lady. Driven by lust, “they thirst, they rage,” for blood. Dacre gives these undead beings fangs to “dart” into the breast of the hopeless lady. The chorus warns that after the puncture, “Now your blood begins to flow—/ Wild they suck amid your pangs” until “Spent with fury” they bear her away and “Sink to hell, and rise

no more/ Till they scent another prey” (33–40). The repeated acknowledgment of the chorus’s virginity previous to encountering Morven emphasizes the sexual nature of his vampiric attack. Saying “I was a virgin fair, / Morven lov’d and thought him true;/ Morven left me to despair—” (41–43) the chorus suggests the seduction occurs in conjunction with the taking of blood, therefore emulating a consumption/consummation parallel where phallic objects “dart” into uncorrupted female flesh. These monstrous fiends are the risen dead driven to consume flesh, the heart specifically, and drink blood from the bosoms of young virgins in a sexually charged act; they are vampires.¹³⁶

This designation is significant because it may represent the first published introduction of the vampire into an original narrative by an English author.¹³⁷ Prior to Dacre’s poem, the term “vampire” had been employed and described in other fictional texts, but these attributions occurred in non-English texts that were later translated and most frequently appeared as summaries of oral history. For example, in 1738 *The Jewish Spy* mentions that the “Heydukes” people of Hungary believe “certain dead” bodies “appear like Skeletons” and “suck the Blood of the Living” and are called “Vampires.” The text also mentions that in certain places of “Turkish-Servia” vampires were believed

¹³⁶ I will use the terms ‘vampyre’ and ‘vampire’ interchangeably for they represent the same creature. ‘Vampire’ likely originated as the Americanized spelling (see footnote 140).

¹³⁷ Some might argue this honor belongs to Coleridge with his depiction of the preternatural Geraldine in “Christabel” although the poem’s publication occurred in 1816, it was likely written as early as 1797 for *Lyrical Ballads*. However, even if this is true, Geraldine is not as explicitly undead nor does the narration *visibly* depict her sucking blood. Chapter Four of this dissertation will use Raupach’s *Wake Not the Dead* as the literary origin of the predatory female vampire.

to be able to turn others into the same creature in the process of sucking their blood.¹³⁸

Tracing the history of the vampire, J.P. Telotte reiterates a common claim by locating the first appearance of the monster in English literature in the 19th-century text *The Vampyre* (1819) by John Polidori (9).¹³⁹ ¹⁴⁰ A novella first published under Lord Byron's name, the introduction to Polidori's text grounds the titular character in the superstitions of the East.¹⁴¹ Over time these legends became pervasive in Eastern Europe as tales of resurrected "human bloodsuckers" called "vampyres."¹⁴² Polidori was "one of the first to understand [the vampire's] psychological possibilities."¹⁴³ The identification of Dacre's

¹³⁸ Marquis D'Argens, trans, *The jewish spy: being a philosophical, historical and critical correspondence, by letters which lately pass'd between certain Jews in Turkey, Italy, France, &c. Translated from the originals into French, by the Marquis D'Argens; and now done into English, Vol. IV* (London: D. Browne and R. Hett, 1738), 124.

¹³⁹ J.P. Telotte, "A Parasitic Perspective: Romantic Participation and Polidori's *The Vampyre*," *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature*, eds. Leonard G. Heldreth and Mary Pharr (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999) 9.

¹⁴⁰ The first appearance of the alternative spelling 'vampire' occurs in American poet John Trumbull's "M'Fingal." The line reads: "And thrived, like Vampire, on their blood." Trumbull includes a footnote defining the creature for his reader, assuming that the American audience would not know of the monster. His footnote reads: "The notion of Vampire is a superstition, that formerly prevailed in many nations of Europe. They pretend it is a dead body, which rises out of its grave in the night and sucks the blood of the living." John Trumbull, *The Poetical works of John Trumbull, LL. D. Containing M'Fingal, a modern epic poem, revised and corrected, with copious explanatory notes; The Progress of dullness; and a collection of poems on various subjects, written before and during the revolutionary war*, Lincoln & Stone (1820). 43

¹⁴¹ There is good reason for Polidori's Eastern grounding of the creature, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

¹⁴² John Polidori, *The Vampyre: A Tale* (London: E. and E. Hosford, 1819) iii–iv.

¹⁴³ James B. Twitchell, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) 6. Subsequent references cited

“fiends” as undead complicates this claim. The history of the vampire locates its origins not in Polidori’s famous iteration but in Dacre’s blood-sucking monsters who threaten young women. The recognition of Dacre as the first English author to incorporate vampires in her work is important to the Gothic tradition and to the history of female authorship, particularly as it relates to the construction of female sexuality. To acknowledge Dacre as the creator of the first English literary vampire reveals a feminine and feminist history to the undead. Dacre’s “fiends” contribute to the development of a literary monster trope that would only grow throughout the nineteenth century.

The presence of the chorus offers experiential wisdom as the solution for the destructive impulse of sexuality Dacre constructs. That the unnamed maiden in “The Aerial Chorus” has fallen in love with a vampire suggests that Dacre perceived female desires as unpredictable. If the Lady chooses to heed the advice of the chorus and returns home, not only will her life be spared but her virginity also remains intact for the love of someone more “true.” Dacre’s production of vampirism as a sexual threat establishes a Western literary tradition that will prove to be one of the most enduring monstrous creations of all time. Her role as not only the first English author but also the first female author to do so deserves recognition. The vampire only becomes a powerful culture force with *Dracula* (1897), Anne Williams claims, “because Stoker presented his vampire as a specifically sexual threat that could undermine Western culture itself.”¹⁴⁴ The vampire becomes “unforgettable” only when “Stoker tailored vampire lore to the dynamics of

parenthetically in the text..

¹⁴⁴ Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness* (University of Chicago Press, 2009) 22. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

power that inheres in all dimensions of patriarchal culture: in the individual family, in the law, in science, in religion, in language” (22). Although Dacre does not address as broad a range of topics as Stoker’s text, focusing instead on the dynamics of power in the sexual and romantic relationship, she does shift some power into female voice thus disrupting patriarchal culture. Dacre’s role in the vampire legend demonstrates the important power in looking back over late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century texts through the wider lens of the history of the undead in literature. Although the label of ‘vampire’ is not affixed to Dacre’s monstrous creation, the monster’s defining characteristics are present in “The Aerial Chorus” thus solidifying the defining role of the undead as an instructive tool.

FEMININE DESIRES, FEMALE EDUCATION

The desiring female body and the attempted intervention of other women to curb such passions are at the root of the undead female and male characters in *Hours of Solitude*. Dacre’s work in its entirety is primarily occupied with sexual desire, as Craciun suggests when she states that such passions “are clearly and spectacularly the central concern” (135). The forces driving Irene in “The Skeleton Priest” and the virgin lady in “The Aerial Chorus” are hardly chaste. Both women run from the safety of their homes into dangerous wildernesses, the desert (“The Skeleton Priest”) and the forest (“The Aerial Chorus”), fully intending to meet their male lovers. The clandestine nature of these meetings recognizes the taboo nature of the women’s feelings. Although Irene believes her desires will gain validity in the marital bed, the narrator mentions no such promise made to the lady of “The Aerial Chorus.” Though both narrators state the women are

driven by “love” (“The Skeleton Priest” 6, 12; “The Aerial Chorus” 9–12) the secretive nature of their envisioned meetings hints at an underlying sexual desire. Irene’s insistence on meeting Orlando despite the Lady’s warnings of disaster does not wish to “treat my fond love with such cruel disdain, / Or deny him my husband to be:/ This might will I wed him, in despite of fate” (56–58). The emphasis on “wed” (the author’s own) and Irene’s hesitance to “deny him” makes the sexual act of the nuptials vividly clear, as does the “fond rapture”(102) of their initial embrace. As referenced previously, the chorus’s repeated forewarning: “I was once a virgin fair, / Morven lov’d, and thought him true;/ Morven left me to despair—Morven thus will do by you” (“The Aerial Chorus” 9–12, 41–44) plainly refers to the narrator’s own sexual relationship with the vampire figure and suggests that the seduction ended in abandonment. Romantic culture imagined women to be more perceptive to sentimentalism, Elizabeth Fay observes, particularly maternal affection and sexual love.¹⁴⁵ If the Lady in “The Skeleton Priest” did have sex with Orlando, which we assume because they were married, she neglects mention of leaving behind any children after her death. This makes her sexual union with Orlando unfruitful and therefore perverse.

The propelling force of sexual desire drives the female protagonists of both poems discussed here, but the presence of sexually experienced women offering maternal concern in the form of urgent warnings tempers any accusations of a lascivious tone. Dacre repeatedly disguises her experience with female sexual desire behind the veil of moral education. Conservative publication the *British Critic*’s review of a novel Dacre

¹⁴⁵ Elizabeth Fay, *A Feminist Introduction to Romanticism* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1991) 6. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

published the same year as her collection of poetry, *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer* (1805), emphasizes her success in this matter.¹⁴⁶ Although the critics on this journal label the story “improbable” declaring, “If this be not nonsense, it is certainly very like it. The moral, however, is good, for it teaches the mischiefs which arise from the neglect and violation of the social duties” (“Art 21” 67). The *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer*’s protagonist Cazire actively pursues a married man, driven by her explicitly sexual and romantic desires, but as *British Critic* shows, readers did not condemn the text for its representation of sexual scandal because of the “teaching” it provides. The undead women who counsel the young maidens who encounter the undead in *Hours of Solitude* perform a similar function, mitigating impropriety by their desire for instruction. The undead Lady of “The Skeleton Priest” and the disembodied counsel in “The Aerial Chorus” are sexually experienced, and although both entities perished because of their desires, the undead women find redemption in attempting to enable other females to avoid a similar fate. Dacre’s culture constructed female sexual desire as dangerous, thus her inclusion of sexual desire earns her a place in the pornographic literary tradition as Craciun suggests. Dacre’s “focus on corporeal pleasure and destruction” (Craciun 111) combined with the presence of edifying female voices in her undead poetry makes evocation of such relationships instructive. From the beginning of the eighteenth century middle- and upper-class women came to think of themselves as sexual beings, as Patricia Meyer Spacks notes, yet they were actively discouraged from voicing their desires or

¹⁴⁶ “Art 21 Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer; a Tale in Three Volumes. By Rosa Matilda. 12 mo. Hughes. 1805,” *British Critic: And Quarterly Theological Review*, Volume 26 (F. and C. Rivington, July 1805) 67. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

worse yet, acting upon them. The proper woman must vehemently suppress her sexual longings.¹⁴⁷ Dacre's poems reflect the social repression of female desire by portraying sexuality as something that can lead to death. Dacre's response, Craciun argues, disrupts the idea of the "proper" woman by making identity and even corporeality unstable (153). Dacre's female characters are in states of flux. Whether they are on their way to becoming brides or appearing as an undead being, for this author, women are always in the process of constructing identity and fashioning a place in the world for themselves.

Both poems find a young, naïve maiden advised by supernatural women whose wisdom comes from experience gained through the pursuit of their own passions, meaning desire possesses the same power to protect as it does to destroy. "Emotion, then," writes Fay, "is also important because it allows women writers to critique society because of the way in which social norms can make women vulnerable to bad choice in love and marriage when they misinterpret how men use emotions" (6). The fault of the women in Dacre's poems is not that they experience strong feelings, but that they allow men to direct these sentiments. The undead Lady of "The Skeleton Priest" represents the productive potential of emotion for the purpose of aiding other women. In Dacre's poetry, desire is strong enough to return a body to life.

The undead Lady's body may be powerful now, but that ability came with a price. The "prophet of woe" (43) offers counsel but cannot force it upon others, an important caveat because it makes the women she counsels, like Irene, the master of their own fates. As the Lady says, "Unless you consent to be guided by me" (52), there is nothing she can

¹⁴⁷ Patricia Meyer Spacks, "'Ev'ry Woman is at Heart a Rake,'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Autumn, 1974) 28.

do to stop Irene. This statement is not the dictating voice of a patriarchal power, but a conciliatory gesture that only a woman can offer another. The murdered woman's experience grants her authority but it is not the kind she wishes anyone to replicate. Thus she willingly offers counsel to keep other women from being similarly bound to the tomb. "Alone let *me* wander, alone let *me* stray," the Lady implores Irene (74). The undead woman despairs because her altruism fails to serve a purpose when Irene ignores her warning. The Lady laments, "I warn'd thee, alas! but I warn'd thee in vain, / For *thou* wert determin'd to die" (149–150). Irene's final decision to pursue her sexual desires is hers alone.

Similarly, the disembodied voices of the women in "The Aerial Chorus" collectively unite to serve other females. I label the chorus feminine not only because of Dacre's overwhelming use of female narrators and protagonists throughout *Hours of Solitude* but because the repeated use of the first-person by the chorus suggests that it is composed of many women who have suffered at the hands of Morven and the other vampire fiends. The post-living drive of both the Lady and the chorus to seek out and warn other women of the destructive potential of sex and desire stress not only the importance of female–female interaction but locates a unique power in the lived experiences of women. Their authority is not absolute, nor do they desire it to be. The chorus and the Lady may offer advice, but because of the importance of autonomy to their existence, unlike the masculine presences in their lives they would never force a living woman to bend to their will.

Dacre recognizes the powerful potential of the female experience, emotionally and physically, as a disrupting force. Chaplin claims, "Sensibility is a concept associated

by Dacre with weakness” (142), but the voices from beyond the grave in “The Skeleton Priest” and “The Aerial Chorus” demonstrate the power inherent in emotion, regardless of its dangers. Dacre earns a place in feminist history through her encouragement of moral education, a claim Alice Browne’s work confirms with when she proclaims eighteenth-century feminists were largely in favor of female education “but add a stronger emphasis on the need for women to develop their rationality and moral sense, and not to rely on the judgment of others.”¹⁴⁸ Dacre’s integration of experiential accounts from other women into female education encourages women to seize autonomy, including over their sexuality. The “domestic revolution,” according to Eve Tavor Bannet in *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel*, can be defined as a subcategory of the Enlightenment that fostered a change in opinion of the ideal woman through two exemplary forms: the Egalitarian and the Matriarchal.¹⁴⁹ The Matriarchs believed women superior to men in sense and virtue, and this ideal originates alongside that of the capable “mother-governess.” Matriarchs “taught ladies how to obtain and deploy ascendancy over men, over their families, and over their inferiors” (Bannet 3). Dacre appears to subscribe to the Matriarchal ideal, encouraging women to educate others on how to manipulate the circumstances thrust upon them by learning to control their impulses.

¹⁴⁸ Alice Browne, *The Eighteenth Century Feminist Mind* (Great Britain: The Harvester Press Limited, 1987) 104.

¹⁴⁹ Eve Tavor Bannet, *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 3. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

Dacre's undead characters and the knowledgeable female voices that accompany them offer women authoritative potential not only over their own lives but those of other women. This analysis locates itself between the claims of Toni Reed and Craciun. Reed believes "the demon-lover conflict expresses the collective oppression of women, and as a body of literature represents a collective warning to women not to deviate from male-defined roles, for those who do are punished."¹⁵⁰ In contrast, Craciun claims *Hours of Solitude* offers a "more complex and positive view of the body and sexuality than modern readers might assume" (116). The disruptive power of Irene's marriage in "The Skeleton Priest" and the unspecified fate of the virgin maiden in "The Aerial Chorus" offer an alternative result to Reed's theory of female oppression. Women have control over their bodies and emotions though the suppression of sexual desire. In controlling their own bodies, women are afforded power over stifling male voices. Dacre's depictions of cautionary tales of love serve as evidence of the vulnerability women offer men should their desires overrule their minds. The knowledge passed from female to female is Dacre's idea of a proper education. Female empowerment comes from enabling women to make informed choices over their bodies and fates.

¹⁵⁰ Toni Reed, *Demon-Lovers and Their Victims in British Fiction* (University of Kentucky, 1988) 9.

CHAPTER FOUR

WAKE NOT THE DEAD'S DISTRUPTION OF UNDEAD BORDERS

"When sin and perverseness can no longer be concealed, she points out the dreadful consequences of disobedience, and the evils that have arisen from perverse desires and passions in the histories of wicked men."

-Hints to Parents on the Cultivation of Children, 1825¹⁵¹

The most popular vampire text of all time, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), looms large in the cultural history of the Western vampire. But if we narrow the study of the vampire only to the late nineteenth century or to the male vampire figure, we run the risk of ignoring the undead creatures who do not fit so neatly into the vampire niche, even if they represent many of the same themes. Female undead characters who suck the blood or eat the flesh of the living do not deserve the critical neglect they've experienced. We saw in the previous chapter of this dissertation that Charlotte Dacre addresses the early development of the predatory vampiric male. This chapter situates female undead creatures in the early nineteenth century amongst other kinds of Romantic undead, in order to demonstrate their importance to literary and cultural history as well as their position as reflections of the fear of female sexuality and construction of the desiring male as monstrous. I argue that *Wake Not the Dead* (1823) deserves to be seen as the locus of the female vampire, and I follow the text's significant reception while examining how this female undead character came to represent growing British anxieties regarding the potential challenges to patriarchal power that arise from unrepressed sexual desire. This chapter argues that examining "undead" narratives as a more inclusive and accurate

¹⁵¹ *Hints to Parents on the Cultivation of Children, in the Spirit of Pestalozzi's Method*. Fourth edition. (London Harvey and Darton, 1825), 29.

mode of study for reanimated creatures of the early nineteenth century has the benefit of offering a more expansive view of the female vampire. No definitive author of the text has ever been identified as the narrative was first published anonymously as part of a collection of Gothic and romantic narratives from Northern Europe. A portion of this chapter examines why the ambiguity of authorship actually contributes to British opinions of how women should function in the nation and how their sexuality contributes to that positioning. Although very popularly received, as library records and numerous critical reviews suggest, little critical attention has been given to an examination of *Wake Not the Dead*'s narrative. This chapter repositions the text as essential to the study of the vampire. Furthermore, my analysis argues that because the female vampire in the narrative acts as a device for relaying a moral education to readers, all Romantic texts featuring such the undead need to be re-evaluated as important epistemological tools.

Wake Not the Dead provides an excellent case study, given that it is the first text in English prose with a reanimated female corpse who is explicitly depicted drinking blood and maintaining a sexual relationship with a living character. The blood-sucking woman is also the first such reanimated monster who becomes undead through actions outside of her control. As a trailblazer, *Wake Not the Dead* provides an excellent case study for analyzing the undead as bodies of knowledge capable of imparting moral and social lessons. The undead character of this text, Brunhilda, portrays sexual desire as dangerous, a hunger capable of destroying entire families. Brunhilda in *Wake Not the Dead* first appeared as part of a collection of translated German texts in the two-volume edition *Popular tales and romances of the northern nations* (1823), a publishing origin that is crucial to understanding its significance. The anonymous, presumed Germanic

origins of *Wake Not the Dead* demonstrate how instrumental the German Gothic movement was to British Romantic literature. Fusing Eastern folklore with Greek mythology and nineteenth-century sentiments of gender and sexuality, *Wake Not the Dead*'s construction of a female undead woman breaks both vampire and lamia stereotypes in order to assemble a monster unique to the early nineteenth century.

The female undead have a distinctive place in the regulation of sexual desire for both men and women because their predation of living humans is unprejudiced. The female undead hunt both male and female characters, frequently deploying an equally liberal use of their sexuality in order to disarm. Their beauty, which often includes a seemingly unblemished corpse, is disturbing because it challenges cultural ideas of women by making beauty a physical and social threat. Brunhilda provides readers with a carnal education within the imaginative environment of fiction. The author's cultural vision is expressed through the fictional text, demonstrating the power of physical desire and its ability to destroy entire families. Critical to the text is the portrayal of Brunhilda's husband Walter whose actions and monstrous sexual appetite directly cause her creation. The demonizing of Walter in the text places the burden of familial destruction on the male head of household, an outcome his undead bride merely facilitates. By constructing both characters as victims of ferocious appetites, *Wake Not the Dead* attempts to police the reader's own desires. The increasing imperial power of Britain and its burgeoning national identity at the beginning of the nineteenth century relies on the production of well-educated, future citizens. Unable to bear children, yet capable of immense sexual appetite, the female vampire disrupts reproduction and thus challenges the future of Britain, and even the human species.

This chapter has five parts and begins with a summary of the possible German origins of *Wake Not the Dead* and its reception as part of *Popular Tales and Romance of the Northern Nations*, in order to grasp the important function of Gothic tales in Britain. A synopsis of the narrative is then provided, in order to lay the groundwork for the analysis that follows about the undead character Brunhilda's place as the first female vampire in British prose and its significance. Finally, a dissection of Brunhilda's role as a blood-sucking corpse resurrected to fulfill male desire argues that undead literature propagates historical ideals of sexuality. For the Romantic period this is expressed in the female vampire as a perverse sexuality that threatens the nuclear family and the concept of the maternal ideal, as my analysis of *Wake Not the Dead* will show. Additionally, Brunhilda's depiction serves as the foundation for all future female vampire characters, forever equating them with monstrous sexuality and domestic disruption.

GERMAN ROOTS?

Critical opinion of *Popular Tales and Romances* was varied when it was first published, but the overwhelmingly positive reviews suggest the collection held value in the literary marketplace. The collection's presence in a variety of libraries and magazines suggests an avid readership.¹⁵² Following publication, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*

¹⁵² Records show that A copy of *Popular Tales* was listed under "New Publications" in *The Edinburgh Annual Register* (1824), as well as included in the *Catalogue of the Library of Congress* (1861), *Catalogue of the Liverpool Free Public Library* (1872), *Catalogue of the Mercantile Library of Brooklyn: Authors, Titles, Subjects, and Classes* (1878), *Reading for the Young: A Classified and Annotated Catalog* (1890), and *Catalogue of English Prose Fiction: Including Juveniles and Translations* (1894).

published a scathing review, beginning, “This publication has much disappointed us. It will do a great deal more harm than good to the popularity of German literature here.”¹⁵³ However, despite this critical opening line of the appraisal, the anonymous reviewer seems more offended by the poor translation of the text than the plot. The critic calls the botched translation a result of “utter laziness and haste,” but does not similarly attack the narratives themselves. The anonymous critic writes, “Nothing gives us more pain (talking of small matters) than to see a really good book ill translated, and of late the English translations from the German prose-writers have been wretched.” He or she recommends that the “few good stories” in the two volumes would better serve the publisher if they were removed and produced as a separate volume. This process could remedy the text, provided that “whole fault has not been utter laziness and haste, which may very probably be the case; and, if so, why, the more shame” (review of “Popular Tales of the Northern Nations” 294). Similarly begrudging approval came from an 1824 edition of *The Monthly Review, Or, Literary Journal*. *The Monthly Review* articulates that some of the stories “seem to have been composed of a charnel-house for the circulating library of ghosts.”¹⁵⁴ Yet the journal also notes that *Wake Not the Dead* “is the most striking narrative” and refers to the tale as “a vampire story” (“Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations” 45–46). The reviewer goes on to print a selection from *Wake Not the*

¹⁵³ Review of “Popular Tales of the Northern Nations,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* Vol. XIV (1823) 293–294. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁵⁴ “Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations,” *The Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal, Enlarged*, Vol. CIII (London: A. & R. Spottiswoode, 1824) 45–47. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

Dead. The scene they publish depicts Brunhilda's need for blood and describes her appetite along with her predation of children ("Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations" 46). This is the only selection given from the entire collection, demonstrating that *Wake Not the Dead* uniquely appealed to readers because of its female vampire. By calling the public's attention to *Wake Not the Dead* as a vampire story, the editors of *The Monthly Review* reinforce its popular appeal and the perceived value of the undead to Romantic culture.

A variety of other critics likewise singled out *Wake Not the Dead* for additional consideration in more positive reviews than *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and *The Monthly Review*. Some of these publications claim *Popular Tales and Romances* to be a significant volume of historical and cultural importance. Multiple sources also direct attention to *Wake Not the Dead* specifically. In 1826 *The Eclectic Review* reviewed *Popular Tales and Romances* as "whimsical."¹⁵⁵ The critics of the journal praise the volumes Germanic origins specifically, saying, "We have been struck, so far as our knowledge reaches, with the general superiority of German tales in the very important particular of morality" ("Art III" 229–30). By establishing *Popular Tales and Romances* and the German authors within then as being particularly proficient in explaining morality, *The Eclectic Review* bolsters the claim that Gothic literature served an important educational purpose for readers. Their review further goes on to say that

¹⁵⁵ "Art. III. 1. *Popular Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations*. In Three Volumes, small 8vo. pp. 1010. London 1823." *The Eclectic Review*. Vol. XXV (London: B.J. Holdsworth, 1826) 229–236. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

“‘Wake not the dead,’ is an appalling and well-told tale” (“Art III” 236). The interesting juxtaposition of adjectives recognizes the talent of the author who produced *Wake Not the Dead*, overlooking its “appalling” elements in favor of the sound principles it promotes. *The Spirit of the English Magazine* expressed similar opinions in 1824. This American publication commended *Popular Tales and Romances*, expressing, “This is one of the most original and pleasing contributions to our legendary lore which has lately been given to the public.”¹⁵⁶ The collection stands out because of its originality and what reviewers appear to have believed to be a unique insight into Germanic literature.

Despite the supposed Germanic origins of *Popular Tales and Romances*, all claims praising its German ingenuity may be unfounded, as no universally recognized agreement exists in either the early-nineteenth century or current scholarship as to the identity of the translator of *Popular Tales and Romances*. Various attempts to identify the author of *Wake Not the Dead* have similarly resulted in a lack of scholarly consensus. In 1862 the *Catalogue of Upwards of Fifty Thousand Volumes of Ancient & Modern Books* states, “These translations are said to be by Gillies, Geo. Soane, and De Quincey.”¹⁵⁷ The 1908 edition of *The Library World* supports this statement.¹⁵⁸ However, The Brooklyn

¹⁵⁶ Review of “Popular Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations,” *Spirit of the English Magazine* (Boston: Oct. 13, 1823) 7, 50–58.

¹⁵⁷ *Catalogue of Upwards of Fifty Thousand Volumes of Ancient & Modern Books: English & Foreign, in All Class of Literature & the Fine Arts, including Rare & Curious Books, Manuscripts, Etc.*, (Willis and Sotheran, 1862) 422.

¹⁵⁸ *The Library World*, Volume XI, No.25 (July 1908) 13. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

Public Library catalogue of 1894¹⁵⁹ along with the Catalogue of Mercantile Library¹⁶⁰ in 1878 both list W.H. Leeds as the translator. Given the proximity of the *Catalogue of Upwards of Fifty Thousand Volumes* to the original publication date of 1823, attributing translation to Gillies, Soane, and De Quincey seems most reasonable.¹⁶¹ ¹⁶² The nebulous authorship of the narratives within *Popular Tales and Romances*, including *Wake Not the Dead*, is even more complex. The editors named the authors of just a handful of the texts in the preface to the collection, yet they did not record an author for each chapter. *Reading for the Young: A Classified and Annotated Catalog* (1890) annotates *Popular*

¹⁵⁹ Brooklyn Public Library. *Catalogue of English Prose Fiction: Including Juveniles and Translations* (July 1894) 131, 182.

¹⁶⁰ Brooklyn Public Library, *Catalogue of the Mercantile Library of Brooklyn: Authors, Titles, Subjects, and Classes* (1878) 513.

¹⁶¹ David Masson, ed., *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey: Tales and Romances* (1890). In the preface to the collection he edited, Masson revealed that his research into De Quincey's works showed that in 1859, De Quincey published a text called *The Fatal Marksman* in a *Collective Edition* of his own work without any hint that it was a direct translation of a German original. Having received a letter pointing out this plagiarism, Masson discovered that *The Fatal Marksman* was written by J.A. Apel. Furthermore, "having looked by mere accident," Masson found the exact text in the 1823 *Popular Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations* "without the name of either the original author of the translator" leading him to conclude that De Quincey originally translated Apel's text for *Popular Texts* as one of his "little commercial asides" and "having a copy of it beside him in 1859, he thought it then worth reprinted just as it stood" (Masson 2–3). Masson's discovery was significant enough to the public that it was included in the October 25, 1890 edition of *The Publishers Weekly* as part of the review of the new Collected Edition of De Quincey (604).

¹⁶² In 1860, *The Athenæum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts* lists John Oxenford as the author of "Wake Not the Dead! Or, The Bride of the Grave," but this is only a piece of poetry Oxenford translated "From the German of J. M. Fermenich." See "The Welcome Guest for 1860," *The Athenæum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts* (James Holmes, 1860) 50, and John Oxenford, "Wake Not the Dead," *The Welcome Guest* (Houlston and Wright, 1860) 50.

Tales and Romances in the ‘Mythology’ section as “Stories from La Motte Foque, Musaeus, and Tieck.¹⁶³ The editor of *Legends of Terror! And Tales of the Wonderful and the Wild* claims to “have seen several translations” of the story “Wake Not the Dead! Or, The Bride of the Grave,” but name the one in *Popular Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations* as the superior version.¹⁶⁴ “Wake Not the Dead” was most commonly believed to have been written by Ludwig Tieck until 2012 when Heide Crawford seemingly proved that Ernest Benjamin Salomo Raupach was the rightful author of the narrative.¹⁶⁵ Crawford asserts that *Wake Not the Dead* had been incorrectly attributed to Ludwig Tieck ever since Peter Haining included the text under Tieck’s name in his horror story collection *Gothic Tales of Terror* (1973). Furthermore, Crawford argues German scholars correctly claimed Raupach as the author, beginning as early as the nineteenth century. She believes that the story initially came to be credited to Tieck because it immediately precedes *Popular Tales and Romance*’s “Auburn Egbert,” the English translation of “Der blonde Eckbert” of which Tieck is the undisputed author (Crawford

¹⁶³ Sargent, John F. *Reading for the Young: A Classified and Annotated Catalog*. Boston: The American Library Association Publishing Section (1890) 6.

¹⁶⁴ “Wake Not the Dead! Or, The Bride of the Grave,” *Legends of Terror! And Tales of the Wonderful and the Wild* (Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1826) 129. This volume includes an image of the undead Brunhilda with the text. Her face appears forlorn as she rises from a tomb wearing a long, white veil and a crown (129).

¹⁶⁵ Heide Crawford, “Ernst Benjamin Salomo Raupach’s Vampire Story ‘Wake Not the Dead!’” *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 45, No. 6, 2012: 1189–1250. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text. Crawford’s publication has been well received by other scholars of undead literature including Richard Dalby and Brian J. Frost whom in their introduction to *Dracula’s Brethren* (2017) also attribute *Wake Not the Dead* to Raupach and claim it to be the introduction of the female vampire to prose fiction (Dalby and Frost 1–2). As this chapter goes on to prove, however, scholars need to reassess Crawford’s claims.

1191). However, Crawford claims, *Wake Not the Dead* had been attributed to Raupach in its original German in *Minerva Taschenbuch für das Jahr* (1823) under the name “Laßt die Todten ruhen” and listed as “A Fairy-Tale by Dr. Ernst Raupach” (Crawford 1189–1191).¹⁶⁶

Despite Crawford’s compelling claims, the actual German text “Laßt die Todten ruhen” bears only the most minimal similarity to *Wake Not the Dead* and does not include any supernatural elements at all. To identify Raupach as the author is an appealing prospect given his great literary reputation in the nineteenth century. Raupach is named in *The Foreign Quarterly Review* in 1844 as having “an almost despotic possession of the stage from 1826–1836” despite the “constant and most energetic critical protesting.”¹⁶⁷ In the 1836 *Germany in MDCCCXXXI*, John Strang writes Raupach “has extended the fame of German family feuds, as much as Shakespeare has done those of the Houses of York and Lancaster.”¹⁶⁸ Strang further claims Raupach is perceived as “one of the ablest and most successful dramatic writer in Germany” (288–89). With such high accolades, claiming Raupach as the author to *Wake Not the Dead* boosts the literary importance of the tale, although as the previously mentioned reviews show, the narrative already holds cultural significance.

¹⁶⁶In its original German: “Ein Märchen von D. Ernst Raupach.”

¹⁶⁷ “Art XI.—F.L.Z. Werner’s *Sämmtliche Werke*. (Werner’s Collective Works.) 12 vols. Berlin. 1840,” *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, Vol. 32. (Treuttel and Würtz, Treuttel, Jun, and Richter, 1844) 209–210. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁶⁸ John Strang, *Germany in MDCCCXXXI, Volume 1* (J. Macrone, 1836) 288. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

My assessment maintains that neither Tieck nor Raupach authored *Wake Not the Dead*, and in fact, the true creator of the tale may not have been German at all, but rather a British writer adopting the German Gothic style. All claims declaring that Raupach penned the text are unfounded, and might very well be an English Gothic tale “masquerading” as German, something Patrick Bridgwater claims as common to the period.¹⁶⁹ A verbatim translation of the text Raupach’s *Lasst die Todten ruhen!* : *Lustspiel in drei Akten (Let the Dead Rest!: a Comedy in Three Acts)* shows that *Wake Not the Dead* is by no means a direct interpretation of Raupach’s text, although it may have provided some, very minimal, inspiration. A tale of jealousy, “Laßt die Todten ruhen” narrates the lives of Baron Ehrenfried Zmiebler, his wife “Baronin” Auguste, and the Baron’s niece Elise. The narrative opens with the Baron and Baronin arguing about when the guardian should grant his niece the right to marry. The Baron believes his wife wants to find Elise a husband because the younger, prettier girl threatens the Baronin’s vanity. The Baron further confronts his wife, saying that he found her staring at the portrait of an old lover. The Baronin does not deny the incident, saying that she loved the man in the portrait and would have married him had he not died in battle. The Baron expresses his frustration that his wife would spend so much time contemplating a dead lover. Baronin Auguste besieges her husband “So seriously, dear: let the dead rest.”¹⁷⁰ The drama ends with the revelation that a mysterious man Elise has been seduced by is

¹⁶⁹ Patrick Bridgwater, *The German Gothic Novel in Anglo-German Perspective* (Rodopi, 2013) 240–41.

¹⁷⁰ Dr. E. Raupach, *Lasst die Todten ruhen! : Lustspiel in drei Akten* (Bei Hoffmann und Campe, 1826) 6–11. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

not her aunt's ex-lover as both believed, a misunderstanding that drove the two women apart, but a case of mistaken identity. Elise's lover is revealed to be the Baron's son (Raupach 95–113). No supernatural elements are present in Raupach's text, and certainly no reanimated corpses. If anything, the anonymous author of *Wake Not the Dead* borrowed the idea of jealousy arising from the lingering presence of a lost love temporarily believed to actually be alive after all, and embellished the story into the actual death and resurrection of a lover. Of additional interest is that the author of *Wake Not the Dead* reversed the genders of the mourner, substituting a man (Lord Walter) for Baronin Auguste. This chapter will investigate why a British author would have adopted a German authorship to publish *Wake Not the Dead*, and more importantly, why the insertion of an undead female character into such a story reflects the country's unique cultural anxieties regarding women's power and sexuality.

The importance of authorship and identification of the translators of *Popular Tales and Romances* seemingly became necessary only in the latter half of the nineteenth century and onward. For the Romantics, the identity of the creators of the text mattered less than that the tales were Gothic, German, and foreign—for better or worse. The editors of *Popular Tales and Romances* include a preface in the first volume of the collection defending their choice to gather and publish preternatural tales. They claim that “These tales do not pretend to be a picture of human nature or human manners; they are either imitations of early traditions, or the traditions themselves, amplified by some modern writer, and must be judge of in reference to such origin” (*Popular tales and romances* v). The editors defend the collection by attributing its stories to some vague Germanic origin, and in doing so associate the supernatural tales with barbarism and

regression. They even claim that the supernatural cannot evolve in urban areas for “the belief in supernatural agents has its native home among mountains and deserts, and snows, and in short wherever society is broken into small masses and detached from frequent intercourse of the general world” (*Popular Tales and Romances* vi). However, the editors also believed that their superior British tastes could make this barbaric literature acceptable. The editors of *Popular Tales and Romances* thought that they were doing the public such a service by eliminating the “fancy” that “had too much sway” over the Germans. Previously to their publication of German literature “it has seldom been under the guidance of sound taste, and the consequence is, that the multitude of their original fictions is disgraced by the most barbarous absurdities” (*Popular Tales and Romances* ix).

Absurdities or not, the influences of German literature on the Gothic genre and the undead figure are crucial to understanding the creation of the first female vampire and all of the future emulations she influenced. Critical studies of the German impact on British literature in the Romantic period are vast. The work of Michael Gamer, E.J. Clery, Michael L. Hadley, Steven Paul Scher, Anna M. Wittmann, Patrick Bridgwater, and Robert Miles informed this chapter’s argument that the German Gothic genre in particular affected the British Romantic literary tradition.¹⁷¹ The stimulus of the

¹⁷¹ See Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); E.J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800* (Cambridge Studies in Romanticism, 1995); Michael L. Hadley, *The Search for the German Gothic Novel* (Peter Lang, 1978); Steven Paul Scher, “The German Lied: A Genre and Its European Reception.” *European romanticism: literary cross-currents, modes, and models*. Ed. Gerhart Hoffmeister (Wayne State University Press, 1990); Anna M. Wittmann, “Gothic Trivialliteratur: From Popular Gothicism to Romanticism *European romanticism: literary cross-currents, modes, and*

supernatural is well-recognized in these evaluations. Gamer credits the “nearly contemporaneous” publications of the Advertisement of *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Lewis, which suggests the plot had been inspired by German and Spanish sources, and three different translation of Burger’s *Lenore* as important facilitators in introducing the German supernatural to British readers (76–79). Clery also cites the translations of *Lenore* in 1796 as confirming the “German ascendancy in the writing of the supernatural,” although he claims “no less than five” translations of the text were produced that year (141). The insertion of German translations into the British literary market “irresistibly connected a new phase of terror fiction with ideas of foreignness and invasion” (Clery 140). *Wake Not the Dead* expands on this claim by placing the threat of the female vampire in the British household and locating the threat of invasion in the undead body.

Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical (1790) marks one of the first English recognitions of the influence of Eastern Europe on the pervasiveness of the vampire in literature, as the first recorded instance of a reanimated blood-sucking corpses labeled as “Vampires” occurs in Hungary in 1730.¹⁷² ¹⁷³ In 1823, Robert Walsh Jr. alleges that from

models. Ed. Gerhart Hoffmeister (Wayne State University Press, 1990); Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing, 1750-1820: A Genealogy*. (Routledge, 1993); Patrick Bridgwater, *German Gothic Novel in Anglo-German Perspective*. (Editions Rodopi, 2013). Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁷² *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, Vol. III. (T. Cadell, 1790) 86.

¹⁷³ First time “vampire” was used in English verse was Robert Southey’s *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1797).

1730 to 1735 ‘vampyres’ were common to the conversation across France and Europe.¹⁷⁴ Walsh also reveals a prejudice against the Germanic countries, claiming that northeastern nations such as Hungary, Poland, and Bosnia owed a love of vampyre tales to their “most abject ignorance, and [their] living in a condition and on coarse food little above the brutes” (Walsh 432). James B. Twitchell charges three German poets, Ossenfelder, Bürger, and Goethe with initiating the eighteenth-century’s inclusion of vampires in literature.¹⁷⁵ In doing so they further solidify Germany’s importance to the development of the vampire trope in literature. Instances of the word “vampire” in the English language occurring previously to the publication of *Wake Not the Dead* also include Erasmus Darwin in *The Botanic Garden, Part II* (1791), who refers to “vampire-wings.”¹⁷⁶ Gothic author Charlotte Smith utilized the German creature in her character “Mr. Vampyre” who appears in her novel *Marchmont* (1796) as a solicitor of suspicious character and a “villain” who preys on other’s fortunes, and whom the narrator refers to as a “blood-hound.”¹⁷⁷ What these references show is that the construction of ‘Vampyre’

¹⁷⁴ Robert Jr. Walsh, *The Museum of Foreign Literature and Science*, Vol II (E. Littell and R. Norris Henry, 1823) 432. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁷⁵ James B. Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror*. (Oxford University Press, 1988) 33. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁷⁶ Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden: A Poem, in Two Parts ; Part I. Containing The Economy of Vegetation ; Part II. the Loves of the Plants ; with Philosophical Notes* (J. Johnson, 1791) 79: 364.

¹⁷⁷ Charlotte Smith, *Marchmont: A Novel. By Charlotte Smith. In Four Volumes*, Vol. 2. (Sampson Low, 1796) 214–215.

as a predatory creature of Germanic origin had infiltrated popular culture by the late-eighteenth century.

The evolution of the Germanic vampire from oral history to written literature created texts that M.M. Carlson says “greatly reworked and remolded the vampire into a recognizable literary type to suit its own needs and purposes.”¹⁷⁸ Carlson recognizes the role Eastern Europeans played in the development of the vampire, but he clearly disdains German vampiric literature and belittles the tales by declaring them devoid “any real merit” and even “crudely pornographic” (26–28). Despite Carlson’s opinions appearing more than a century after the comments of Walsh and the editors of *Popular Tales and Romances*, he too echoes the critical sentiments during the early nineteenth century that likened most Germanic literature to sensationalism, and therefore making it unworthy of critical scrutiny. This movement, as Clive Leatherdale maintains, was made possible by the Germans, and he goes as far as to brand them the first authors who “realized the potential of the vampire,” refocusing the creature from superstition to “respectable” literary characters.¹⁷⁹

Despite the tension surrounding the critical acceptance of German tales to the English literary world, the editors of *Popular Tales and Romances* reveal a begrudging loyalty to the original texts and refuse to change anything in the narratives. The editors

¹⁷⁸ M.M. Carlson, "What Stoker Saw: An Introduction to the History of the Literary Vampire." *Folklore Forum* 10(2) (1977) 26-28. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁷⁹ Clive Leatherdale, *Dracula, the Novel and the Legend a Study of Bram Stoker's Gothic Masterpiece* (Desert Island, 2001) 46. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

make it a point to mention that besides the exceptions of the “Spectre-Barber” and “Kibitz,” all the tales in *Popular Tales and Romances* “have not hitherto been translated, so that, whatever many be their faults in other respects, they will at least have the merit of novelty with the English reader, and that, though not the highest, is certainly not the least, of commendations” (xiii).¹⁸⁰ What can be gathered from this defensive preface is that appreciation for Gothic literature can be explained by emphasizing the “novelty” of the texts. Critics of the collection continued their serious critical disdain well into the twentieth century, but public readers rejoiced in its macabre imagery.¹⁸¹ A collection of playbills from 1821 to 1824 include a reference to *Popular Tales and Romances*, and *Wake Not the Dead* in particular, saying that “We had read in the course of the afternoon the story of *Wake Not the Dead*, in the newly translated Tales of the Northern Nations, and we never felt the force of the title and moral of a fancy narrative more completely.”¹⁸² The ideas of “fancy” were a profitable and widely reaching market in the early nineteenth century. Critics often dismiss popular supernatural literature, but the integration of the monsters and tropes into British literature, particularly as they

¹⁸⁰ Given that I have not yet been able to locate the source text of *Wake Not the Dead* in German prose, poetry, or drama, the editor’s claim about translation here is suspect.

¹⁸¹ In 1931, Edwin H. Zedel lambasted *Popular Tales and Romances* in his text *Ludwig Tieck and England: a study in the literary relations of Germany and England during the early nineteenth century*, claiming that “The uncritical editor of the *Popular Tales and Romances* was interested only in presenting material which readers with a bent for the curious in literature would devour” (Zeydel 148). It bears without saying in this dissertation that those with “curious” inclinations did not make any less enthusiastic or receptive readers.

¹⁸² Haymarket Theatre Royal, *A collection of playbills from Haymarket Theatre (1821-1824)* 216.

contribute to the regulation of carnal desires, become increasingly frequent as the nineteenth century progresses. That these texts were published and appropriated for an English audience does not lessen their educational impact. *Popular Tales and Romances* appear in *The Bibliographers Manual of English Literature* (1864) as one of the most “rare, curious, and useful books” printed in or relating to Great Britain and Ireland since “the invention of printing.”¹⁸³ The praise the collection received in *The Bibliographers Manual* along with its appearance in library catalogues supports that readers found it entertaining, and perhaps even useful.

The value of a text like *Wake Not the Dead* lies in how it both adheres to and challenges the tropes of the demon lover and the predatory undead woman. Leatherdale argues that the Romantics turned to vampire imagery “not to frighten, but to entertain and enlighten” (49). The popularity of the text as discussed above in conjunction with the sexual education element adheres to Leatherdales’s conclusion; however, he fails to address the terror undead women do provoke in the early nineteenth century. Raupach’s undead Brunhilda proves this by disrupting lamia, vampire, and European folklore in an amalgamation of undead traits previously unseen, which would later become the template for all undead female constructions. Fear of the reanimated woman lies in her capacity to challenge patriarchal norms as she aggressively pursues and consumes both man and woman, young and old alike. Her destruction knows no boundaries, and neither does her

¹⁸³ William Thomas Lowndes, *The Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature: Containing an Account of Rare, Curious, and Useful Books, Published in or Relating to Great Britain and Ireland from the Invention of Printing; with Bibliographical and Critical Notices, Collations of the Rarer Articles, and the Prices at Which They Have Been Sold*. Ed. Henry George. Bohn. Vol. IV. (Henry G. Bohn, 1864) 2571.

gender. Joseph Andriano claims that the “very being” of all female demons “defies gender boundaries, for she is aggressive both sexually and intellectually.”¹⁸⁴ This chapter’s analysis of *Wake Not the Dead* addresses the fluidity of the undead woman’s sexual and gender identities by discussing how Brunhilda’s consumption of blood and destruction of an entire village bellies her seemingly submissive attitude to Walter. The contradiction of Brunhilda’s dominating appetite and apparent obedience to her husband is likewise reflected in her undead body that exists between states of being.

WAKE NOT THE DEAD SUMMARY

The narrative begins with Burgundy Lord Walter lamenting the loss of his first wife, Brunhilda, imploring to her grave, “Wilt thou for ever sleep? Wilt thou never more awake, my beloved?” Married in their youth, Walter and Brunhilda were “equally enamoured and devoted” to one another, and their marriage was filled with “a passion that rendered them reckless” until Brunhilda’s sudden death. Initially upset at the loss, Walter quickly moves on to the equally beautiful Swanhilda, making her his second wife. Unlike the fervent Brunhilda, Swanhilda tempered Walter and bore him two children, a boy and a girl. They all live together happily for years, with Walter’s thoughts returning to his first love fleetingly and with little frequency, thinking of her as only a friend. But time causes his happiness to fade, and his thoughts turn again to the passion of his youth as his memories of Brunhilda return to him “in all the glow of her bridal charm.” Sensing his change in mood, Swanhilda “redoubling her attentions towards him, and her cares

¹⁸⁴ Joseph Andriano, *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction*. (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 6.

towards their children,” attempts to reinforce their bond again, which only serves to make her more intolerable to Walter. The children become the only thing linking the couple together as they are bonded by a shared affection towards their progeny. Paternal love cannot dull the passion Walter again feels for Brunhilda, and he begins to visit her tomb regularly.

Finally, Walter’s sorrow is broken by the appearance of a sorcerer “from the neighboring mountains” who stumbles upon Walter as he hunts for the mystic herbs that only grow from grave soil. Initially reproachful, the sorcerer questions why Walter pines away at the tomb saying

Wherefore, fond wretch dost thou grieve thus, for what is now a hideous mass of mortality—mere bones, and nerves, and veins? Nations have fallen unlamented; even worlds themselves, long ere this globe of your was created, have mouldered into nothing; nor hath any one wept over them: why when should thou indulge this vain affliction for a childe on the dust—a being as frail as thyself, and like thee the creature of but a moment? (*Wake Not the Dead* 240).

Walter insists that the “fellow-clay” resting in Brunhilda’s tomb possess “a fire, —with an essence, that none of the elements of creation possess—with love.” The sorcerer warns Walter that disturbing Brunhilda’s repose would only leave her resentful, but Walter insists his bride would treasure the ability to return to his side. The sorcerer persists in questioning Walter, asking if Walter could bear to look Brunhilda once reanimated: “and couldst thou endure to gaze without shuddering on one disgorged from the jaws of the grave? Art thou too thyself the same from whom she parted; or hath time passed o’er thy brow and left no traces there? Would not thy love rather be converted into hate and

disgust?” Walter begs the man to restore life to Brunhilda, saying that although he has the power to do so, but claiming that he can “build a bridge” between life and death and not “fill up the frightful chasm.” The sorcerer tells Walter to consider his wish, telling the widower to return to the gravesite the following night at midnight, leaving him with the final message “I warn thee, ‘wake not the dead.’”

Walter’s newfound hope chases sleep from him, and he passes the day wandering through the woods, avoiding the realities of his desire to bring Brunhilda back from the dead and choosing to focus instead on being able to “repose on her bosom at night.” That night the sorcerer again asks him to consider the request again, only to warn Walter again on the third night he returns. Only after the third warning has been administered does the sorcerer acquiesce saying that if he restores Brunhilda to Walter, Walter cannot be rid of her until his death “even though aversion and horror should seize thy heart.” The sorcerer’s spell raises a storm, and amidst agitated owls, a “fiery column” of worms, and a rush of wind, the tomb to Brunhilda’s tomb rolls open, the lid of her coffin released with a “tremendous sound.” Pouring blood from a human skull into the coffin the sorcerer bids the “sleeper” to drink from “this warm stream, that thy hear may again beat within thy bosom.” The combination of blood and “some other mystic liquid” reanimates Brunhilda. Starting suddenly from “her earthy couch” Brunhilda awakens and the sorcerer leads her to Walter saying that if he needs his assistance again he can be found where “three roads meet” on the mountain during a full moon.

The recently reunited couple retreat to a castle in the mountain, keeping her existence secret from all but one servant. For seven days, Brunhilda can bear no light, and the next week she can only tolerate the light of sunrise and sunset. Walter rarely leaves

Brunhilda's side, attached seeming by some "nameless spell" to despite his initially inability to touch her and shuddering at her proximity. Appearing more beautiful than she did formerly, Brunhilda reminisces with Walter about the past and paints a future for them of "more than mortal extacy." Two weeks pass and Walter is finally able to see Brunhilda in daylight, a fact he revels in for "Every trace of the grave had disappeared from her countenance." Even though her appearance has improved, Brunhilda forbids Walter from touching her until the next full moon. Brunhilda spurns Walter's amorous advances, refusing to become his concubine. Walter tells Swanhilda she must return to live with her father without their children. Walter redecorates the castle, giving the bedroom extra attention, and brings Brunhilda to the castle as his "newly-made bride." The servants of the castle notice Brunhilda's resemblance to their deceased former mistress, and all but the oldest among them of them ultimately flee their posts in fear.

At this moment in the story, the narrator reveals that Brunhilda lures children to her, lulling them to sleep and drinking the blood from their breasts. As the children begin to show signs of illness and others die, the remaining occupants with offspring leave the castle. Finally, no one but Walter's own children remains for Brunhilda to feed on, and she does so until they wither away and die. Brunhilda then turns to Walter, secretly feeding from him until he has contact with a mysterious root that stops Brunhilda's dream spell from working on him and allowing him to experience Brunhilda "drawing with her lips, the warm blood from his bosom." Walter recoils in horror as Brunhilda blames his fate and that of his children on his own desire to possess her again. Walter is forced to seek out the help of the sorcerer again, who says Walter can only be free if he murders Brunhilda amidst her vulnerability for the duration of the new moon. The sorcerer gives

Walter instructions to hide in a cave until the moon is at the proper phase, and he manages to do so, despite the nightly taunting of Brunhilda who is forced to remain outside a magical circle of protection. Walter succeeds in stabbing Brunhilda as he repeats the oath the sorcerer provided him: “Never will I think of her with love, never recall her to mind intentionally, and, should her image recur to my mind involuntarily, so will I exclaim to it: be thou accursed.”

Following Brunhilda’s second burial, Walter goes to war to avoid thinking about her, and eventually returns to Swanhilda to beg for her forgiveness. Swanhilda denies him upon learning their children are dead. Riding through the forest, Walter meets a woman on a black horse dressed all in black and carrying a raven. She asks if she and her companions can take lodging in his castle for a night, and Walter agrees. Three days of feasting past, and Walter asks the mysterious woman to remain. Walter shares his tale with the woman, who suspiciously takes it all in stride, saying that “there are beauties who will gladly share your couch, make you again a father.” Shortly after, the two marry but upon taking his new bride into their nuptial chamber, the woman transforms into a monstrous serpent and crushes Walter to death as flames consume the entire castle amid a disembodied voice crying out “WAKE NOT THE DEAD” (233–91).

VAMPIRIC HISTORY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LAMIAE

Brunhilda’s proclivity for young blood and status as a reanimated corpse makes her classification as the first female vampire in English prose literature justifiable, but it does not completely explain all of the traits she possesses. Unlike other texts preceding

Wake Not the Dead,¹⁸⁵ Brunhilda fulfills all three of the qualifications for the traditional female vampire as established by Carol A. Senf: “bloodsucking, rebellious behavior, and overt eroticism.”¹⁸⁶ The European vampire of either sex is corporeal, has some sexual aspect to its nature, threatens the family unit, and embodies the contradiction of attraction and repulsion (Leatherdale 18–19). However, Senf assumes that all pre-twentieth-century texts evoking the female vampire attribute her blatant sensuality as an indication of her “absolute evil” (Senf 204), a trait Brunhilda does not possess. *Wake Not the Dead*’s vampire does drink blood (261–265, 270) and represents a social rebellion of the chaste female archetype in her enthusiastic participation in sexual acts with her husband before and after death (*Wake Not the Dead* 235–36, 253–54, 261, 265). To call Brunhilda a being of “absolute evil” seems unfair, especially given Walter’s dominating role in her reanimation. While evil does not need to be intentional to be morally damaging, and the consequences of Brunhilda actions are catastrophic, her malevolent actions are not her fault alone. Brunhilda rises from the grave because of some nefarious spirit, personal desire, or demonic pact, but at the behest of Walter. Even the sorcerer who performs the ceremony granting Brunhilda a second life denies that her reanimation could be considered purely evil. The sorcerer warns Walter not to request the reanimation not because of how Brunhilda will act, but because the damage it will do to Walter alone.

¹⁸⁵ English poetry contains references to female vampires long before Brunhilda’s appearance. Examples of such early characters include Oneiza from Robert Southey’s “Thalaba the Destroyer” (1801), Geraldine of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Christabel” (1816), and the titular “Lamia” from John Keat’s (1820).

¹⁸⁶ Carol A Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth Century English Literature* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2013) 200. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

When Walter asks the man to “restore me my beloved; so shalt thou hereafter bless the deed, and see that it was good work,” the sorcerer responds in kind: “A good work! a blessed deed!...for me there exists nor good, nor evil; since my will is always the same. Ye alone know evil, who will that which ye would not” (*Wake Not the Dead* 242). If evil is to be located anywhere in the reanimation of Brunhilda, it is with Walter who is driven by a desire for pure passion.

Disassociating the female vampire from evil is not the only contribution *Wake Not the Dead* made to the vampire trope. The text’s significance also lies in its introduction of what Crawford refers to as “important and very modern elements” to the female vampire in the early-nineteenth century including the predation of children, seductress persona, hypnotic breath, the drinking of blood from the breast, and allowing victims to wither over time rather than killing them outright (1199–200). Nevertheless, some scholars ignore the history of identical beings that exist outside of the label of vampire. To borrow Toni Reed’s terminology, other “demon lovers” are quite common, especially in mythology.¹⁸⁷ The “demon lover” motif, according to Reed, comprises of “an aggressive” man’s attempts to dominate and destroy a naïve, impressionable woman and demonstrates also her lack of perception and foresight” (Reed 2). Here again Brunhilda defies basic categorization in her possession of traits Reed believes can only be held by a man. As Brunhilda’s actions and Walter’s fate show, *Wake Not the Dead*’s undead female dominates Walter sexually, exploiting his ignorance that she will be his willing sexual partner without any consequences. Walter’s character lacks perception and

¹⁸⁷ Toni Reed, *Demon-Lovers and Their Victims in British Fiction* (University of Kentucky, 1988) 2. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

foresight, ignoring the warnings of the sorcerer who asks Walter “and couldst thou endure to gaze without shuddering on one disgorged from the jaws of the grave? Art thou too thyself the same from whom she parted; or hath time passed o’er they brow and left no traces there? Would not thy love rather be converted into hate and disgust?” Walter responds by saying that it would be more likely that “sun will henceforth refuse to shed his beams through the heavens” (*Wake Not the Dead* 241). Despite this claim, immediately upon Brunhilda’s reanimation, Walter experiences a visceral reaction whenever he is near her. The sensation of repulsion is “not unmixed with pleasure,” but Walter’s involuntary shudder contradicts the promise sworn to the sorcerer (*Wake Not the Dead* 250). Reed’s assertion that “the demon-lover conflict” serves “as a pervasive leitmotiv in British fiction, [so that] we may better comprehend volatile gender relationships” (7) inadvertently applies to both male and female dominated relationships. Specifically, the female vampire as demon-lover demonstrates Senf’s claims that the “connection between women and vampires often stems from a general fear of the Other, in this case, a fear of powerful and predatory women” (Senf 199). Brunhilda encapsulates such power, eliminating the youth of both genders with her consumption, and driving away older men and women who grow to fear her destructive capacity.

The forbidden knowledge *Wake Not the Dead* communicates establishes Brunhilda as the “Other” predatory woman references a long history of vampiric characters that predates the nineteenth century. The separation of vampire and demonic woman is caused by a desire to separate the “high literary” seductive female monster from its folklore past. Carlson, for example, argues that the “Fatal Woman” as a vampire did not emerge until Poe’s “Ligea” (1838), and also marked the return of the Lamia, a

character who Carlson insists “only vaguely related to the folkloric vampire” (28). Not only is this an inaccurate point of origin, but Carlson’s assumptions encapsulate the tendency to ignore the mythological tradition of the vampiric female. The convoluted history of the female vampire begins with Grendel in *Beowulf*, a character Nicolas K. Kiessling argues is not merely the ‘notorious’ or ‘infamous’ creature traditional translations of often claim him to be, but Grendel can be read as an “incubus, night monster,” a claim Twitchell supports (30).¹⁸⁸ Other scholars also locate the vampire in male mythological creatures, most significantly with Satan. Reed is one such scholar who insists that the demon-lover is an exclusively male figure “clearly” based on the devil (Reed 8). Attributing all demon-lovers to Satan cannot be an accurate statement given that all demon-lovers are not male, nor do they all represent evil. Furthermore, the oldest references to creatures capable of feeding on humans in some capacity are not exclusively male, something recognized by the author of *The Museum of Foreign Literature and Science* (1823). This text names Greece the source of the ‘Vampyre’ superstition, associating it with the male and female Vroucolaca that inspired the Vampyre of Slavonia (Walsh 436).¹⁸⁹ Walsh says,

¹⁸⁸ Nicolas K. Kiessling, “Grendel: A New Aspect,” *Modern Philology*, Vol. 65, No. 3, (1968) 191. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁸⁹ In addition to mentioning the lamia and lamiae, Walsh associates the vampyre with the tradition of the Greek church. He believes that the vampire also evolved from the Greek Orthodox belief that an excommunicated body preserved in the grave would stay buried “entire and unputrified,” a conviction that combined with the belief that the dead were capable of eating and drinking in their graves and would have “devoured their own flesh and burial-clothes for want of better food” (36–37) to produce the vampyre.

The Vampyre, then, we take to be originally a creature of the superstition of the Greek church—a monster generated from the persuasion of the wonder efficacies ascribed by the Greek priests to the excommunication of their bishops, and perhaps inheriting some of his horrid characteristics from some of the traditionary monsters of ancient Greek mythology including the “beautiful and bloody Lamiae” and the Strygis or Stryx (438).

More influential than Grendel, Satan, or the incubus to the vampire trope is the lamia and/or the lamiae, female blood-sucking creatures of ancient lore who provided the foundation from which female vampires like Brunhilda were crafted.¹⁹⁰ This chapter argues that the lamiae parallel all vampires, not just female ones, meaning that all vampire lore comes from a feminine mythological history.

The lamia first evolved as one of a list of creatures living in the desert (Isaiah 3.3.14) under the title “Lilith” (Kiessling 13).¹⁹¹ In Assyrian texts from Mesopotamia,

¹⁹⁰ Parsons states that English children first learned of the lamia from *A Description of Three Hundred Animals... Illustrated with Copper Plates*, a text published from 1730–1826, although any illustration of her was censored in 1797 and fully removed by 1808, only to be omitted completely from the text 1812 (Parsons 183). The illustration from the tenth edition of the book (1767) depicts the lamia as a four-legged beast in front of a background of sand and palm trees. Her back legs are cloven hoofs and the front paws resemble those of a predatory cat. She has the tail of a horse, a scaled or feathered body, and a smiling human face. The lamia is also depicted in the image with large human breasts with no nipples. This is a deviation from the seventh edition of the text where the lamia’s breasts are drawn with nipples, which proves censorship of the image began before 1797 as Parsons claims. The lamia appears in both editions on the page with “the Elke” and “the Allocam Elus.” Thomas Boreman, *A Description of Three Hundred Animals: Viz. Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Serpents, and Insects, the Tenth Edition* (H. Woodfall, et al., 1769) 21; Thomas Boreman, *A Description of Three Hundred Animals, Viz. Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Serpents, and Insects, the Seventh Edition* (R. Ware, 1753) 21.

¹⁹¹ Boreman’s 1767 edition supports this with a desert background included in the illustration of the lamia. Thomas Boreman, *A Description of Three Hundred Animals,:*

Lilith appears as “Lili,” a succubus that hunts men to participate in her orgies and looking for children to steal. The Hebrew ‘lilith’ was then translated into the Greek ‘lamia.’¹⁹² “Lilith” receives an equally important translation by an Old Irish version of the Bible dating to 876 or 877 A.D. This translation of the original Hebrew text alters the word “Lilith” to ‘lamia,’ a Vulgate translation for witch. The Old Irish lamia is as “a ‘monstru[m] in femine figura. Ie. morigain.” The Morigain can be traced to the Celtic ‘morrigan,’ whose history also harkens back to ‘māere,’ the Old English world Grendel is referred to (“Grendel: A New Aspect 194–95).

The lamia’s history is rooted in desire and revenge, an apt origin for what would become the basis for the female vampire. In classical mythology ‘Lamia’ was the name of two different women. One was a daughter of Poseidon who bore Zeus a Sibyl named Herophile. The other woman to bear the name Lamia refers more directly to the creature referred to by Romantic poets and authors. The daughter of Belus and a queen in Libya, Lamia’s beauty seduced Zeus and she bore him children. The jealous Hera learned of their relationship and kidnapped all of Zeus and Lamia’s offspring, a tragedy that drove Lamia insane. In retaliation, she would kidnap the children of others and murder them, a habit that caused her appearance to turn ugly and grotesque. Her monstrous appearance caused Zeus to allow her to remove and replace her own eyes.¹⁹³ The myth of Lamia

Viz. Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Serpents, and Insects, the Tenth Edition (H. Woodfall, et al., 1769) 21

¹⁹² Nicolas K. Kiessling, . *The Incubus in English Literature: Provenance and Progeny*. (Washington State University Press, 1977) 13–14.

¹⁹³ Robert E. Bell, *Women of Classical Mythology: A Biographical Dictionary* (ABC-CLIO, 1991) 270–271. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

directly contributed to the development of a class of predatory female monsters called the ‘lamiae’ that were named for their obvious reference to the scorned mother of Greek mythology.¹⁹⁴ The lamiae, writes Robert E. Bell, were “handsome ghostly women who by various sensuous means lured young men to the beds” where they would relish in “the fresh, youthful energy of their victims” by drinking their blood and feeding of their flesh. “They were in ancient times the equivalent of vampires in modern legends” (Bell 271).¹⁹⁵ The lamiae were “fairly well known in Germanic countries” by A.D. 500–600, and the creature became the vampire seen in Germanic texts. These early texts identified the lamiae as witches who “could consume the insides of men and so kill them, or they could act as vampires” (“Grendel: A New Aspect” 196). All vampires reflect the lamia. This assertion challenges the historical notion that vampire literary history is a masculine one, and like the previous chapter’s claim that Dacre invented the Western male vampire, brings attention to the importance of women to the construction of the undead. To ascribe the lamiae as the source of all vampires in part explains why some critics find the male vampire to be a “feminized” character. All European blood sucking and flesh eating undead can claim Lilith as their dark Eve. The Greek Lamia, Twitchell claims, are the prototype for the seductive undead that held such strong influence that by the end of the eighteenth century she became the “generic term for all female vampires” (40). Thus,

¹⁹⁴ From this point forward I will refer to all blood-sucking, undead predatory women who derived from the Lamia and/or lamiae tradition as “lamiae,” unless directly referring to the Greek mate of Zeus, in order to simplify the claims I am making and my desire to incorporate all interpretations of these original creatures.

¹⁹⁵ I would go as far as to say that these creatures helped shaped the Western understanding of the Haitian zombi as the flesh-eating undead cannibals we see in popular culture today.

Brunhilda's actions and appearance can be more thoroughly evaluated when the feminine mythological history of her character is recognized. Brunhilda's disruption of sexual and domestic values reflects a larger historical anxiety about the perceived instability of female desire and women's intimate relationships with children

If Brunhilda does indeed mark the point in English literature where the female vampire enters into history, *Wake Not the Dead* represents an etymological shift of the lamiae into the female vampire.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, Brunhilda proves that Walsh's assertion is incorrect, and the lamiae (and her male counterpart the larvae) did not fade into obscurity, as he believes. Walsh claims that

the Lamiae and the Larvae of the ancient were, indeed, horrid creations—but the latter were mere shadows, which takes off much of their monstrosity—but the Vampyre is corporeal creature of blood and unquenchable blood-thirst—a ravenous corpse, who rises in body and soul from his grave for the sole purpose of glutting his sanguinary appetite with the life blood of those whose blood stagnates in his own veins (431).

The lamiae are no less corporeal than the vampire, and Walsh's dismissal of the larvae as "mere shadows" does not account for their female counterparts. Leatherdale also glosses over the feminine history of the vampire, although he does mention female goddesses Kali, the predatory hags called vetala, and even the lamia in his brief summary of vampire history (17–18). However, his reliance on Christian interpretations of vampires

¹⁹⁶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Christabel" features a predatory undead female, as the introduction to this dissertation asserts, but that character never explicitly drinks blood or is seen rising from the grave in the text. Unlike "Christabel," *Wake Not the Dead* clearly portrays the undead woman as seductive female vampire who literally feeds on the blood of the living.

(23–44) and use of *Dracula* as the seminal vampire text unequivocally positions the male figure as the authority on these undead creatures. Not all critics ignore the lamiae's contribution to the vampire in English literature but for those who do, the exclusion reads as an attempt to disguise the female in the history of the important literary figure of the vampire.¹⁹⁷ Overturning the assumption that male vampire figures (and male authors) determined the literary and cultural history of the vampire is necessary to understand the edifying effect these monsters provide. *Wake Not the Dead* is important in how it retools the lamiae myth to produce the modern female vampire. Of crucial significance is how *Wake Not the Dead* changes the association with the lamiae from what Coleman O. Parsons refers to as those who entered into a “pact with the Devil to gratify their exorbitant sexual desires” (188). Brunhilda, *Wake Not the Dead*'s female vampire/lamiae makes no such pact. Instead, she is reanimated by the desperate carnal desires of her husband. *Wake Not the Dead* thereby locates the evil associated with the creation of the undead woman with men and male sexuality. This seemingly puts Walter in control, but Brunhilda revolts by destroying his children, his village, and ultimately his own life. Walter's sexual desires overwhelm any morals or obligations to family he might have, and Brunhilda's control over his life and his progeny impart to the reader that desire must be regulated. In *Wake Not the Dead*'s positioning of blame to the masculine head of the

¹⁹⁷ See for example, Carol A. Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth Century English Literature* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness* (University of Chicago Press, 2009); Richard, and Brian J. Frost, eds., *Dracula's Brethren* (Harper Collins UK, 2017); Nicolas Kiessling, *The Incubus in English Literature: Provenance and Progeny* (Washington State University Press, 1977); Steve Preston, *Truth About Vampires* (Lulu Press, 2014); Brian Righi, *Vampires Through the Ages: Lore and Legends of the World's Most Notorious Blood Drinkers* (Llewellyn Worldwide, 2011).

family through the character of Walter, the text makes the living male as much of a monster as the undead Brunhilda.

MONSTROUS MALE SEXUALITY

Upon visiting Brunhilda's tomb, Walter inquires, "Say then, doth the paly shroud become thee better than the bridal veil? Is the chamber of the grave a warmer bed than the couch of love? Is the spectre death more welcome to thy arms than thy enamoured consort?" (*Wake Not the Dead* 234). With this query he reveals a possessive jealousy over Brunhilda's physical (sexual) body that ultimately prompts his pursuit of her reanimation. Referencing her "bridal veil," the "couch of love," and most tellingly, Death as her lover, the reader learns that Walter's physical longing has made him irrational. He desires to control not Brunhilda's spirit, but the corporeal body capable of welcoming a lover into her arms—her physical corpse. Brunhilda's perceived longing for a bedfellow demonizes her character with the implication that her sexual desires are so immense that they continue after death. To be 'feminine' in this period, Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff claim, was to be virtuous and honorable.¹⁹⁸ Walter's imagination of Brunhilda happily sinking into the arms of Death erases her virtue in the eyes of the reader. As Romantic animate corpses, Joseph Andriano claims, all undead women were animated by demons constructed from "the haunted man's unconscious" as "psychological

¹⁹⁸ Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class* (Hutchinson, 1987) 155. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

symbols.”¹⁹⁹ In *Wake Not the Dead* the undead woman makes Walter vulnerable in her exposure of his fragile masculinity as he seeks gratification from the deceased Brunhilda to prove his prowess can surpass any man living or dead.

The narrator of *Wake Not the Dead*’s story makes an effort to described Brunhilda’s physical appearance both before and after death. In life Brunhilda is depicted as a slender woman with “a beauty far surpassing in loveliness all her rivals” with long hair “dark as the raven face of night” and skin of “beaming lustre.” Her cheeks have a “rich” tint as “deep and brilliant as that of the western heaven.” Her eyes are not those “burning orbs whose pale glow gem the vault of night,” but rather “the sober beams which cheer this nether world” and “kindle the sons of earth to joy and love” (*Wake Not the Dead* 235). This kindling of “joy and love” seemingly drives Walter’s passion, and once they wed they “abandoned themselves to the enjoyment of a passion that rendered them reckless of aught besides” (*Wake Not the Dead* 235). Walter’s physical attraction to Brunhilda paired with the mention of their unquenchable passion leads the reader to assume that the two made good use of the marriage bed in the days following their wedding. It is the memories of these amorous unions that Walter recalls every time the sorcerer demands he consider the implication of Brunhilda’s reanimation. Instead of seriously considering the matter, Walter spends three days wishing to “again fold her in his arms, gaze on her beaming brow by day, repose on her bosom at night” (*Wake Not the Dead* 243).

¹⁹⁹ Jospeh Andriano, Joseph, *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction*. (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 69.

Given Walter's preoccupation with Brunhilda's physical form, it is no surprise that upon her reanimation and amplified beauty ("so fair, so fascinating, so admirable"), Walter is captivated. With a voice that "Never till now" had "such tones of sweetness," and her "whole being refined and purified by that long sleep in which neither passion nor sin had approached in her dreams," Brunhilda's "syren strain" inspires him to dream of "more than mortal extacy" (*Wake Not the Dead* 250–52). For the first three weeks of her reanimation, Brunhilda manages to avoid the embraces of Walter, presumably to give her time to fully adjust to being undead and perhaps give her time to feed. When Walter finally is able to see her in the light of day he notes that "Every trace of the grave had disappeared from her countenance: a roseate ting like the ruddy streaks of the dawn again beamed on her pallid cheek; the faint, mouldering taint of the grave was changed into a delightful violet scent; the only sigh of earth that never disappeared" (*Wake Not the Dead* 252–53). The preternatural beauty of Brunhilda stimulates the fantasies she paints for him as she continues to deny him physical contact with her remembrances of their "past delights": "Ever did she dwell upon those days of their first love, those hours of delight which they had participated together when the one derived all enjoyment from the other" (*Wake Not the Dead* 251). The inclusion of 'together' here along with the veiled reference to sexual gratification leave little doubt that Brunhilda's control over Walter lies in her capacity to stimulate his sexual appetite. Walter's failure lies in his inability to regulate his passions, the ultimate sin of the nineteenth-century gentleman. In this way *Wake Not the Dead* enforces the ideal construction of manhood Hall and Davidoff summarize as being only attainable "not to be gained through sexual adventure but by self-control through religious commitment which was the strongest guard for a young

man” (401). With Walter’s disregard for the sanctity of the grave, his meddling in the creation of life, and readiness to abandon his legal second wife Swanhilda demonstrate a thorough disregard for “religious commitment.”

Brunhilda’s character actually adheres to moral and religious principles more firmly than Walter as she refuses to enter into his bed as what she calls a “concubine” given that she has been “purified by death” and therefore deserves to be his wife over “a mere daughter of earth,” and only then will she allow him to “obtainest the end of thy wishes” in the bedchamber they reside in as king and queen. The patient Swanhilda is rewarded for her loyalty by being presented with a “paper of separation” and division with her children (255–56). Walter’s welcoming of Brunhilda as his “newly-made bride,” includes decorating the castle “in a most costly style” with extra care paid to the bedroom (*Wake Not the Dead* 253–57). Walter’s cruel treatment of his wife and frivolous spending on new décor symbolize his continued deterioration of masculinity. Relegated to fussing over the ornamentation of the castle while Brunhilda sits idly by serves to reverse the stereotypical expectation that the woman is meant to tend to the duties of the home. His excessive spending also hints at an increasing lack of self-control, a warning to the readers that Walter himself does not see. To effectively lure Brunhilda into his bedchamber, Walter must adhere to her rules and demands, putting him in the submissive position in their relationship, and again forcing any blame onto himself for, after all, a “true man” would be able to resist.

The most damning evidence of Walter’s flawed morality is Brunhilda’s own admission that she must consume blood to feed Walter’s sexual appetite, rather than her own. The text makes it very clear that Brunhilda is undead and that she requires a steady

supply of human blood to continue to function in the living world. Specifically, the narrator says

The art of the sorcerer had indeed bestowed upon Brunhilda an artificial life, and due nourishment had continued to support the restored body; yet, this body was not able of itself to keep up the genial glow of vitality, and to nourish the flame whence springs all the affections and passions, whether of love or hate; for death had forever destroyed and withered it: all that Brunhilda now possessed was a chilled existence, colder than that of the snake (*Wake Not the Dead* 260–61).²⁰⁰

Without blood, Brunhilda is incapable of responding physically or emotionally to Walter, something crucial to her survival for it is “necessary that she should love” and return the passion of her husband who she has to thank for her “renewed existence” (*Wake Not the Dead* 261). Appearing youthful, or at least vital (perhaps fertile?) to seduce her husband ensures Brunhilda’s survival. The narrator is not trying to describe this in metaphorical terms, but rather directly connects Brunhilda’s blood drinking to her ability to perform sexually. The “the dull current in her veins” can only be animated by imbibing in a magical “hellish drink,” the “potion of abomination—one note even to be named without a curse,” of warm human blood, “from the veins of youth.” She “thirsted” for this drink, her existence a “mere blank” should she fail to lie “in the arms of her paramour husband.” Brunhilda’s desire to join Walter in sexuality activity is beyond her control. For

Brunhilda, sex is something “craved incessantly after the horrible draught” (*Wake Not the*

²⁰⁰ Early Haitian representations of the zombi describe the undead creature as rising from death at the behest (and control) of a sorcerer, often a priest of Vodou called a ‘bokor.’ While there are also European tales of necromancers, literally witches or wizards who could restore life to the dead, the connection between *Wake Not the Dead* to the modern zombie is worthy of further research.

Dead 261–62). *Wake Not the Dead*'s narrative unequivocally attributes Brunhilda's deviant sexuality to Walter. From the explanation of the terms of her undead life, it can be assumed that if Walter were to curb his desire for her she would in turn stop requiring blood. Brunhilda's identity as a vampire/lamia demands the participation of a male component. The unchecked desires of Walter directly lead to the loss of life and destruction of a village, and could have been avoided had he exercised restraint.

The relationship between Brunhilda, vampirism, and eroticism does not express evil, as presented by Reed's theory of demon-lovers when he indicates, "The connection between sex and pain or cruelty seems unmistakably related to an urge to destroy: rather than being a creative or procreative event, sexual union becomes a means of expressing hatred and evil" (Reed 29). Rather, Brunhilda and Walter serve as a warning about the devastation that sex can produce. However, the more optimistic interpretation argues that the assembly of this cautionary knowledge is a form of "creation" or productivity. Brunhilda cannot bear biological offspring but the lesson she imparts about the damaging potential of sexual appetite serves as an intellectual progeny. Brunhilda and Walter's cautionary tale promotes responsibility rather than unbridled passion. The undead female may destroy the nuclear family, but her intellectual offspring warn others of the destructive sexual appetites of men. Hall and Davidoff's argument that during the Romantic period "Male sexual passion was to be contained and hidden, women's to be ignored if not denied" (402) is important here. Brunhilda represents the notion that if male sexuality remains hidden and unchecked, female sexuality will be impossible to ignore because it develops into a deadly force.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY

Even when depicted in vestaments of the grave or in some stage of decomposition, the corporeality of the undead marks their appearance as human. The undead's human form reminds the living bodies it encounters of their own impending demise. To identify oneself with the undead body is absurdly easy, and the interactions such undead characters have with the living are made possible by their ability to infiltrate human spaces of intimacy. The undead female as represented by Brunhilda penetrates the most sacred of spaces—the marital bed. In doing so, Brunhilda disrupts the ideal family Walter possesses before her reanimation. He possesses a docile and fertile wife, Swanhilda, who bears him two children, including a male heir. Swanhilda “tranquil and serious, yet cheerful, studying in all things are husband's pleasure, she restored order and comfort in his family” (*Wake Not the Dead* 237). Her dedication to pleasing her husband and nurturing her family place her in the role of an ideal woman for the time. However, as Hall and Davidoff surmise, “Idealized womanhood was asexual and chaste, yet the supreme goal for women was marriage and motherhood, conditions which publicly proclaimed sexuality” (322). In other words, at the core of the idealized woman was a sexual potential that remained obscured. The narrative of *Wake Not the Dead* suggests that such ambiguity could cause men to seek out more passionate, aggressive women. The physical differences of the appearances of Swanhilda and Brunhilda help establish their presumably juxtaposing personalities. The “golden” hair of the delicate Swanhilda frames a face with eyes that “beamed eloquently.” The narrator comments that these eyes somehow inferior to the seductive gaze of the passionate Brunhilda whose own eyes inspired “former delirium” in Walter. Swanhilda's eyes hold power of their own but are

more akin to “the milder radiance of a star tranquillizing to tenderness rather than exciting to warmth” (*Wake Not the Dead* 236–37). The happiness of Swanhilda’s features fail to inspire “that luxuriant fullness of animal life” her husband longs for. Swanhilda cannot fully satisfy her husband’s desires, and he must seek out carnal satisfaction in the grave (*Wake Not the Dead* 236–37). At first glance, Swanhilda and Brunhilda are opposites, foils to one another in appearance and character. Swanhilda serves to remind the reader that women are not to be blamed for the resulting chaos of Brunhilda’s reanimation. Upon closer examination of the two women’s actions, one finds that Brunhilda’s own exploits are perversions of traditional idealized feminine ideals of mother, wife, and lover.

The conflict of the idealized woman, or the virgin/whore dichotomy is addressed in Patrick R. O’Malley’s astute summary of the tension that exists as he notes,

While the plots of these novels maintain an insistence on sexual, religious, and national purity—often with an intensity that borders on the hysterical—they constantly undermine that very purity from within. At the very moment of the retreat into the safety of the domestic, that space turns out to be the secret realm of the transgressive and ultimately uncontainable fantasy of sexual, religious, and national deviance.²⁰¹

The home can succeed only if a proper female figure sits at its fireplace, delicately balancing the sexual demands of her position as wife and breeder with the responsibility of the moral health of the entire family. During the Romantic period, a woman’s role

²⁰¹ O’Malley, Patrick R. *Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 33.

inside and outside the familial home depended upon performance. Hall and Davidoff emphasize the importance of female presentation, arguing that “Through their example in life women could hope to make those around them, in their family circles, better people. It was *moral influence* which was to allow a reassertion of self for women” (170). Male identity became increasingly concerned with “occupation” and the female identity became located in the familial. This later responsibility was of importance as the “family” existed as a space between public and private, market and domestic (Davidoff & Hall 30–32). In this way, the familial sphere is in-between, a border agent in much the same way the undead are located between the living and dead.

These liminal spaces then are particularly susceptible to outside influence, as they exist with one foot in each world. In the case of the ideal feminine role, for a woman this conflict meant offsetting the demands of both private desires and public appearances. *Wake Not the Dead* comments on this tension by placing two very different women in two different homes. Swanhilda confirms Walter’s socially accepted patriarchal role, performing the duties of a maternal, quiet wife who is never depicted anywhere outside the home in the narrative. Brunhilda, on the other hand, challenges Walter’s attempts to place her in the same role. He believes he locks her away in a castle and successfully reintegrates her into the habits of the dutiful wife, but in reality Brunhilda easily avoids confinement and regularly leaves the home to seek out the blood she needs. *Wake Not the Dead* represents the instability of patriarchal-imposed female identity during the Romantic period by allowing its undead antagonist to move inside and outside the home, and thus making what should be private (Walter’s sexual desires and Brunhilda’s responsibility to fulfill them), public. Brunhilda can only meet Walter’s exaggerated

appetite for sex if she brings others into their relationship as her need for human blood suggests. What *Wake Not the Dead*'s female vampire reveals is that the boundaries between public and private spaces are as nebulous as the boundaries between life and death.

At first it appears as though *Wake Not the Dead* is setting up Swanhilda as the marker of public perfection and Brunhilda as desire made flesh, but ultimately neither are successful. Swanhilda's calming and positive presence in Walter's household, particularly demonstrated through her the treatment of her children, would hypothetically protect her family from harm. Her daughter "was mild and patient as her mother," happy in solitude and serious in nature, the boy "possessed his father's fiery, restless disposition, tempered however, with the solidity of his mother" (*Wake Not the Dead* 237). Yet Swanhilda's influence is not strong enough to stop her husband from dismissing her for another, nor to prevent the death of her children. Brunhilda kills many offspring in the narrative, but she is not without maternal instinct. She does not hunt through violence, but through nurturing and lulling her victims into a false sense of security. Luring both male and female children to her with "soothing words and fond caresses," Brunhilda quiets her prey by breathing on their faces as she holds them in her arms until they fall asleep, allowing her to "suck from its bosom the warm, purple tide of life" (*Wake Not the Dead* 262). The draining of the "vital juice" (*Wake Not the Dead* 262) in the arms of a loving comforting maternal figure recalls the nursing of a child at its mother's breast, only with the roles reversed. Such an allusion highlights the life giving power of the female, and in turn her ability to take it away. Brunhilda's control over the life and death

of the youth of the village highlights the maternal role in the nurturing of children and therefore the insurance (or destruction) of future generations.

The narrator of the text says as much when the desertion of the castle by all those of reproductive age is described as apocalyptic. Commenting on the fact that only the servants remain, the narrator says “Such will, in the latter days of the earth, be the last generation of mortals, when child-bearing shall have ceased, when youth shall no more be seen, nor any arise to replace those who shall await their fate in silence” (*Wake Not the Dead* 264). Walter ignores this sign of warning until his own lineage is destroyed when his constant need for sex drives Brunhilda to seek out more blood and she is forced to feed from and kill Walter’s own children. The children embrace their deaths because the visions they have as Brunhilda “sucked the life-stream from their bosoms” are so wonderful, they “stretched out their arms to approaching death, because it assumed the mask of pleasure” (*Wake Not the Dead* 266–68). And so Walter’s progeny fall, not at the hands of a violent killer, or helmet falling from the sky, but in the tender embrace of a mother.

Brunhilda finds Walter’s bereavement succeeding his children’s deaths offensive, believing it betrays an enduring affection for Swanhilda and insults the secrets she offers him (*Wake Not the Dead* 269), and she rightfully reminds him that he has only himself to blame. The deaths of his children may have occurred by her fangs, but Walter is to be blamed for the death of all the children she has fed on, including his own. Brunhilda insists that she “was obliged to pamper myself with warm youthful blood, in order that I might satisfy thy furious desires—thou art the murderer!” Brunhilda continues her haranguing, saying “Thou who hadst the courage to love the dead—to take into the bed,

one who had been sleeping in the grave, the bed-fellow of the worm—who hast clasped in thy lustful arms, the corruption of the tomb—dost thou, unhallowed as thou art, now raise this hideous cry for the sacrifice of a few lives” (*Wake Not the Dead* 273). The extreme results of Walter’s abandonment of his family and obsession with non-reproductive sex (there is no evident in the text that Brunhilda requires any of the basic needs or functions of the living human, and no suggestions that her body could carry a child) are cast before Walter clearly when Brunhilda cries, “Come, chase these idiot fancies, and taste the bliss thou hast so dearly purchased” (*Wake Not the Dead* 273–74). Walter pays the ultimate price for his selfishness, destroying his legacy and those of countless others. Given his unfortunate demise at the end of the novel at the hands of the “beautiful stranger” who turns into a monstrous serpent, the reader is assured that Walter’s ancestry has been erased from the earth. The destruction serves as a reminder that women can destroy as readily as they can create. Alan Richardson notes, “women are responsible not only for bearing and nurturing children, but also for insuring their legitimacy, on which the integrity of the family unit (and the transmission of private property from father to son) depends.”²⁰² *Wake Not the Dead*’s narrative proposes that the integrity of the family unit is of utmost importance. Even if women are successful as mothers, the father can still destroy his legitimate offspring. From loving caresses to the “crushing” embrace of the serpent, the female characters of *Wake Not the Dead* act as they do in reaction to the ineptitude of the male patriarchal figure.

²⁰² Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1994) 171.

The harm Brunhilda causes in her disruption of procreation as she becomes Walter's sole sexual companion and barren wife does not extend to herself. Her return to the grave is violent, and Walter stabs her through the heart. Yet Brunhilda's final words reflect no remorse, and she reminds her husband that "Thou too art doomed to perdition" (*Wake Not the Dead* 283). *Wake Not the Dead* undead female challenges assumptions scholars have made regarding the female monster, as Ewan Fernie's notes, "If it is defined in terms of decreation, for instance, then the female demoniac is deadlier than the male, for she does *additional violence* to that primordial link between her own femaleness and creation that is expressed in childbirth and maternity; her deed is therefore the more self-devastating."²⁰³ The female undead *are* deadlier than their male counterparts. But these creatures are not "self-devastating," at least as they are presented in *Wake Not the Dead*. Brunhilda is reanimated and must feed on blood through no fault of her own, but rather the self-destructive desires of men. Brunhilda has no reproductive potential of her own to destroy as an undead corpse. She is capable of eliminating Walter and his lineage, but only at his prompting.

Wake Not the Dead makes Brunhilda the tool through which the author's lessons are distributed, but Walter's story is the educational one. The female undead body functions to punish those who do not conform to their expected roles in some way, which in this case manifests in Walter's disrespect for the dead, a failure to support the familial sphere, and the lack of control over physical desires. The author's instructive tone is not lost on Crawford either, and she maintains that *Wake Not the Dead*'s "purpose seems to

²⁰³ Ewan Fernie, *The Demonic: Literature and Experience* (Routledge, 2013) 143.

be to instill a sense of repulsion in the reader in a consistently deliberate and moralizing manner, rather than to build suspense about the vampire figure specifically, and in this he is successful” (Crawford 1197–8). The narrative reads more like a cautionary tale than a sensational romance. Much in the same way Charlotte Dacre uses undead male narratives to draw female reader’s attention to the duplicitous nature of men they can expect when physical desire is involved, *Wake Not the Dead*’s undead woman similarly emphasizes the dangers of pursuing carnal knowledge.

As the epigraph to this chapter suggests, women’s unique responsibility over moral education occasionally required an offensive approach to negative male role models. *Wake Not the Dead*’s undead woman is obliged to destroy Walter’s family and those around him as retribution for Walter’s own horrific actions. Driven by sexual desire, Walter loses sight of everything else he should value, namely his wife, lineage, and responsibilities as a provider. The narrative uses the undead to instruct readers, both male and female regarding the destructive capacity of unchecked passion. Ultimately the carnal knowledge Walter seeks with Brunhilda destroys him. Walter’s experience offers readers a lesson they cannot afford to learn on their own, and so the German tale functions as a safer educational experience. In this narrative the female vampire serves as a catalyst for the already unstable domestic sphere, and her actions only illuminate a preexisting fragility posed to take down the familial home and those who depend on it—unrestrained sexual desire. Combining the emerging vampire tradition with ancient lamiae folklore, *Wake Not the Dead*’s bloodsucking, undead woman is the first of her kind to be cursed of her affliction by someone else’s accord. While she may have had a sexual appetite in life, her resurrection from the grave can directly be traced to Walter’s desires and the actions

of the male sorcerer. Perhaps this is why Brunhilda returns as the mysterious woman in black at the end of the narrative. To crush Walter in her serpentine grasp and bring down his entire household shifts the balance of power to herself, recognizing the unrestricted feminine as an influential force. Brunhilda can only destroy the patriarchal home because Walter allowed her into the most personal space, the bedroom, and underestimated the power she could wield inside and outside of its walls.

CHAPTER FIVE

“THE LITTLE DEAD WOMAN’S” GRAVE REVENGE

“Revenge seems to be the Rod of Justice in the Hands of savage Nature to keep the People in Awe and afford the Subject some little Degree of Security.”

- John Perkins, *Thoughts on agency*,
1765²⁰⁴

“A society in crisis often turns to its forbears to discover what it is, what it should be, and perhaps what it is no longer. It seeks to remember its dead.”

- Paul Westover, *Necromanticism: Travelling to Meet the Dead*, 2012²⁰⁵

Previous chapters explored the influence of German Gothic literature, pre-nineteenth century undead mythology, and Egyptian burial rituals on British constructions of reanimated corpses. It should come as no surprise then that British authors also adopted French literature in constructing their undead. The text this chapter examines originally appeared in French under a different name and attributed to the Comtesse de Bradi, elements that English publications of the text eventually eliminated. The failure of some of the English publications of “The Little Dead Woman” to note the country of origin, author, and even original title of the text makes analysis of the narrative as it relates to British history and culture more feasible. Readers in Britain were most likely introduced to the text in its later manifestation, and therefore could have

²⁰⁴ John Perkins. *Thoughts on agency; wherein, the article of motive (as necessitating human action) is particularly examined; and the origin, nature, and bounds of moral freedom, considered in a new way; with occasional observations and reflections on revenge, avarice, self-love, envy, &c.* (New-Haven: B. Mecom, 1765) 20. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

²⁰⁵ Paul Westover. *Necromanticism: Travelling to Meet the Dead, 1750–1860*. (Palgrave, 2012) 2. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

assumed the narrative originated in their country. That is not to say that an academic study of “The Little Dead Woman” should ignore its French origins, but only that such information will be presented to emphasize that tensions in the early nineteenth century could resonate across cultural, physical, and language boundaries.

These aforementioned tensions reflect the intellectual friction of the body physically and philosophically, the increasing conflict between gender roles of men and women, the reluctant acknowledgement of female sexuality, and the role the past could/should play in constructing the future of England. Similar to the lesson imparted in *Wake Not the Dead*, the undead character in the “The Little Dead Woman” bolsters the importance of regulated sexual desire to the survival of the nation, but additionally elevates the importance of female agency to achieve this aim. Unlike any of the other undead texts presented in this dissertation (and the majority of undead literature altogether) the undead character in “The Little Dead Woman,” Ursula, kills herself after being abandoned by a lover only to rise from the grave to drive him to his own death, introducing themes of suicide and revenge to undead canon. Mary Shelley and Jane Loudon’s undead characters serve as intellectual and moral educators, and Charlotte Dacre and *Wake Not the Dead*’s erotically driven undead instruct on the dangers of sexuality for both men and women. “The Little Dead Woman,” written by Agathe-Pauline Caylac de Ceylan Comtesse de Bradi, while edifying similar lessons, primarily concerns itself with knowledge of the self. The little dead woman’s narrative emphasizes the agency individuals have over their own bodies. The titular character takes her own life, an increasingly controversial act in the nineteenth century that nonetheless marks the ultimate act of individual control. Suicide asserted the rights of the individual, Kelly

McGuire claims, so by choosing to commit suicide, the abandoned woman in “The Little Dead Woman” claims agency over her body again.²⁰⁶ McGuire’s critical work on suicide in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries asserts an important role for literature, claiming “The novel as an interactive participant in the public sphere through print culture must be considered another disciplinary framework that exposes suicide to scrutiny, analysis and even, in certain instances, containment” (3). As analysis of “The Little Dead Woman” demonstrates, other kinds of literature have the potential to achieve the same effect. Ursula appears to exert power over her own body even after death. Unlike the Mummy, Dodsworth, Valerius, or Brunhilda, her reanimation is driven by her own cognizance, powered by a personal galvanism triggered by vengeance.

This chapter will therefore explore suicide in the early nineteenth century, both as a rising “trend” and in regards to changing social and medical opinions. Increasingly seen as indicative of mental illness and social failure, rather than personal sin, suicide’s role in “The Little Dead Woman” reflects a significant cultural shift. The affection and attention Ursula’s community grants her undead body demonstrates the recognition of the importance of the moral lesson she imparts. “The Little Dead Woman” positions the fallen woman as a source of power, and elevates the status of those most vulnerable to such seduction—females of a lower social class. De Bradi’s treatment of the act conceptualizes the suicide as a victim who ultimately triumphs over death. The little dead woman’s reanimation empowers her by allowing her body to move freely in public

²⁰⁶ Kelly McGuire, *Dying to be English: Suicide Narratives and National Identity, 1721–1814* (Pickering & Chatto, 2012) 3. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

spaces, something few living women of the Romantic period could claim for themselves. The undead female body in “The Little Dead Woman” is as much a promise as a threat, representing the destructive and productive potential of the liberated woman.

“The Little Dead Woman” continues a literary history beginning with the work of Eliza Haywood that associates female suicide with the “dire effects of unrequited desire” (McGuire 27). Haywood postulates that the suicide of women is a direct result from patriarchal restriction of the female body. The enforced leisure of middle to upper class women results in self-caused deaths that serves as an alternative “mode of revenge” where the inconstant lover is humiliated (McGuire 27). The author of “The Little Dead Woman” is not content with disgrace and insists on the literal destruction of the male seducer. Additionally, the reanimation of the maiden’s corpse gives Ursula immortal, unlimited time. The undead woman of de Bradi’s text does not waste the freedom from life and death now afforded to her, but instead actively pursues her seducer. “The Little Dead Woman” adapts Haywood’s themes to the demands of the nineteenth century. Even though the original narrative comes from France, its publication for an English audience suggests that at least some members of the British nation shared the anxieties produced in the text. The portrayal of a woman with an eerily wide smile and enormous eyes in the accompanying illustration to the text in *Tales of All Nations; or, Popular Legends and Romances* makes the tension between life and death visible. By depicting the smiling face of the undead woman confronting living characters, the drawing expresses the importance of the physical body of the woman to disrupt the world around her.

Beginning with a summary of the short story itself, the chapter then moves to an examination of the text’s journey from a French narrative to an English text through

multiple publications in Britain and Ireland. The evaluation goes on to explore the unfamiliar Romantic territory of an undead corpse produced from suicide, explaining why such an abnormality in undead literature emerges by evaluating the changing perception of suicide scientifically and socially in the early nineteenth century. The final two sections of the chapter end by arguing that Ursula's suicide and reanimation functions as a cautionary moral narrative for all social classes demonstrating the undead's capacity for inclusive, instructive meaning. Such edification also promotes the required presence and power of women to order to better serve developing British national identity.

SUMMARY OF "THE LITTLE DEAD WOMAN"

According to the narrator, presumably the Comtesse de Bradi, the story of "The Little Dead Woman" is an account of the real events she experienced while travelling from Paris to Marseilles by carriage. Only seven of the vehicle's nine seats are filled when the carriage stops to collect "a fine looking young man" at the gates of a "magnificent" country estate. That man, M. Maurice, bids farewell to a mother and daughter, the later his betrothed, a young woman named Augusta. They have been promised to one another since infancy because of the proximity of their familial estates, and are to wed in a fortnight. Later that night, the occupants wake suddenly as the carriage stops to pick up their final passenger, a young woman the conductor introduces as one "who will not take up much room...She will not trouble you much, for she is deaf and dumb. I know her, and have already taken her twice to Lyons. The devil be with her!...she has always brought me bad luck." The now full carriage continues, although an "unpleasant sensation of cold" envelops the passengers accompanied a "dreadful uneasy

sensation” they had not felt before, and which they “laughingly” attribute to their new companion (“The Little Dead Woman” 163). Waking “in fright” throughout the night prohibits the passengers from a restful sleep, and upon the light of morning their tired eyes are greeted with an uncanny image as the features of the young woman are revealed. All are astounded to by her appearance, noting the “deadly white” tone of her thin skin, her protruding teeth, and the enormous eyes burning “like live coals” from her grinning face. She appears “like death laughing in our faces” as her noiseless laughter doubles her over in silent mirth (“The Little Dead Woman” 163).

The axle of the carriage breaks, upturning the carriage sending all of its occupants and their luggage across the road. The conductor blames this misfortune on “that cursed little dead woman, as they call her in her own neighbourhood” (“The Little Dead Woman” 164) whom he also attributes as the source of a horst suddenly dying and a postilion breaking his leg on previous trips with her. As the carriage is repaired, the travelers retire to a nearby home to seek shelter and food. The most striking thing about the scenery is a large cross surrounded by three elms that lays 50-feet from the house. M. Maurice, the narrator, and a woman named Madame Pinguet view the cross as they discuss their eerie travel companion, with the narrator claiming that “she seemed disposed to flirt with you, for she looked at you as if she desired to catch your attention” (“The Little Dead Woman” 164). They observe the young woman feeding a herd of goats and attempting to persuade them to kneel at the foot of the cross. The goat herder informs the trio that 18 months before, a young woman had been buried at the base of the cross. This information prompts M. Maurice to interrogate their hostess who reveals that she once rented a room to a young girl whom remained sequestered within it, eating little, and roaming only at

night to sit at the foot of the cross. One day the young girl was found dead near the elms, having hanged herself to one of its branches with a silk handkerchief. The branch broke from the tree and in the fall, the woman hit her head on one of the stones, which was the cause of death determined by the doctor summoned there. The priest refused to bury her in consecrated ground, so the hostess had her buried at the cross. She then divulges to the group that the young girl had given her a will before she perished, displaying it in the public room as the girl wished. Upon seeing the handwriting of the will, M. Maurice “utter[s] an exclamation of surprise, and changed colour” although he denies knowing who penned the will. The narrator gives a transcription of this document, which serves as a warning to other girls. The young woman who wrote the will describes how at fifteen, she was seduced and late abandoned by a gentleman of superior rank. The final lines of the will read “All must now end” (“The Little Dead Woman” 165).

Haunted by this tale, the travelers continue on their journey in the repaired coach, making it to Lyons without further incident although all of the passengers suffer from feelings of unease physically and mentally (“The Little Dead Woman” 165). The story’s narrator and M. Maurice share a boat but are forced to ground in Pomier because of the low levels of the frozen Rhone river. To their surprise, on their second day at a local inn the little dead woman appears in the corner of the public room watching them with her “flashing eye-balls” (166). M. Maurice leaves to return to the boat when he sees her, saying that he would have traveled by land if he knew she would follow. Walking after supper, the narrator sees “in the midst of a willow grove” M. Maurice and “a small figure in white” close to him, although both are obscured in darkness as a cloud passes before the moon. Going to question why M. Maurice would be conversing with “the death’s

head,” the narrator says, “I heard a loud laugh, and the name of Ursula pronounced, and immediately after a splash as of a heavy body falling into the water, interrupted the uniformity of its murmurs” (“The Little Dead Woman” 166). M. Maurice does not respond to the narrator’s calls and the narrator can no longer see them when the cloud passes. The river is searched, and half an hour passes before only the body of M. Maurice is found drowned and incapable of resuscitation. The tale ends with the narrator’s declaration: “I shall not state the conclusion to which I have come upon the above facts. The readers knows as much as I do, and may, according to his own ideas, account for the agitation of Maurice” and insisting that the little dead woman was not an imaginary description (“The Little Dead Woman” 166).

FRENCH ROOTS, BRITISH APPROPRIATION

“The Little Dead Woman” originally appeared under the title “La Fille Spectre,” in the French publication *Contes de Toutes Les Couleurs* (1833), naming the author as “La Comtesse de Bradi.”²⁰⁷ Born in 1782, French author Agathe-Pauline Caylac de Ceylan Comtesse de Bradi published three novels in her lifetime: *Leonore, Poeme Imité de L’ Allemand de Bürger* (1814), *Nouvelles, par Mme. La Comtesses de Bradi* (1825), and *Colonna: ou Le beau seigneur corse du 10e siècle: par Madame la Comtesse de Bradi* (1825). De Bradi was also a frequent contributor to the ladies lifestyle journal *Petit Courrier des Dames* from 1833–1836, and creator of two textbooks on politeness and the

²⁰⁷ La Comtesse de Bradi, “La Fille Spectre,” *Contes de Toutes Les Couleurs*, Tome VII. (H. Fournier, Libraire, 1833)112 Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

art of writing.²⁰⁸ Published in “almost all the newspapers of education” (“Agathe Pauline Caylac”), de Bradi’s focus on female audiences and the dissemination of knowledge is visible in “The Little Dead Woman.” De Bradi’s undead tale impacted a global audience as a tale of caution and promotion of self-agency.

The first English translation of “La Fille Spectre,” appears on the first page of the *Dublin Weekly Journal* on Saturday, May 18, 1833 under the title *The Spectre Girl, from the French of Le Salmigondis, Contes de toutes les couleurs*.²⁰⁹ ²¹⁰ *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts* (1833) reprinted the version that appeared in *The Dublin Weekly* as the only selection from their review of *Le Salmigondis, Contes de toutes les couleurs*.²¹¹ In doing so, *The Athenaeum Journal* introduced the text to a much larger English-speaking audience. Published every Saturday morning and sent to Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Dublin, Glasglow, Edinburgh, and “all other large towns” *The Athenaeum Journal* prided itself on its extensive influence. For “the convenience of persons residing in remote places of abroad” these weekly editions were collected and “stitched in a wrapper” and shipped to “all parts of the World” as one

²⁰⁸ “Agathe Pauline Caylac de Ceylan Comtesse de Bradi.” *Babelio*. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

²⁰⁹ “The Spectre Girl, from the French of Le Salmigondis, Contes de toutes les couleurs,” *The Dublin Weekly Journal, A Repository of Music, Literature, and Entertaining Knowledge*. First series. (E. Ponsonby, 1833) 225–27, 230. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

²¹⁰ The translation itself is almost completely true to the original French and contains no significant changes to the narrative.

²¹¹ “Le Salmigondis, Contes de toutes les couleurs,” *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts January to December* (J. Francis, 1833) 290. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

cohesive collection (*The Athenaeum Journal* 1). *The Athenaeum Journal* acknowledged *Le Salmigondis, Contes de toutes les couleurs* to be “perhaps, better than either of the two last, although we recognize in it tales translated from the English” (“Le Salmigondis” 290), although *The Spectre Girl* is clearly of French origin. In regards to *The Spectre Girl* itself, the reviewer declares “The following strange story is told by the Countess of Bradi; our readers may attach as much credit to it as they think it deserves” (“Le Salmigondis” 290). This ambiguous appraisal, half praise, half confusion, leaves the audience to determine the validity of the experience the Comtesse de Bradi claims as truth.

Perhaps because of *The Athenaeum Journal*’s recognition, however slight, or simply because the translation was complete, *The Spectre Girl* appeared verbatim in the collected edition *Tales of All Nations; or, Popular Legends and Romances* (1836).²¹² This marks the first time the story appeared without acknowledging Comtesse de Bradi as author, or with any reference to its French origins. The eight volume *Tales of All Nations* collected 67 different narratives, “many of great interest,” along with 48 engravings that initially appeared as penny broadsides. The collected edition includes the title page and engraving of the original broadside publications of “The Little Dead Woman” on Saturday, July 2, 1836 (“The Little Dead Woman” 161). This chapter uses the *Tales of All Nations* version of de Bradi’s narrative for simplicity of reference, as well as because the title change does not appear accidental. Emphasizing her status as a corpse, as well as adding the adjective “little” demonstrates a desire to bring to the attention of the reader to

²¹² “The Little Dead Woman.” *Tales of All Nations; or, Popular Legends and Romances*. London: W. Strange, 1836) 160–66. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

her physical appearance, a theory sported by the included engraving. Changing “girl” to “woman” is of added importance. In the narrative, the titular character is referred to as both woman and girl, perhaps a conscious decision by de Bradi to signify the in-betweenness of her main character. The revelation that the little dead woman, Ursula, is “only fifteen,” rouses the sympathy of the fictional characters, and arguably the reader.²¹³

The tensions of agency and sexuality for women in the nineteenth century were topics of vigorous debate that resonated throughout culture, science, and politics as previous chapters of this dissertation have shown. De Bradi’s narrative confronts the vulnerability of young women, sexually and emotionally, whose station in life was determined at least in part by marriage and the appearance of virtue. A woman’s “situation” and all the nuances such a position held, as noted by Joanna de Groot, “evolved not in isolation but as part of the material and cultural history of both feminine and masculine genders, and the development of boundaries and/or interactions between them.”²¹⁴ “The Little Dead Woman” illustrates how male and female relations create a ripple effect in the communities in which they live. For the titular character, a romantic dalliance with a wealthier young man causes such shame that she ultimately kills herself. Her lover, M. Maurice, initially appears unscathed by their relationship with his reputation and wealth intact. However, when the little dead woman rises from her grave,

²¹³ This exact phrase appears in all English editions of the text mentioned here in a will the dead woman pens.

²¹⁴ Joanna de Groot, “‘Sex’ and ‘Race’: The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century,” *Sexuality and Subordination*, Ed. Susan Mendus & Jane Rendall (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002) 90.

her interactions with all who come in contact with her serve as a “living” reminder of the impact such liaisons produce.

“The Little Dead Woman” can be placed in the category of sexually repressive literature given the direct correlation between the Ursula’s seduction and her suicide. However, her reanimation and successful revenge against M. Maurice (and possibly others) suggest an inverted power dynamic that would not have been made possible without the little dead woman’s initial actions. Revenge prompts even Ursula’s reanimation; she gains control over her body. As a French author primarily writing for women, de Bradi’s exploration of the social politics of the female body appears commonplace in a post-revolutionary period still reeling from the effects of a literal uprising of bodies. Women’s bodies were included in this consideration as Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall emphasize in their claim that “French writers of the early nineteenth-century recognized the sexual potential and awareness of women; yet bourgeois standards sought equally to order and control that awareness.”²¹⁵ What “The Little Dead Woman” offers is an alternative mode of control, one in which women and men are called to exercise authority over their bodies and desires by illuminating the cause and effect principle, and reminding all readers that their actions have repercussions.

The supernatural element present in the reanimated corpse prompts a physical confrontation of these decisions. The characters in “The Little Dead Woman” must address how M. Maurice’s actions caused the demise of a young girl, forcing them to

²¹⁵ Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall, “Introduction,” *Sexuality and Subordination*, Eds Susan Mendus & Jane Rendall (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002) 13. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

reflect on how his social status and good looks do not adequately represent his character. Only a reanimated corpse possesses the corporeal power to address how individual physical actions, such as sexual relations outside of marriage, resonate throughout culture. As corporeal regulating mechanisms, the undead in literature are bodily reminders. Jason Marc Harris supports this concept when he says, “Supernatural intrusions of the dead constitute a metaphysical response to breached in social conformity; a revenant therefore is an undeniable manifestation of deep-seated fears of social difference.”²¹⁶ The undead regulate social norms in the most physical way possible as the tale of the little dead woman demonstrates. Her undead body serves as an instrument of vengeance, disciplining M. Maurice for violating cultural ideals.

THE EMOTIONAL POLITICS OF SUICIDE

The Little Dead Woman’s suicide is notable for its cultural relevance and as a unique feature in early nineteenth-century undead literature. The creation of suicide statistics in addition to an increasingly literate population, an accessible press, and burgeoning medical field meant that the increase in suicides across all populations was frequently a topic of conversation and concern in Europe. As early as 1823, newspapers in England were expressing a growing concern for the “*increased and increasing frequency*” of suicide.^{217 218} These early nineteenth-century suicides were not considered

²¹⁶ Jason Marc Harris, *Folklore and the Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Routledge, 2016) 121.

²¹⁷ “Horrid Attempt at Suicide!!!,” *Norfolk Yeoman's Gazette and Eastern Advertiser; for the Counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridge and Herts* (8 Mar. 1823).

a purely social problem, but instead as acts indicative of changing social, cultural, medical, and intellectual opinions.²¹⁹ Prior to 1750, suicide was largely seen as a sin and therefore a moral failure of the individual. The Romantic period marked the beginning of an alteration in suicide theory, with the majority of nineteenth-century commentators on suicide classifying the act not as a sin, but as a deed that could be prevented (Weaver 23). Publication statistics from the era demonstrate these changing opinions. John C. Weaver's comprehensive analysis of printed materials from this time show that from 1780–1829, there were seven texts written in French that dealt with suicide as a moral issue, but only three examined it as a medical or sociological issue. Between 1830–79, the ratio dramatically shifted, with 49 French texts approaching suicide through a medical or sociological lens and only nine through a moral one. In comparison, between 1780–1829, 17 British suicide moral texts and three medical/sociological texts were in print, and six moral and 24 medical/sociological between 1830–79 (Weaver 28). The topic was more prevalent in French texts than other countries's works in part because of France's commitment to governing the medicalization of insanity, which arose during the

²¹⁸ The statistics documenting suicide in the early nineteenth century are complicated and hard to pin down in terms of accurate numbers given the propensity for family and friends to cover up suicides to ensure proper religious burials, as well as the failure of doctors and courts to reliably prove the death was purposefully executed by the deceased's own hand. For more detailed discussion of these issues and a view of suicide outside of literature, see John C. Weaver, *Sadly Troubled History: The Meaning of Suicide in the Modern Age*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009 and Olive Anderson *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

²¹⁹ John C. Weaver, *Sadly Troubled History: The Meaning of Suicide in the Modern Age* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009) 21–24. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

revolution and continued into the new century. This political movement gained traction because of Jean-Étienne-Dominique Esquirol theory of mental illness. He believed one could trace the cause of psychological conditions to the nervous system rather than the bodily humors (the previously prevailing philosophy). While other commentators of the nineteenth century disputed Esquirol's claim that suicide was directly associated with mental illness, the topic of suicide dominated intellectual thought overall (Weaver 35–37).

With suicide becoming more readily associated with mental illness, philosophers, authors, and scholars alike sought to pinpoint the catalysts that ultimately drove individuals to take their own lives. Many, including M. Andral, D.M.P. in a lecture given the same year “The Little Dead Woman” was published in its original French (1833), emphasized that madness or monomania could not exclusively be the cause of suicide.²²⁰ Instead, some external event triggered a pre-existing condition. Suicide was ultimately the choice of the individual, and could be avoided but only if education and cultural systems were in place to prevent these triggering moments. Andral's description of what modern scholars would recognize as depression details the afflicted individual's desire to retain normalcy “but finds every attempt unsuccessful; he feels and knows that he is different from other men, and he consequently sinks into the profoundest mental discouragement.” This discouragement could be temporary, permanent, or “may alternate with mania” (“The Following Interesting Observations” 9), but more likely than not, an emotionally stressing event prompted the suicidal impulse to surface. Andral cites data

²²⁰ “The Following Interesting Observations on Self-Murder Are Taken from a Lecture Lately Delivered in the University of Paris, by M. Andral, D. M. P. On monomania,” *Register and Library of Medical and Chirurgical Science*, Vol. I, No. V, (1833) 9. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

collected from the police in Paris that listed two hundred and fifty-four caused by “disappointed love,” 1,287 by “general bad conduct,” and 905 by “misery” alone (“The Following Interesting Observations” 10).²²¹ Even though statistical reports show that men were more likely to commit suicide during this period (Weaver 24), communities were more likely suppress incidents of female suicides perhaps as a way of maintaining a feminine “virtue” in the public eye.²²² As the suicide of Ursula reflects, the “disappointed love” catalyst was imagined to be suffered by women more frequently than men, a trope perpetuated newspapers and fictional works alike.²²³

The tragic female suicide’s prevalence reflects prevailing beliefs about women as emotional, sensitive creatures made delicate by their emotions, an assumption de Bradi challenges in her portrayal of the undead woman. Haywood writes in *The Female Spectator* (1745) a desire for women “who have been abandoned and betrayed by men...would rather contrive some means to render the ungrateful love the object of contempt, than themselves, by giving way to baseless grief” (119). “The Little Dead Woman” accomplishes this aim, but can only do so through suicide and reanimation, which are required to afford the titular woman the time, agency, and power to pursue the

²²¹ Andral gathered these numbers from data collected by M. Falleraye regarding 6,782 suicides.

²²² Olive Anderson, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Clarendon Press, 1987) 44.

²²³ See “Love and Suicidel” *La Belle Assemblée*, 1808: 27–32; T. Kinnersley, 1818: 119–139; “Suicide of a Young Female.” *Cobbett's Evening Post*, 9 Feb. 1820. Both of these examples feature young women who kill themselves due to emotional duress brought on by male abandonment. One kills herself after the deaths of her brothers leave her without male relatives, and the other kills herself when she believes her husband died at war.

destruction of her seducer. For this narrative, suicide is not only a result of emotion and betrayal, but an effect of the limitations placed on the woman by her lower social position. To commit suicide and leave behind a record of her abandonment by a wealthy man is to draw attention to the social and political structures that bind women of a lower class into place by restricting their access and success in choosing their own mates, husbands, and economic status. Obviously *Tales of All Nations* does not advocate for women to commit suicide with the hopes of becoming reanimated, or even as a political statement, but rather the text uses the fictional situation to illuminate adverse effects produced by patriarchal attempts to control the female body in life. This is why women's suicide became a "cultural obsession," as Margaret Higonnet shows (103). Higonnet argues suicide for women in the nineteenth century forced others to "read" their deaths (103). The undead body changes the narrative by allowing the dead to shape how their deaths and lives are read, as the Little Dead Woman does. The reanimated corpse affords the body agency it lacked in life by removing all its boundaries. Only because the undead body exists between borders can it defy convention and allow the person who controls it to move unhindered throughout society. While in life the little dead woman's desires ultimately cost her future, upon her reanimation, she is a joyous, laughing woman and the exact opposite of her previous self. The emotion that drives her after death (revenge) empowers her. She travels alone and meets men after dark without accompaniment, all without worry of fear or censure. With death she achieves freedom.

Leaving behind a fiancé, a family, and a fortune, M. Maurice's death is far less personally satisfying. The narrator and therefore the reader cannot conclusively claim that M. Maurice's death was a suicide or a murder. All that is known is that he entered the

water after calling out the little dead woman's name (Ursula) and drowned. We do not know if he was pushed by the undead woman or if his guilt, fear, grief (or some combination) drove him to jump himself. This represents a real-life tension in the nineteenth century regarding the discovery of drowned corpses. Drowning deaths allowed for "the honest mistake" of recording suicides as accidents (Weaver 54). Whether done purposefully to avoid shaming the family, or by actual chance, some scholars during the Romantic period as well as today believe that many deaths marked as accidental drowning could have been suicides, or even murders. In data collected by M. Moreau de Jonnes and published in *The Eclectic Journal of Medicine* in 1838 under the title "Number of Deaths from Violence, in general" both suicide and drowning appear alongside murder, execution, and those simply "found dead." It should also be noted that these deaths made up the most numerous category in the year 1824 as well as years 1828–1831.^{224 225} Including drowning deaths in the category of violent deaths displays a reluctance to acknowledge such demises as natural, and therefore devoid of moral complication. The physicians recording and publishing these numbers also regulate how these kinds of deaths are perceived. This becomes particularly important as the actual mode of suicide could determine how others reacted to the death, with some methods seen as noble or romantic, and others as barbaric and shameful. The inability to classify

²²⁴ M. Moreau De Jonnes, "Statistics of Suicide in London." *The Eclectic Journal of Medicine*, Vol. II, No. 11 (1838) 16. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

²²⁵ For comparison, here the reported numbers for suicide and drowned are as follows: 1824: 53 suicides, 149 drowned; 1828 41 suicides, 150 drowned; 1829: 35 suicides, 36 drowned; 1830: 25 suicides, 97 drowned; 1831 48 suicides, 131 drowned. (De Jonnes 16–17).

most drowning deaths as suicides contributed to the view that it was not a “preferred” method as it lacks what some considered to be the “poetic” or “romantic” decision to take one’s own life.

An article published in *Cobbett’s Magazine* in 1834 deals with this very issue, appearing under the title “On Suicide, Considered as a Matter of Taste.” The anonymous author of the text ranks all suicides by degree of “taste,” arguing that certain methods reveal characteristics of the deceased. At the bottom tier lays hanging and suicide, largely because they are common methods with little honorable historical reference. “Hanging is the most decidedly in the very worse taste; whether performed with hempen cord, or silken string, with garter or bell-rope, is equally beneath the attention of a scholar and a gentleman.”²²⁶ Drowning is only slightly better, but only if the circumstances are sufficient, such as the body of water itself holding special artistic or literary meaning. More often than not drowning, “cannot always be reconciled to good taste; it makes but an indifferent picture, at least when performed in the ordinary way” yet it is “a long way a-head of hanging,” a “degrading” method “not to be thought of” (“On Suicide” 78).²²⁷ Although these assessments were made after the publication of “The Little Dead Woman” it is interesting to note that the two methods de Bradi chooses for her characters in text

²²⁶ “On Suicide, Considered as a Matter of Taste,” *Cobbett’s Magazine*, Vol. III, No. 15 (1834) 78. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

²²⁷ The more tasteful deaths mentioned in the article include slashing one’s wrists in a bathtub (in allusion to the death of Marat), and certain kinds of poisons. The apex of suicides, and those methods “recommended” by the author are “to leap into Etna...or any other volcano equally renowned,” or to perform the “chef-d’œuvre” of suicides and “jump like Mokanna, into a tub of aquae-fortis” (80–82). How an active volcano was to be found, or a vat of acid procured is not included in the author’s “recommendation.”

are later considered to best the most corrupted. Charles Moore's treatise *A Full Inquiry Into the Subject of Suicide* (1790) claims that suicide, "that species of self-destruction, which arises from a confirmed melancholy, as it partakes more of a disease than a crime, [falls] under the head of commiseration rather than censure."²²⁸ Perhaps suicide by drowning was looked down upon because it did not allow the public to feel sympathy as a "nervous" condition could not be cited as the underlying cause. Using madness as an excuse for suicide eliminates any responsibility of the public. Blaming the individual for the action, even if unpreventable as mental disease, allowed neighbors, friends, and family members to partially unburden themselves guilt. Even if, as David Hume claims, suicide can be defended against "every imputation of guilt or blame," suicide is a social construct.²²⁹ M. Faubert and N. Reynolds argue that suicide finds some cause in communal relations for although "deeply antisocial in its repudiation of affective and communal bonds, suicide nevertheless situates the subject within a network of human sympathy and prejudices."²³⁰ "The Little Dead Woman's" portrayal of Ursula and M. Maurice's deaths demonstrates the changing nineteenth-century opinion on modes of suicide by evoking greater sympathy for Ursula than M. Maurice. Although Ursula

²²⁸ Charles Moore, *A Full Inquiry Into the Subject of Suicide: to Which Are Added (as Being Closely Connected With the Subject) Two Treatises On Duelling And Gaming*, Vol. 1. (J. F. and C. Rivington, et al., 1790) 8. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

²²⁹ David Hume, *Essays on suicide and the immortality of the soul. By the late David Hume, Esq. With remarks by the editor. To which are added, two letters on suicide, from Rousseau's Eloisa*, A new edition (Basil: 1799) 3.

²³⁰ M. Faubert and N. Reynolds, "Introduction: Romanticism and Suicide," *Literature Compass*, 12 (2015) 642. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

initially chooses to hang herself, her actual death is caused by striking her head upon the cross when the tree branch snaps (“The Little Dead Woman” 165), thus freeing her from the shame of hanging. M. Maurice’s demise appears predestined, a fate his ignoble action instigated. Ursula is just as much a victim of circumstance as she is of her own desires, as the breaking of the tree branch denotes. Both her seduction and her suicide emphasize Newton’s Third Law. Once actions are set into motion, the outcome cannot be avoided. “The Little Dead Woman” stresses the importance of foresight through the characters’s recklessness in an attempt to educate readers on the virtue of responsibility.

The implication of choice is inherent to de Bradi’s narrative, from M. Maurice’s seduction to Ursula’s reanimation and stalking of M. Maurice. Even Ursula’s choice to kill herself can be read as an empowering moment as she resolves to take control of her body in the most permanent way—by choosing to eliminate it entirely. Without the return of Ursula as an undead corpse, “The Little Dead Woman” would simply be a cautionary tale and nothing more, a warning to women to regulate their sexual desires akin to the works of Dacre. Ursula’s resurrection changes the message by giving her power over her undead body in ways unobtainable in life. She travels alone, at night, and confidently navigates public venues. The discomfort others feel around her, the “dreadful uneasy sensation” (163), “damp chill” (166), and the “horror” she inspires (165) does not affect her in any way. In fact, she revels in the bodily responses she arouses. As the travelers gaze upon the little dead woman in “silent astonishment” at her grotesque features, Ursula gleefully smiles “with an expression of gaiety so out of character with her countenance, that we cast down our eyes under the glance of hers: she seemed like death laughing in our faces” (163). Unlike in life, Ursula’s undead body is free not from

ridicule, but from regulation. She cares not what the others think of her countenance, gathering strength and even a sense of peace from their reaction, calmly sitting or feeding goats in contentment. Other female undead characters use their physical appearance as a lure, using sexual availability as a weapon of predation.²³¹ Ursula's appearance is monstrous; her distorted features more akin to a mummified corpse or a skeleton. The physical features she possesses, "thin skinny lips" stretched over her teeth, protruding muscles and blood-vessels, and visible orbital bones (163) inspire nothing but unease. However, her looks also symbolize her agency. Unlike the other undead characters I discuss in this dissertation, she alone reanimates for her own purposes. Shelley's Roger Dodsworth and Valerius are reanimated to impart intellectual wisdom, Loudon's Cheops to teach morality, and Dacre's undead men to hunt women. *Wake Not the Dead's* Brunhilda returns from the grave solely for her husband's sexual gratification; she has no choice in the matter. De Bradi's narrative gives no hints as to how Ursula came to rise from the grave. Readers can only assume that some strength of *her* own will, or desire for revenge, reanimated her corpse. Distinct from life, her undead body belongs to Ursula alone.

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

The little dead woman's suicide, as explained in her will, is a direct, public attack against M. Maurice. The shame and dishonor he brought, leaving her with no money, "no

²³¹ Arguably beginning with Coleridge's "Christabel" (1816) this trope becomes more prevalent with the progression of the century, as observed in Eliot's *The Lifted Veil* (1859), Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), and Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). I have yet to find another female undead character from the nineteenth century who utilizes her physical appearance as Ursula does here.

strength to work,” and no love leaves her with no other recourse than death (165). Instead of writing a letter or asking the hostess to place the will away somewhere to be hidden, Ursula “requested” it hung, framed, in the public room of the house (165). She literally hangs up her dishonor for all to see, an oddly disturbing poetic gesture given her intended method of suicide. Ursula takes the private and forces it into the public sphere, shirking decorum. Although bodies are socially controlled, her death and the letter bring attention to the circumstances that led her to take her own life and thus make her desired outcome successful. Furthermore, her will comprises mostly of advice to other “poor girls” to “beware of the gentlemen who come to them disguised.” With white hands, and uttering “strange words” in soft voices, they are not meant to be trusted (165). Even without her undead body, Ursula’s death carries a permanent weight because she chooses to share her knowledge. Through this instruction, she lives on not only in her will but in the lives of those who heed her advice. Ursula takes control of her own story, a dangerous deed in the early nineteenth century as Mendus and Rendall emphasize when they claim: “To free women from their passivity was now construed as socially dangerous” (9–10). All of Ursula’s actions in the text, her insistence on displaying the will, her suicide, and eventual resurrection can hardly be considered passive. Everything she does demands public attention. Suicide is a death that insists on public scrutiny, bringing in the government and its policing agencies through the generation of the medical inquests and death certificates (McGuire 4). The suicide in “The Little Dead Woman” compounds the effects of the reanimated corpse herself by forcing others to confront the situation that led her to such dramatic action, and when the identity of her seducer is revealed, compel a judgment of his character. The story thus serves to illuminate the lasting effects of sex

outside of marriage, and particularly, the unjust predation of poor young women by more affluent men.

When Faubert and Reynolds assert that all Romantic literature including female, slave, or working class suicides confronts “Eurocentric, masculinist ideals of genius, volition, and heroism” (Faubert & Reynolds 643) they could easily be referring “The Little Dead Woman,” particularly in the construction of M. Maurice’s character. The narrator of the text paints M. Maurice like a stereotypical Romantic hero. “His figure was symmetry itself, and nothing could be more strikingly handsome than his features; but there was an expression of gay recklessness in his dark eye, and he smiled too often to be altogether to my taste,” but nevertheless she begins “setting him down as a hero of a romance” (“The Little Dead Woman”162). Even after he behaves suspiciously while reading the will, uttering an “exclamation of surprise, and chang[ing] colour” (165), the narrator’s interactions with him on their boat ride find her declaring him to be “really one of the most fortunate men of his age” (166). This is why Ursula must become undead. Without a physical retaliation no one would know M. Maurice’s true character. Only when his dead body is found does the narrator put together the pieces of the story and realize M. Maurice’s role in the tragedy. De Bradi therefore tells the reader that written warnings, like the will, are not enough to prevent the circumstances leading to Ursula’s suicide, but that physical actions must be taken. This is not to say that de Bradi was necessarily promoting the revenge killing of men nor harassing them into suicide, but rather that women must make conscious physical decisions to avoid dishonor. The same concept applies to the male readers; men, especially those of higher standing, must take caution with the promises they offer both physically and emotionally. The suicides of

young women dishonored by sexual relationships place just as much guilt, if not more, upon the seducer. Even Moore recognized this at the end of the eighteenth century, explaining in this essay that suicide was sought out by women “as her sure refuge from shame and infidelity, in the disappointments and jealousies of love, and lays the guilt of her death at the door of the perjured man” (Moore 5). Ursula’s death and reanimation presents her undead body for all to see and forces them to look at the architect of her guilt, and the society that shaped him.

The narrator says that the body of little dead woman was never found (“The Little Dead Woman”166) leaving the reader questioning whether she returned to her grave, or if she continues to wander the countryside. Like her will, a permanent sign of her seduction and suicide, her grave serves as a physical marker of Ursula’s existence and acceptance by the rural community. As a suicide victim, placing Ursula’s body below the stone cross is unusual, even more so because of the expense of burials at time de Bradi penned her narrative. For poor or friendless individuals like Ursula, two burial options existed. If one was lucky, the family would scrape together enough for an independent burial. Alternatively, a pauper funeral (usually in a mass grave) paid for by local authorities, often the parish, served as means of interment. Beginning at least as early as the sixteenth century, providing customary burial practices for the poor population was seen as a social and moral responsibility^{232 233} Commercialization of the death industry and changing

²³² Elizabeth Hurren and Steve King, “‘Begging for a Burial’: Form, Function and Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Pauper Burial,” *Social History* 30, No. 3 (2005) 321–22, 333.

²³³ Thomas Laqueur, “Bodies, Death, and Pauper Funerals,” *Representations*, No. 1 (1983) 109. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

laws in the nineteenth century made burials more expensive, and all the more necessary. The 1832 Anatomy Act allowed doctors to legally use the bodies of the deceased for non-burial purposes. If a body was not claimed, the doctor could use it for dissection or sell it (Laqueur 122–23). Considered a violation of dignity, families and friends desperately struggled to procure the funds to claim their dead and spare the corpse from vivisection or other experiments. Suicide victims left the community with an even greater problem. They could not be buried in consecrated ground. Legally the corpses of suicides had to be “buried in some public highway,” a funeral much Moore describes as akin to “the burial of a dog” (321).²³⁴

Leaving “not a single paper” of identification, Ursula had no relations the community could ask for money for a burial. Not only did the parish priest forbid her remains from being interred in consecrated ground, but he also refused to give her a burial of any kind. The hostess of the home from whom she was renting a room took pity on “the poor young corpse,” begging the community to allow her to bury Ursula near the cross she died on, reasoning that “the ground there must be almost as good as the consecrated ground” (“The Little Dead Woman” 165). Thus Ursula was spared from the indignity of an unmarked or mass grave. The hostess’s insistence on giving Ursula a

²³⁴ In his discussion of suicide burials, Moore notes that in some regions, a stake is driven through the body, bringing to mind the traditional mode of destruction for vampires. Charles Moore, *A Full Inquiry Into the Subject of Suicide: to Which Are Added (as Being Closely Connected With the Subject) Two Treatises On Duelling And Gaming*. Vol. 1. London: Printed for J. F. and C. Rivington; J. Robson and W. Clarke; G. Nicol; and J. and T. Egerton; Fletcher, Prince and Cooke, Oxford; Merrills, Lunn, Cambridge; Simmons and Kirby, Canterbury; and Gillman, Rochester, 1790: 321.

burial of some kind suggests that her death held greater significance from others of her status.

Thomas Laqueur's account of pauper funerals theorizes that in the nineteenth century, funerals of the poor became symbolic of "their absolute exclusion from the social body," for their inability to procure significant financial or social wealth (109). Despite Ursula's complete seeming lack of monetary wealth or social respect, her burial represents her inclusion into the community's history. The normal pauper funeral, as argued by Hurren and King, often serves as "a mark of failure of the dead person, an indicator of the financial burden that death might impose upon already marginal families and an indirect testimony to the emotional agonies and practical difficulties of those left behind" (Hurren & King 322). The "emotional agony" Ursula represents as a fallen woman is a direct testimony to her educational and emotional value. Instead of ignoring the events that led to her suicide, her death memorializes the destructive potential of acting solely on desire. Even before her reanimation, the little dead woman leaves a mark on those around her, her grave below the cross a reverential signifier of the innocence of youth and its vulnerability.

De Bradi's description of the gravesite assists this claim. Elm trees, associated with dignity,²³⁵ ²³⁶ traditionally symbol a meeting place and are often used boundary

²³⁵ Catharine H. Waterman, *Flora's lexicon: an interpretation of the language and sentiment of flowers: with an outline of botany, and a poetical introduction* (Hooker and Claxton, 1839) 78, 250. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

²³⁶ *The Language of Flowers; with a Complete Vocabulary, and A New Selection of Quotations from the English Poets, Illustrating the Sentiment and Meaning Attached to the Various Flowers and Plants* (Ward, Lock, & Co., 1800) 50. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

markers for parishes and counties.²³⁷ Their branches shade Ursula's burial site. Her body and death literally act as border patrol, demarcating the acts and emotions society deems undesirable. Chosen by Saxons for their temples, the elm is considered a tree of protection and immunity given its ability to withstand lightning strikes,²³⁸ and was a common coffin material for the same reasons (Stafford 201). The three elm trees and stone cross they surround in "The Little Dead Woman" existed before Ursula's death, but much in the same way the hostess chose the ground near the cross for a burial site, she might have seen these trees as protection for the corpse. But protection for whom? The trees could just as easily been meant to shield Ursula from ridicule and judgment as they were intended to defend the community against her sinfulness, or even her reanimated body. Given that Ursula does return to existence as an undead corpse, one who is accepted and even protected by the community, it appears more likely that the protective elms are intended to defend her from harm.²³⁹ This means that the community values her presence and the history it represents, in life, death, and reanimation.

Even the flowers growing around the base of the cross, sweet briar and common bramble ("The Little Dead Woman" 164) indicate her cultural value. Associated with

²³⁷ Fiona Stafford, *The Long, Long Life of Trees* (Yale University Press, 2016) 197. Subsequent references cited parenthetically.

²³⁸ Hilderic Friend, *Flowers and flower lore* (J.B Alden, 1889) 343.

²³⁹ Examples include the carriage conductor's (reluctant) willingness to give her safe transport on multiple occasions, the priest Monsieur le Curé's protectiveness over Ursula, and even the suggestion that the goat herder and the hostess' tenderly care for her, letting the woman play with the goats and giving her bread ("The Little Dead Woman" 163, 165).

imagination and even “considered the poet’s flower” (Waterman 77, 250), the sweet briar invites the viewer of the grave to visualize Ursula and the circumstances that led her to reside beneath the blossoms. The common bramble is even more telling, symbolizing lowliness, envy, and remorse (*The Language of Flowers* 29).²⁴⁰ ²⁴¹ To evoke remorse at a gravesite is hardly surprising, but the envy the plant symbolizes proves a more complicated association until one recalls the agency Ursula was able to gain in her death and subsequent reanimation. Reverend Thomas Firminger Thiselton-Dyer, a nineteenth century non-fiction author, writes in *The Folk-lore of Plants* (1889) that the bramble is both positive and negative omen in dreams. If one dreams they pass through the brambles and are pricked by thorns, it foretells of “secret enemies” who will “do an injury with your friends.” If one can travel through the bramble unscathed, it denotes an ability to triumph over enemies (Thiselton-Dyer 108). While Ursula’s undead body bears no apparent supernatural power akin to that seen in Loudon’s Cheops, *Wake Not the Dead*’s Brunhilda, or Dacre’s Skeleton King, its unblemished, albeit grotesque, appearance suggests the metaphorical brambles cause her no harm. Her triumph over death, and ultimately over M. Maurice, denotes power—something she never had in life. Women in particular, even those of lower rank, deserve a place in history as the little dead woman’s grave and will show. Given the respect of an individual burial, protected

²⁴⁰ T.F. Thiselton-Dyer, *The Folk-lore of Plants* (D. Appleton and Company, 1889) 183. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

²⁴¹ Henry Phillips, *Floral Emblems* (Saunders and Otley, 1825) 263.

by the community, and successful in her revenge against her seducer, Ursula symbolizes the rising strength of the lower class.

Paul Westover argues that the importance the Romantics placed on visiting or “reanimating” the past through books and visits to actual gravesites, homes, and even places mentioned in literature, came from a desire to reach an intimacy with authors.²⁴² Westover further states that this form of tourism developed from a history of travel involving around a desire to “meet the dead” (31). The undead expands this concept by exchanging exterior necromanticism to the interiority of the body itself. The desire to meet the dead, fictional or real is alive in the body of the reanimated corpse. An undead body is both inert and active, allowing for intimacy in its ability to interact with the living and providing a “safe” barricade to explore the past. As Ursula’s interactions with the living demonstrate, the dead seek out the living, reinserting the importance of their presence to both past history and contemporary life. According to Westover, necromanticism “delights in the many analogous oscillation between the ‘ideal’ and the ‘real’—the interplay between geographical and imaginary terrains, between implied authors and embodies ones, and finally between the literary and physical relics of dead authors—yet it always returns to the ground of necromantic metaphors: the grave itself” (5). The undead body is its own relic, and its movements increase the effect of these oscillations by broadening the audience. So when the travelers in “The Little Dead Woman” are confronted first with the reanimated woman herself, and then her gravesite,

²⁴² Paul Westover, *Necromanticism: Travelling to Meet the Dead, 1750–1860* (Palgrave, 2012) 31. Subsequent references cited parenthetically in the text.

they (along with the reader) are forced into a tangible confrontation with the past facilitated by the undead.

FEMININE RETALIATION

The above argument claims that Ursula's corpse drove itself from the grave in response to a great emotional disturbance, her desire for revenge. The living Ursula leaves an educational legacy to other young women, warning them of the sexual predation of men, particularly those of the upper class. She writes: "Let poor girls of my age beware of gentlemen who come to them disguised. Their hands are whiter than the hand of workmen; they utter strange words; and their voice is soft. But they love not girls beneath them in rank. They deceive and abandon, and then laugh at them" (165). In imparting these visual and auditory clues, Ursula instruction empowers young women like her to use their bodies productively. Relying on their senses to guide them from public ridicule, those women who listen to Ursula's advice achieve some degree of personal control over their bodies, no small feat in a culture that evaluates their worth based on their relationships to men. She offers practical knowledge, not an abstract warning.

The undead Ursula pursues retribution, not only for herself but for all ruined women, a pursuit those in the community tolerate if not actively encourage. Evidence in the text suggests that M. Maurice may not be her only victim. The carriage conductor recognizes the little dead woman, admitting that he has "already taken her twice to Lyons." Though "she has always brought me bad luck," he allows her a place in the carriage and even promises to "take good care of the young lady" (163). Considering that

her presence on his carriage had previously resulted in a horse dying and human injury, he does not refuse her (163). Whether or not this aid is brought on by altruism or fear, the conductor's actions enable the little dead women to pursue her goal. The reasons behind her previous journeys to Lyons are mysterious. The reader's knowledge of the interactions between Ursula and Maurice give no indication that she knew M. Maurice was to travel there. And why would she not have simply waited at her gravesite in the chance that M. Maurice would pass by? Ursula's freedom of movement and repeat travels to Lyons could insinuate that her revenge is not limited to M. Maurice, and that instead, she travels the countryside as a wayward avenger for fallen young women, bringing them justice by causing the deaths of their seducers. This would also explain why the community seems to endure her presence. Existing in a liminal space between life and the grave, normal social constraints do not bind her. Her sexual activity outside of wedlock and her suicide violate social norms, transgressions that Jason Mare Harris argues can "cause a moral disturbance that extends into the supernatural world, triggering, for example, a revenant to restore the ethical balance and assuage the outraged cry for vengeance that resonates through the metaphysical universe" (121). Ursula's corpse balances the metaphysical scales by empowering the female body and seeking reprisal from those men who abuse their authority.

In his moralizing text *Thoughts on agency; wherein, the article of motive (as necessitating human action) is particularly examined* (1765), John Perkins claims revenge is driven by a "native Ambition for Honour" (21). Because Ursula's integrity suffered in her relationship with M. Maurice and the death it drove her to, the restorative power of revenge offers equilibrium. As the first epigraph to this chapter states, the threat

of revenge provides sufficient terror to regulate society (Perkins 20). The promise of an undead female corpse, acting under no other agent than herself could, simply by existing, sufficiently inspire others to behave with propriety.

CONCLUSION

For the Romantic authors utilizing this figure, the purpose of the undead body is as an epistemological tool. How the other characters in the narrative interact with the undead determines its practical and moral purpose. When Jacques Khalip reasons “Humanizing literature becomes a way, not only of individualizing it, but of assuming that texts can be thought to contain knowledge only if they are presented as breathing, embodied, and personal things that lie in wait for critics’ excavations,”²⁴³ he inadvertently references the undead—the “living” knowledge within the physical text. The undead, the embodied beings of education, whether passively sharing insight into a lost empire (“Valerius,” “Roger Dodsworth”), acting as moral counselors (*The Mummy*; *Hours of Solitude*), or patrolling the boundaries of gender and sexuality with violence (*Hours of Solitude*; *Wake Not the Dead*; “The Little Dead Woman”), exist as a physical manifestation of past’s ability to effect the present. The lessons of experience the reanimated corpse brings alongside with it are only valuable to others. The undead can never go back to change what has occurred in their lives, but through disseminating the knowledge they possess their existence may alter the future.

Literary critics and scholars have long been puzzled by the undead, but they have always been part of the popular imagination. The texts examined in the proceeding chapters demonstrate the reluctant or even ruthless criticisms of the Gothic texts that include the reanimated corpse. Yet, as this dissertation shows, the public embraced such figures and in doing so found themselves exposed to the instructional messages

²⁴³ Jacques Khalip, *Anonymous Life: Romanticism and Dispossession* (Stanford University Press, 2009) 10.

embedded in and onto their bodies. The Romantic authors who established and solidified the tropes associated with the undead figure might be surprised to find that their undead creations lived on outside their own text, their monstrous bodies appearing in every period since the nineteenth century.

To study the history of the undead monster in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is to evaluate the social, political, scientific, and cultural values and anxieties of the Romantic period. The texts that feature such creatures hold value not only as extensions of the Gothic, but as a way to understand Romantic ideology. The instructional messages the undead relate serve to inform readers of what moral and intellectual traits are required for personal and national success as the narratives discussed in the chapters above suggest. The undead are only able to act as informative devices because of the corporeal body. The body of the reanimated corpse offers instruction in the words it speaks, but also as a tangible presence that can interact with the living in a physical way. The undead's knowledge becomes real. To limit this effect only to one type of undead being, as other scholars have done previously, is to ignore the importance of the reanimated body as a cultural mechanism of edification. By expanding the definition of the undead and looking at under examined works that portray these monsters allows us to access voices that might not otherwise be recognized. As my dissertation demonstrates, the value of the female voice both inside and outside the text emerges as particularly relevant. In acknowledging the importance of the female presence to the undead narrative, we are called to more thoroughly investigate how "outsider" voices shape the narratives that become part of our everyday lives.

As the undead became part of a cultural lexicon extending beyond literature in the nineteenth century, some of the etymological purpose was lost. The vampire in particular became a term used for everything from pet names to an insult. A listing of horse races appearing in an 1822 Worcester journal names Mr. Jones “Vampyre, the favourite” in an expected race.²⁴⁴ That same year, an article in *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* promotes “the most splendid exhibition the stage can boast,” *Vampyre*, a theatrical performance inspired by John Polidori’s work “The Vampyre.” The undead character in this production, we are told, can only be saved “from destruction” by “marrying a young and spotless female” before the end of a year.²⁴⁵ Portraying the vampire on stage became fairly popular. A translated German opera *Der Vampyr* set in Transylvania, afforded the acquisition of “entirely new and splendid scenery, dresses, and decorations” in 1829 London.²⁴⁶ The British public are not just consuming the undead, they invest in portrayals of such beings and bring their reanimated bodies to life outside of the text. The concept of the “vampire” became so popular that an American scientific journal in 1877 used the term as a way to understand the “hysterical woman,” another threatening creature that “sucks the blood of the healthy people around her.”²⁴⁷ Using “vampire” as a derogatory term was not only applied to women. An anonymous political rant from *The English*

²⁴⁴ *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, Issue 6243 (Aug. 29, 1822).

²⁴⁵ *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post, or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser*, Issue 2936 (Jan. 3, 1822).

²⁴⁶ Playbill, *Der Vampyr* (1829). From the collection of The Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Ambleside LA22 9SH, UK.

²⁴⁷ “Vampire Women.” *Good Health*, Vol. 12, No. 10 (1877) 298.

Republic (1853) laments the return of “Russel” to Parliament to the undead creature for “the wretch is revomited from obscurity.”²⁴⁸ ²⁴⁹ Only a few years later in 1858, a London paper reports of a series of attacks on women in Germany where the victims would be made unconscious with chloroform and have their hair cut off by a suspect they call “some vampire in human form.”²⁵⁰ All of these varied examples construct additional narratives from the framework of Gothic authors, but still remain associated with monstrosity and deviance. These connotations would not be possible if the reanimated corpse did not succeed in the public imagination.

An investigation of the Romantic period through the undead provides scholars with an accessible, inclusive way to look at how literature, particularly the Gothic genre constructs and challenges cultural norms in continual, impactful ways. Cohen says “The monstrous body is pure culture...Like a letter on the page, the monster signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which is received, to be born again” (3). Monster narratives are continuously reborn as culture, science, and technology change around them, as works of Shelley, Loudon, Dacre, de Bradi, and the anonymous author of *Wake Not the Dead* demonstrate. The text itself, and the monster it creates, remains enduring even if its cultural meaning changes. Because the undead persists, even today, so to do the Gothic texts that formed them. Like the very reanimated bodies

²⁴⁸ “Kings of England.” *The English Republic* (London: 1853), 241.

²⁴⁹ May be a reference to John Russell who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom twice.

²⁵⁰ “A Dark Mystery.” *People*, Vol. II, Issue 39 (Jan. 9, 1858), 5.

depicted on the page, the Romantic undead rise up from the past to share their wisdom, continuing their existence forever in the messages they pass on.

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