DOCUMENTS OF CULTURE, DOCUMENTS OF BARBARISM:

GOTHIC LITERATURE, EMPIRICISM, AND THE RISE OF PROFESSIONAL

SCIENCE

by

ANDREW BIORN GRACE

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Student: Andrew Grace

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This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of English by:

Deborah Spillman   Chairperson
Elizabeth Bohls   Member
Forest Pyle   Member
Kenneth Calhoon   Outside Member

and

Kimberly Andrews Espy   Vice President for Research and Innovation
                             Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Andrew Grace

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The trope of the discovered manuscript, in which a narrator or character finds a document and presents it to the readers or other characters, has been a part of the Gothic genre since its inception. The discovered manuscript trope persists, despite criticism and satire, in part because it enables Gothic stories to situate their readers. In the nineteenth-century, as the presence of lawyers, doctors, scientists, journalists and other experts grew in society, Gothic novelists drew upon their methodologies and their records to revise the discovered manuscript trope. This project examines the trope of the discovered manuscript throughout Gothic literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to discuss how the Gothic functions as a literature of terror and how its techniques evolved in response to the epistemologies espoused by empiricist philosophers and professional scientists.

I draw upon Jacques Rancière's theories about the representative and aesthetic regimes for the identification of the artistic image to support three central, interrelated claims about the role, and evolution, of the discovered manuscript trope within Gothic fiction: 1) Gothic literature responds to an epistemological problem in the empiricist tradition revolving around the connections between sensory uncertainty and linguistic

gaps; 2) reading and interpreting documents play vital roles in the Gothic tradition; and 3)

examining documents in Gothic fiction as image operations illuminates how they

participate in a story's epistemological drama. In order to support these claims, this

project presents four chapters that discuss a broad range of Gothic texts from Walpole's

The Castle of Otranto to Stoker's *Dracula*.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Andrew Biorn Grace

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
Gustavus Adolphus College, Saint Peter, MN

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, English, 2013, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, English, 2010, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, English, 2004, Gustavus Adolphus College

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Nineteenth-Century British Literature

Gothic Literature

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

ELL Specialist, Academic Advising, Gustavus Adolphus College, 2010 - Present

Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2006 - 2010

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Mark H. Anderson Diversity Award, Gustavus Adolphus College, 2012

PUBLICATIONS:

"Rendering the Vampire's Reflection: Documents as Images in Stoker's
Dracula." *Studies in Gothic Fiction*. 2.2 (2012): 14-26. Web.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE GOTHIC STYLE

In the nineteenth century, Gothic protagonists professionalized. The minor

aristocrats from eighteenth-century Gothic novels, who were forced by family

circumstances into amateur sleuthing, transformed into experts—lawyers, doctors,

scientists and journalists—drawn into mysteries by their occupations. This transformation

occurred gradually, staying apace with the growing role of experts in British society.[1]

Between Isabella's flight from Prince Manfred and Dr. Van Helsing's analysis of Count

Dracula, Mason hired a lawyer to thwart Rochester's attempt at bigamy and expose

Bertha as the source of Thornfield's mysteries, Helen Graham feared for her husband's

soul while diagnosing his body, and Rev. Jennings sought consolation from a

metaphysical physician.

Incorporating professional characters and practices into Gothic stories affected

many traditional Gothic tropes, and the growing presence of professionalism within

British Gothic fiction is particularly evident in the evolving role of the discovered

manuscript. The trope of the discovered manuscript, in which a narrator or character finds

a document and presents it to the readers or other characters, has been a part of the Gothic

genre since its inception, when Horace Walpole wrote a fictional preface claiming the

manuscript for *The Castle of Otranto* had been written by an Italian monk in the fifteenth

century and unearthed in the library of an old Catholic family. Although scenes of

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[1] Harold Perkin describes the growing role of experts in the nineteenth century in *The Rise of Professional Society*. He contends that nineteenth-century professionalism presented a new ideology that opposed aristocracy and capitalism by suggesting that society should "reward expert service based on selection by merit and long arduous training" rather than basing rewards on family ties or entrepreneurship (117). This shift in ideology helps to explain the shift in characterization and storytelling in nineteenth-century Gothic fiction.

frightened characters in dire situations stalling their flights to read dozens, or even hundreds, of pages of the random manuscripts that they happened to find strained the credulity of readers, the discovered manuscript remained a nearly ubiquitous trope in Gothic fiction for more than two hundred years.[2] The discovered manuscript trope persists, despite criticism and satire, in part because it enables Gothic stories to situate their readers in ways that can make them more receptive to a story's specific form of terror. When a narrator claims that a story comes from an ancient document or the diary of a lunatic, it helps readers imagine themselves as more civilized or enlightened than the characters in the story. When a character reads a mysterious letter from a long-dead relation, it helps readers mentally place themselves in the character's situation as they read the same letter.

As the presence of lawyers, doctors, scientists, journalists and other experts grew in society, Gothic novelists drew upon their methodologies and their records to revise the discovered manuscript trope. Whereas earlier Gothic writers had been restricted to describing predominantly personal documents—memoirs, diaries, and letters—and the occasional clerical record, nineteenth-century authors could incorporate legal files, medical records, scientific reports, and newspaper clippings by also portraying well-trained experts who could explain the important details of these documents. In addition to indicating that their stories take place in larger, more fully realized worlds than their eighteenth-century predecessors, these documents often add an additional layer of mystery. When confronted with a bill of purchase for a piece of an estate, a scientific

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[2] Diane Long Hoeveler describes the persistence of the discovered manuscript trope in *Gothic Feminism*: "This device, the partial fragmented manuscript, became after Radcliffe a stock gothic topos. In fact, the unearthed manuscript was such a tired convention that it was both ridiculed and valorized in several later gothic (or antigothic) novels" (80).

description of chemical compounds, or a news report about a new children's game, untrained readers may not know which details are the most important or what information stands out as unusual or how the documents relate to what they just learned about the mysterious assault of a well-loved gentleman. In this way, documents designed to convey information can also serve as new sources of uncertainty and dread. Hence, this project examines the trope of the discovered manuscript throughout Gothic literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to discuss how the Gothic functions as a literature of terror and how its techniques evolved in response to the epistemologies espoused by empiricist philosophers and professional scientists.

In addition to uniting Gothic stories and professional society, discovered manuscripts stand out among other Gothic tropes for two reasons. First, they are nearly ubiquitous among Gothic stories. While ancient manors, brutal tyrants, conniving clergy, monstrous creatures, haunting specters, and similar tropes appear in many Gothic stories, their popularities wax and wane throughout the centuries. In contrast, as the next four chapters of this dissertation demonstrate, the popularity of discovered manuscripts persisted from the middle of the eighteenth century, through the entirety of the nineteenth century, and into the present. Second, discovered manuscripts bring rhetorical style, as well as narrative content, to the forefront of a story. Whereas a description of ominous weather may have the greatest effect when readers are too absorbed in imagining the scene to pay close attention to the nuances of the writer's style, a transcribed letter from an attorney has the greatest impact when readers pay enough attention to its composition that they recognize the rhetorical signs of authority that a real letter from an attorney would possess.

Rather than requiring readers to suspend their disbelief, discovered manuscripts encourage readers to consider how they would react to receiving the same information through the same medium. In particular, discovered manuscripts encourage readers to contemplate how their experiences limit their knowledge because the manuscripts always introduce new perspectives that carry new information. Furthermore, the oftentimes abrupt endings (especially in the eighteenth century) and veiled, discourse-specific language (especially in the nineteenth century) of discovered manuscripts invite readers to question how the physical fragility and stylistic restrictions of documentary evidence could prevent it from ever providing a complete understanding of its author's thoughts and experiences. In this regard, discovered manuscripts enhance the terror created by Gothic texts by not only facilitating readers' imaginative efforts to place themselves within frightening situations but also reminding readers that their access to information is limited and faulty.

Although many scholars have mentioned the prevalence of discovered manuscripts in Gothic literature, they have not focused on these documents as stylistic tools that can enhance terror. Instead, depending on their critical inclinations, scholars have associated discovered manuscripts with other Gothic tropes in analyses that define Gothic literature under one of three broad headings: psychological symbolism, cultural anxiety, or historiography. Critics focused on psychological symbolism are apt to read Gothic texts as allegories about divisions within the self and employ Freudian terminology about "the uncanny" and the "return of the repressed."[3] In contrast, critics

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[3] David Punter instigated the popularity of using psychoanalysis to understand Gothic literature in 1980 with *The Literature of Terror*. Punter continues to be one of the most prominent practitioners of psychoanalysis among Gothic scholars, though his more contemporary works incorporate ideas about gender, race, and class brought forward by cultural studies critics.

focused on cultural anxiety interpret the stock features of Gothic fiction as signs of and

responses to the divisive issues that can destabilize societies.[4] Finally, critics who analyze

Gothic texts as historiographies argue that their tropes and settings cast some peoples,

places, and times as barbaric in order to imply that another set of peoples, places, or times

are enlightened and civilized.[5] Both cultural studies and historiographic approaches to

Gothic fiction often focus on how a figure or location is "othered" within a Gothic story.

Psychoanalytic, cultural studies, and historiographic critics alike emphasize the

ways in which the content of Gothic stories, the "uncanny" and "othered" figures, differs

from the content of other literature. By focusing on its symbols, stock features, and

depictions of the past, scholars have treated the terror in Gothic stories as a byproduct of

potentially unsettling content, rather than the expressed goal of Gothic writers and the

desired object of Gothic readers.[6] Yet, castles are not just reminders of ancient misdeeds;

they are disorienting for readers who imagine running through their maze-like hallways

and secret passages. Omens are not just reminders of antiquated superstitions; they

participate in a form of knowledge characterized by a certain set of ontological

assumptions. Monsters are not just symbolically-potent aberrations; they defy

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[4] Fred Botting popularized the connection between the "stock features" of the Gothic and "cultural anxiety" in 1996 with *The Gothic*. Scholars like Gail Turley Houston continue to explore this connection. For example, in *From Dickens to Dracula: Gothic, Economics, and Victorian Fiction*, Houston argues that Gothic texts transformed the ineffability of nineteenth-century economics into a source of spectral haunting while economic writers used Gothic tropes to account for banking panics.

[5] Robert Mighall's *Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction* from 1999 provides a clear articulation of this argument. Other critics like Patrick O'Malley and Alison Milbank have presented variations of it as well.

[6] Julian Wolfreys's *Victorian Hauntings* and Marshall Brown's *The Gothic Text* present notable exceptions to the dominant trends, and both explore the relationship Gothic forms and epistemological concerns. However, neither critic focuses on the historical situations of the epistemological concerns. Instead, Wolfreys ultimately suggests that all writing is haunted by the spectral, and Brown notes that his "readings approach the gothic preoccupation with the mental on a general level, transcending specificities of situation and historical location" (xiv). Since this dissertation is focused on how the Gothic preoccupation with "perception and imagination" evolves alongside empiricist philosophy and the natural sciences, it focuses on the epistemological concerns at issue for English-language readers between 1756 and 1898 (Brown xiv).

understanding and reason-driven inquiry. All of these Gothic tropes, these "stock features," offer more than oblique ways of making point-to-point references to psychological, cultural, and historical dilemmas. They enable Gothic stories to terrify readers by pressing upon the limits of human understanding and verbal representation. As existing scholarship details, these limits can take the shape of what individuals refuse to acknowledge about themselves, what a society refuses to discuss, or what a culture refuses to recognize about its past. Taken together, these distinct analyses demonstrate that, as a form of literature closely associated with the mysterious, the unknown, and the incomprehensible, the Gothic is particularly well-suited for capturing the terror that stems from epistemological crises.

Hence, the emphasis on style and problem-solving among critics of realism, rather than existing criticism about the Gothic, provides a model for the inquiry into Gothic literature presented here. In particular, critics of realism have made consistent and compelling arguments that realism responds to an epistemological problem created by the advent of empiricism. By promoting the importance of sensory experiences as the roots of all human knowledge, empiricist philosophies put a burden on writers to simulate sensory experiences for readers. However, attempting to simulate sensory experiences forces writers to confront the relationship between words and objects. This relationship can become a problem for writers when they fear that their words can never escape the linguistic conventions in which they originated. For realist authors, this could mean that their descriptions of the British countryside will never refer to any countryside that their readers may stroll upon. Instead, their fictional countrysides would refer to rhetorical systems that produce the language available to writers describing fictional countrysides,

systems consisting of previous fictional countrysides, the etymologies of particular words, and readers' expectations.

Scholars of realism, including George Levine, Michael McKeon, and Nancy Armstrong, have described realism as a style of writing employed by writers self-consciously struggling with the relationship between words and objects in order "to use language to get beyond language, to discover some nonverbal truth out there" (Levine 6). According to Levine in *The Realistic Imagination*, realism is defined by a unique relationship between rhetoric and epistemology because realist authors constantly attempt to disrupt discursive standards and expectations in order to connect readers with an extratextual reality:

> Realism, as a literary effort, can in these terms be defined as a self-conscious effort, usually in the name of some moral enterprise of truth telling and extending the limits of human sympathy, to make literature appear to be describing directly not some other language but reality itself (whatever that may be taken to be); in this effort, the writer must self-contradictorily dismiss previous conventions of representation while, in effect, establishing new ones (8).

For Levine, realism as a genre does not revolve around similar content. Instead, it revolves around a shared problem, the attempt to "discover some nonverbal truth out there," and a shared methodology, the dismissal of "previous conventions." In this regard, realism must constantly evolve to avoid slipping into conventional tropes that cannot "get beyond language."

McKeon and Armstrong share Levine's emphasis on problem solving. In *The Origins of the English Novel*, McKeon reconceives Watt's progressive, or Whiggish,

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thesis about the rise of the novel in dialectic terms. Instead of viewing "formal realism" as the chief characteristic of novels, McKeon discusses it as a tool for resolving some of the epistemological problems that novels encountered as they moved dialectically through "Romance Idealism," "Naïve Empiricism," and "Extreme Skepticism." He even notes, "The ideological status of genre, like that of all conceptual categories, lies in its explanatory and problem-'solving' capacities" (20). While Levine focuses on the word/object problem presented by Derrida and subsequent deconstructionist critics, McKeon examines the broader epistemological milieu surrounding realist writing. Nonetheless, both critics suggest that realism is a stylistic response to an epistemological problem, and Armstrong goes so far as to describe realism as "the entire problematic in which a shared set of visual codes operated as an abstract standard by which to measure one verbal representation against another" (11). Although Armstrong does not explicitly separate the style of realism from the epistemological concerns it addresses, her reference to "measur[ing]" verbal representations against one another according the standards of a "shared set of visual codes" keeps her focus on the ways in which writers try, or consciously do not try, to use language to "get beyond language." For each of these critics, realist works do not have to feature characters from the middle class or unsavory behavior. They do not have to include elaborate plots that reveal how a multitude of social forces ultimately converge in a single event. Instead, they abandon these content-oriented definitions of realist works in favor of stylistic criteria.

This project contends that, as with realist works, Gothic stories share a common stylistic approach to confronting epistemological concerns and, as with realist works, Gothic stories respond to the troubling separation between the word and the object that

empiricists emphasize when they describe the process of creating knowledge from sensory encounters with the "real" world. While realist works employ diverse techniques to convince readers that they should accept the descriptions within novels as referents to "real" objects outside of novels—effectively recreating the sensory experiences that empiricists value and, therefore, imbuing readers with the knowledge created by those experiences—Gothic stories use terror to dramatize the relationship between object, referent, and observer. Dramatizing this relationship can either reinforce the imminence that empiricists ascribed to the senses-experience-knowledge dynamic or undermine it, and whether or not discovered manuscripts heighten a story's terror with cryptic and inconclusive information or extinguish the terror with authoritative explanations can determine how a text portrays this dynamic.

i. Empiricism and the Problem of Communication

By dramatizing the relationships between objects, referents, and observers, Gothic stories contribute to one of the central debates within and about empiricism: the debate about why observers form different conclusions from encounters with the same objects. This debate shapes not only the way foundational empiricists like John Locke propose their theories but also how contemporary scientists conduct and record their day-to-day research. In particular, both Locke's theories and scientists' practices emphasize categories of knowledge in which they anticipate less room for a multitude of responses while implicitly relegating other categories to a secondary level of importance. As the cultural capital of the empirical sciences grew between the nineteenth and late-twentieth centuries, science's ability, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to elevate some kinds of knowledge as more important than others began to have profound effects on social

institutions. As a result, both contemporary philosophers and literary scholars have looked critically at how the intersections of empiricism, science, social policy, and cultural norms began to take shape in the nineteenth century. Yet, while their work has been comprehensive and diverse, it has rarely considered how attention to Gothic texts could illuminate the discussion.

From the beginning, empiricists have struggled to explain variations between perceivers since the inception of their philosophy. This problem permeates Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and Locke devotes considerable space to preempting possible objections to his empiricism that are based on contradictory responses among observers. He preempts such objections in various ways as he outlines the characteristics of all three components of the relationship—objects, observers, and referents—throughout the essay. For instance, with regards to objects, Locke distinguishes between the ideas related to an object's "primary qualities" ("bulk, figure, texture, and motion") and the ideas related to its "secondary qualities" ("colors, sounds, tastes, etc.") (49). He claims that ideas related to primary qualities resemble the object itself while ideas related to secondary qualities only exist within the mind of the observer.[7] This distinction enables Locke to maintain his premise that ideas exist within objects, despite skeptical anecdotes about coffee that was simultaneously too sweet for one taster and too bitter for another.

Locke continues to rebut skeptical objections based on individual differences when he describes the characteristics of perception. Since his theory relies more upon the impeccability of human perception than it does on other operations of the human mind,

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[7] Locke's distinction reflects Descartes' earlier distinction between primary and secondary qualities in *Meditations on First Philosophy*. However, Locke's distinction serves a different purpose than Descartes' due to Locke's rejection of Descartes' rationalism and its elevation of reason over the senses.

such as reflection, discernment, or reason, Locke simplifies the definition of perception to "only when the mind receives the impression" (56). With this definition, empiricism does not need to account for the different "complex ideas" that humans form after receiving the same "simple ideas" from encounters with an object. He even notes "concerning perception, that the ideas we receive by sensation, are often in grown people altered by judgment, without our taking notice of it" (58). Finally, he devotes the entire third book of his essay to outlining the proper uses and most common abuses of words. In particular, he emphasizes that the signification of words is "perfectly arbitrary" in response to "those fallacies, which we are apt to put upon ourselves, by taking words for things" (180, 72). By discussing the limits of language, Locke implies that contradictory responses to encounters with objects may be the result of applying different arbitrary signs to the same response. In other words, one woman's "sweet" might be another woman's "bitter."

By attributing different responses to shared sensory experiences to observers mistaking ideas for resemblances, mistaking judgments for perceptions, and mistaking words for things, Locke set the tone for four centuries worth of empiricist rhetoric about settling disagreements about phenomena.[8] Ever since Locke outlined all of his meticulous distinctions in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, empiricists have attributed disagreements about phenomena predominantly to confusion between the observers. Observers may be confused about which qualities other observers are addressing. They may be confused about at which moment an object left an impression on other observers. Perhaps most commonly, they may be confused about what another observer really means by a particular word or phrase. In this way, empiricists can maintain that, as long

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[8] Lorraine Daston's and Peter Galison's *Objectivity* describes this history as it runs through Francis Bacon, David Hume, Adam Smith, and Immanuel Kant before becoming focused on the methodologies of the natural sciences.

as two or more observers receive an impression from the same quality of an object at the same time and successfully refer to this impression with the same set of signs, they will form compatible conclusions about the object.

Hence, the trend among professional scientists, who must communicate with one another out of necessity, has been to conduct experiments that enable them to gather information about specific qualities at specific moments in time and adopt the most standardized system for communicating their findings that they can devise. Lorraine Daston demonstrates how the evolution of empiricist thought revolved around the difficult process of developing successful practices for communicating about phenomena when she details the history of aperspectival objectivity, which is commonly regarded as "scientific objectivity," from its origins in the moral and aesthetic philosophies of eighteenth century empiricists like Adam Smith and David Hume through the technological advancements that supported the professionalization of the sciences in the nineteenth century. As such, she associates the origin of the contemporary use of the term "objectivity" with the transformation of the natural sciences from hobbies for enthusiastic gentry and philosophers into internationally institutionalized professions for university researchers. In "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," Daston defines aperspectival objectivity as "the ethos of the interchangeable and therefore featureless observer – unmarked by nationality, by sensory dullness or acuity, by training or tradition; by quirky apparatus, by colourful writing style, or by any other idiosyncrasy that might interfere with the communication, comparison and accumulation of results" (609). Among the multitude of discussions about objectivity within the histories, critiques, and philosophies of science, Daston's definition uniquely emphasizes the ways

in which "scientific objectivity" can be understood as a standard of communication rather than a standard of truth or a frame of mind.

Daston's analysis of objectivity as a standard of communication presents a fruitful basis for understanding the means and limitations of science as a method for validating knowledge. She explains, "The net result [of adopting more mechanical methods for standardizing results] was often a loss of valuable information that had previously been an integral part of the observation report – whether the observer was suffering from a head cold, whether the telescope was wobbly, whether the air was choppy – but information too particular to person and place to conform to the strictures of aperspectival objectivity" (612). Within Daston's formulation, scientific objectivity responds to the possibility of confusion that plagues empiricism by systematically reducing knowledge claims to unobjectionable levels. However, as Daston notes, this reduction necessarily eliminates valid but incommunicable information from scientific knowledge claims. While this kind of reduction is consistent with the original aims of Locke and other empiricists, who were more concerned with recognizing the limits of human understanding than solving all of the mysteries of the universe, it can instigate a new set of problems.

First, the popularity and effectiveness of scientific objectivity as a form of communication has contributed to the common belief that knowledge claims adhering to objective standards are more true than knowledge claims that adhere to more idiosyncratic standards. Daston frames this problem by asking "Why, for example, should public knowledge – observations most easily communicated to and replicated by as many people as possible – lay metaphysical claim to being the closest approximation of the

real?" (613). When individuals or societies invest in the belief that scientific knowledge

provides the best access to "the real," they oftentimes begin to denigrate knowledge

claims about abstract ideas that resist easy translation and communication. Discourses of

humor, morality, and theology become matters of mere opinion while the phrase "it has

been scientifically proven" becomes a means of ending debates. As a result of this

disparity, individuals who wield scientific authority gain access to power and privileges

in society that are only tangentially related to the limited knowledge claims they make

about the world (Daston 630). In this regard, other fields that wrestle with competing

knowledge claims, such as the law and journalism, tend to mimic scientific standards for

communicable information even when decidedly idiosyncratic systems of ethics and

customs mediate their interests in sensory experiences.

Just as scientific authority can influence the dynamics of social power, cultural

power structures can influence the standards for scientific authority. Science studies

scholars like Peter Galison and Bruno Latour and feminist epistemologists like Donna

Haraway and Sandra Harding have elaborated upon various dimensions of this influence.

In *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?*, Harding draws attention to the issues

surrounding objectivity in particular. She argues that science carries both "liberatory and

oppressive possibilities"[9] and that the influence of existing power structures over

scientific methods not only bolsters those structures but also hinders science. She ties this

double-bind directly to the issue of objectivity: "One way to focus on this problem is to

discover that we have no conception of objectivity that enables us to distinguish the

scientifically "best descriptions and explanations" from those that fit most closely

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[9] The use of evolutionary theory to support racist and sexist assumptions about human development
exemplifies the kind of "oppressive possibilities" to which Harding alludes while the use of DNA evidence
to exonerate African American men convicted by racist juries highlights its "liberatory" possibilities.

(intentionally or not) with the assumptions that elites in the West do not want critically examined" (97). Although Harding published her book a year before Daston published her short history of aperspectival objectivity, her critique is consistent with Daston's description. Information that undercuts existing power structures may, at first, appear "idiosyncratic." For example, by removing personal information from their reports, scientists maintain the standard that an observer's gender has no effect on his or her process of gathering and reporting data. For over a century, eliminating the idiosyncrasy of gender from scientific reporting contributed to male domination in the sciences while concealing the possibility that a female observer may ask a different set of questions than a male observer. Furthermore, Harding's critique helps to answer the question Daston poses at the end of her essay. If the standards of scientific objectivity can silently bolster existing power structures,[10] then those power structures will orient themselves in order to promote knowledge that fits the standards of scientific objectivity.

Many scholars in the last twenty years, including Gillian Beer and Peter Allan Dale, have used literary texts as focal points for understanding how the intersections between scientific methods and cultural authority described by scholars like Daston and Harding began to take root in the nineteenth century.[11] Just as critics explicitly interested in realist fiction have been more likely to address epistemological concerns than Gothic scholars, critics interested in the intersections between scientific methods of knowledge

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[10] Obviously, other standards of knowledge and communication have bolstered existing power structures as well; however, they have usually been more overt about the relationship between their standards of knowledge and the power disparities they support. For example, religions that promote male primacy make direct connections between God as a masculine figure, God as the source of all knowledge, and some kind of divine decree that men should possess authority over women.

[11] Peter Allan Dale's *In Pursuit of Scientific Culture* describes how Scientific Positivism became central to British culture in the nineteenth century as a unifying theory that could possibly replace institutional religion. Gillian Beer's *Darwin's Plots* examines how evolutionary theory became a common conceit in late nineteenth-century fiction.

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production and cultural authority have usually focused on realist texts, especially the works of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.[12] However, if Gothic texts, like realist texts, respond to an epistemological dilemma, then they also present a valuable resource for understanding how people responded to the growing influence of scientific thinking in nineteenth-century culture.

ii. Documents as Empirical Records in Gothic Fiction

One reason that scholars have focused on realist texts, rather than Gothic texts, when examining scientific methods of knowledge production is that there has been no critical consensus about the connections between eighteenth-century Gothic novels, mid-nineteenth-century novels associated with the Gothic mode, and *fin-de-siècle* novels and stories about inhuman monsters. In particular, scholars interested in early Gothic fiction and scholars interested in the *fin-de-siècle* have overlooked the Gothic's presence in mid-century fiction. Without this link, it is difficult to recognize the consistently present, but gradually transforming, elements that define the Gothic as a response to epistemological dilemmas. Analyzing the connections across the whole span of Gothic literature illuminates common elements and creates space for examining how those elements evolve over time alongside cultural developments. The central role of documents within Gothic texts stands out as uniquely ubiquitous, and understanding how the role of documents shapes Gothic literature requires understanding how the roles of documents within society changed and grew throughout the nineteenth century.

Most scholarship that discusses the connections between Gothic literature and the history of science focuses exclusively on the 1890s when a series of scientific theories,

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[12] As I explain in the next section, many Gothic scholars discuss the connections between the content of Gothic fiction in the 1890s and the century's momentous scientific discoveries; however, Gothic scholars rarely discuss the connections between the rhetoric of Gothic fiction and the methods of empirical science.

most famously Darwin's theory of evolution, and science-driven technological developments pressed upon public awareness.[13] When critics like Kelly Hurley focus on scientific theories and discoveries, rather than scientific standards and practices, they commonly dismiss the connections between late-nineteenth-century Gothic and earlier phases of Gothic literature, including the whole body of mid-nineteenth-century stories infused with Gothic tropes, including novels by the Brontës, Dickens, and Le Fanu, as well as stories by Gaskell, Eliot, and the writers for *Blackwood's*.

Taking the whole range of Gothic literature into account reveals that the appearance of graphic monstrosities in the *fin-de-siècle* is consistent with a broad range of changes that took place in the Gothic gradually as popular responses to new phenomena shifted. In other words, the monsters of the 1890s may not be that different from the monsters of the 1790s, and the threats to the human subject in the 1890s may not be that much greater than they were in the 1830s; instead, the ways that observers describe and respond to those threats may have changed to meet the expectations of audiences in the 1890s. Certainly, evolutionary theory and psychological theories about the unconscious gave shape to a new host of terrors, but those terrors took their power from the bastion of all terror – the unknown. In this regard, both the scientific theories

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[13] For example, in *The Gothic Body*, Kelly Hurley argues that the Gothic reemerged in the late nineteenth century "after its virtual disappearance in the middle of the century" as a response to "a general anxiety about the nature of human identity" that grew out of "[e]volutionism, criminal anthropology, degeneration theory, sexology, [and] pre-Freudian psychology" (4,5). She concedes that "certain broad narrative and thematic continuities link this form to the late eighteenth-century and Romantic Gothic novel" but maintains that "the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic rematerializes as a genre in many ways unrecognizable, transfigured, bespeaking an altered sensibility that resonates more closely with contemporary horrific representations than those generated at the far edge of the Enlightenment" (4). In particular, she argues that the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic is more "graphic than before" and solicits "a more visceral readerly response than before" (4). Like Botting and Turley Houston, Hurley examines the back-and-forth between cultural and literary tropes, between the sciences and the Gothic, that enabled Gothic stories to "manage [and aggravate] the anxieties engendered of scientific innovations by reframing these within the non-realistic, and thus more easily distanced, mode of gothicity" (6). Within Hurley's assessment, the Gothic produces terror through its viscerally graphic renderings of science's implications about the human subject.

and the scientific standards of the late nineteenth century gave Gothic writers new, but not radically different, tools with which to plunge readers into a disorienting world of unknown phenomena.

Thus, in order to provide a fuller understanding of the interplay between empiricism, and by extension science as a standard for the communication of empirical findings, and Gothic literature throughout the nineteenth century, this project focuses on documents in order to show how Gothic protagonists, narrators, and readers express their encounters with objects that defy their understandings. Rather than focusing on the monstrosities themselves, this project assesses how Gothic literature conveys characters' initial encounters with new phenomena, subsequent grapplings with their inability to fit their encounters into existing frameworks of knowledge, and eventual successes or failures at establishing the necessary authority to overcome any threat presented by the phenomena. Whether or not characters can find the necessary terms to communicate their experiences is the heart of this process. Within their stories, Gothic protagonists rarely have the resources necessary to confront threats by themselves, so they must find the means to share their experiences with others who may be able to help. With regards to narrative strategies, protagonists' attempts to communicate their experiences, to other characters or directly to the audience, can simultaneously drive the action of a story and determine its tone.

The prevalence of the discovered manuscript trope within Gothic literature is the logical result of the genre's emphasis on communication. Because documents can comply with various standards of communication, such as the elimination of idiosyncrasies, they can provide epistemological authority in a tense situation. In this regard, a properly

written document, with all the trappings of social class, expertise or institutional authority, can put an end to the uncertainty in a single dramatic revelation. When this happens—for instance, when Utterson reads about Hyde's transformation—the terror caused by preexisting sensory uncertainty is replaced by codified horror. Although this horror can seem more frightful from a logically superficial standpoint—it is easy to think that a wretched monster is a greater threat than an elusive shadow—these revelations ultimately alleviate anxieties by enabling characters to become proactive. Since the revelations decrease the tension within stories, they often serve as climaxes, and any subsequent confrontations are often perfunctory rather than dramatic. For example, the final confrontation with Dracula and his minions is recorded in scarce detail from the point of view of the people watching it at a distance. The dramatic weight of documents is enhanced by the fact that audiences and characters often experience these revelations in the same way, by reading the same words on a page. Even if readers have been idling comfortably on the sofa as they read about Mr. Hyde's transgressions, they can still read Dr. Lanyon's letter at the same "time" Utterson does. As a result, Gothic protagonists and Gothic readers can quell, or fail to quell, their mutual doubts and uncertainties with the same pieces of evidence that have been written to affirm one interpretation of sensory experiences.

While the trope of the discovered manuscript has been part of Gothic literature since its inception, the documents that appear in nineteenth-century Gothic fiction frequently have a higher degree of sophistication and technicality that corresponds directly with the proliferation of documents in Victorian culture. Technological, legal, and methodological developments alike fueled the incredible spread of documents in the

nineteenth-century. Trains, telegraphs, and steam-powered presses made it exponentially easier to record, print, and deliver documents. The repeal of the Stamp Acts turned daily newspapers and weekly periodicals into incredibly profitable industries.[14] Meanwhile schools, hospitals, and courts adopted empirical standards for evaluating knowledge claims.[15] These standards placed new weight on the quality of an individual's concrete descriptions and on how well her statements cohere with evidence from other sources.[16] Thus, archival documents became important tools for maintaining and assessing the consistency of an individual's performance, health, and assertions.

The proliferation of documents had a reciprocal relationship with the historical circumstances, philosophical shifts, and political developments that led to it. As documents became an increasingly common and even necessary part of life, they transformed the culture around them. A listening culture transformed into a reading culture;[17] nation-states grew stronger through the creation of "imagined communities" and by making the wealth of the nation a matter of state;[18] the ability to view individuals

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[14] Several histories of the newspaper cite these developments as crucial to modern mass media, including Alan Lee's *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914* and Mark Hampton's *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950.*

[15] Michel Foucault discusses this development in several of his works, including *Discipline and Punish*, which is discussed more specifically later in this project.

[16] For example, a woman who can describe the symptoms of her illness in terms of their locations and regularity is more likely to receive effective medical care than a man who describes his symptoms metaphorically. Furthermore, the victim of a crime is more likely to see his case successfully prosecuted if he describes the physical features of his attacker in the same terms as another witness than if he describes his attacker as tall and dark haired while a witness claims to have seen a short, fair-haired individual. Likewise, the victim is more likely to prosecute his case if he describes his attacker the same way every time an authority asks him to recount the incident.

[17] Matthew Rubery explains this shift in *The Novelty of Newspapers*.

[18] Benedict Anderson examines the role of newspapers in the rise of the nation-state in *Imagined Communities*. Mary Poovey describes the legislation and ideology that made the wealth of the nation a matter of state in *A History of the Modern Fact*.

as "cases" led to the conception of a "normal" subject;[19] the possibility of exchanging documents like other commodities resulted in a new "information culture," in which secrets were as valuable as gold or a hearty meal;[20] and "experts" at interpreting data developed as a group independent from those who gathered empirical data.[21]

All of these changes affected the ways in which documents functioned as images, and sites of epistemological conflict, in Gothic stories throughout the nineteenth century. In particular, the increasing popularity of empiricism, the growing prominence of experts, and the continuing proliferation of documents placed new emphasis on the act of interpretation. In order to capitalize upon empiricism's approach to knowledge creation, science, medicine, politics, journalism, and the law had to gather as much sensory data as possible. Relying on highly educated professionals would have limited their input considerably. Thus, each field employed an array of semi-skilled technicians, clerks, and correspondents to observe laboratory experiments, collect surveys, and report the day's events. Educated experts, in turn, interpreted the data gathered by this workforce and reported it through the rhetorical medium that best suited their purposes.[22]

The two-part knowledge-making system at work in nineteenth-century culture proved to be a boon for the authors of Gothic fiction who now had working models not only for dividing the knowledge-making process into dramatically viable segments but also for drafting colorful, new interpersonal exchanges. Like their eighteenth-century

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[19] Michel Foucault describes how viewing individuals as "cases" manufactures an artificial "normal" in several places, including *Discipline and Punish*.

[20] Benedict notes the interchangeability of people in *Imagined Communities*, and Richard Maxwell describes the importance of nineteenth-century "information culture" in his analysis of G. W. M. Reynolds, Dickens, and *The Mysteries of London*.

[21] Poovery elaborates upon these distinctions.

[22] Again, Poovey describes this two-part knowledge-making system in greater detail.

predecessors, nineteenth-century Gothic writers described their protagonists'

encountering the unknown, struggling with uncertainty, and discovering satisfying

explanations. However, unlike their predecessors, nineteenth-century authors were able to

depict their protagonists in conversation with recognizable professionals who could guide

their struggles and authorize a story's conclusion. For example, like Emily St. Aubert,

Jane Eyre encounters a mystery concealed behind a curtain; yet unlike Ann Radcliffe,

who explains what Emily discovered behind the curtain directly to the readers in her

novel's dénouement, Charlotte Brontë introduces a lawyer who can dramatically explain

the truth to Jane and the readers simultaneously. In this way, the prominence of experts in

nineteenth-century culture facilitated the well-documented shift from third-person Gothic

tales to first-person Gothic narratives,[23] and relating stories in the first-person, in turn,

enabled Gothic authors to help readers experience uncertainty and terror alongside their

protagonists. Likewise, the presence of experts added a layer to the discovery, reading,

and interpretation of documents, since a befuddled young gentlewoman like Maud

Ruthyn could finish reading her father's will and immediately ask her attorney about the

relevance of its most cryptic codicils.

iii. Documents as Images in Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fiction

If, as I have proposed, Gothic literature capitalizes upon the epistemological

authority of documentation in order to dramatize sensory uncertainty, an uncertainty

shared by characters and readers and exacerbated by the difficulty of conveying sensory

experiences through language, then a comprehensive examination of rhetorical

conventions in Gothic works must explain how fictional documents embedded within

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[23] Peter Garrett highlights this shift in the introduction to *Gothic Reflections: Narrative Force in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*.

larger fictional texts function. This project discusses them in terms of "signs" and "images." While it is possible to regard them as "objects" or "things," doing so could not effectively address their unique visual properties within the text, nor could it adequately distinguish the role of documents expressly imagined for inclusion within a story from the roles of other material goods mentioned within the text. In other words, because documents explicitly convey information through their texts as well as implicitly conveying information through their materiality, they constitute a distinct category of objects, one that can be visually represented in novels in ways that bedposts and wardrobes cannot.

In order to address how documents function with Gothic stories as both texts and images, this project utilizes Jean Jacques Rancière's discussion of regimes for the identification of the artistic image. According to Rancière, an artistic regime is a set of relationships between audiences, artistic works, mediums of expression, signs, and objects that shape how an artistic image creates meaning. In *The Future of the Image* and *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, Rancière discusses the ethical, representative, and aesthetic regimes for the identification of the arts. In the simplest artistic regime, which Rancière calls the "ethical regime" in *Aesthetic and Its Discontents*, images like idols are inseparable from the objects they represent. However, the relationships are more complicated in the representative, which supplanted the ethical regime, and the aesthetic regime, which eventually rose to prominence.

In order to understand Rancière's concept of artistic regimes, it is vital to understand what he means by "image." For Rancière, the image is the basic unit of expression in a work of art, and shifts in how images operate lead to shifts in artistic

regimes. Rancière argues that "art is made up of images, regardless of whether it is figurative, of whether we recognize the form of identifiable characters and spectacles in it," and he specifically lists literary descriptions, paintings, photographs, and musical phrases as potential types of images (7). He explains that "image" "refers to two different things [. . . ,] the simple relationship that produces the likeness of an original: not necessarily its faithful copy, but simply what suffices to stand in for it [. . . and] the interplay of operations that produces what we call art: or precisely an alteration of resemblance" (6). Rancière's references to "the simple relationship" and "the interplay of operations" build upon his earlier statement that artistic images are operations: "relations between a whole and parts; between a visibility and a power of signification and affect associated with it; between expectations and what happens to meet them" (3). In these statements, he implies that the relations that constitute image operations in any regime involve a medium (a whole), an expression (a part), an object (a signified), a resemblance (a visibility), an audience (people who form expectations and may be affected), and an artist (someone who attempts to meet or defy expectations by manipulating the other elements of the operation).

As the dominant regime prior to the nineteenth century, the representative regime defined the image as a "certain alteration of resemblance" by maintaining "a certain system of relations between the sayable and the visible, between the visible and the invisible" (12). As such, within the representative regime, the assumed "order of stable relations between the visible and invisible" meant that an image could be "the codified expression of a thought or a feeling" (12, 13). For example, regardless of its effect on a reader's emotional state, the image of Emily St. Aubert fainting after peering behind the

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black curtain in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* could express a certain idea of terror when it initially appeared at the end of the Eighteenth century because, in this expression, Radcliffe aligns her medium (the Gothic novel), resemblance (a woman fainting) and object (a moment of terror) in accordance with her audience's expectations about what words can and cannot render visible. However, if Radcliffe altered Emily's response—if Emily burst into maniacal laughter for example—or if Radcliffe's audience did not perceive fainting as an appropriately ladylike response to terror—if they believe young ladies should flee at a quick pace for instance—then the image would no longer be an expression of terror. Instead, it might be an expression of madness (if Emily burst into laughter) or feebleness (if the audience expected Emily to flee).

Hence, Rancière argues that the break between the representative regime and the aesthetic regime did not stem from artists choosing new subjects for their images, "white or black squares rather than the warriors of antiquity" (13). The break stems from "the fact that words and forms, the sayable and the visible, the visible and the invisible, are related to one another in accordance with new procedures" (13). In the aesthetic regime, Emily St. Aubert's fainting spells do not necessarily express a certain idea of terror because the image is no longer "a double or a translation" of what a young lady outside of the novel might experience upon encountering a terrifying object (13). Without the "order of stable relations" maintained within the representative regime, things in the aesthetic regime "speak and are silent" themselves. As a result, Emily's encounter with the object behind the curtain only conveys an expression of terror if the audience experiences terror while reading about it.

Although he does not cite the intrusion of empiricism into daily life as a primary cause of the shift from the representative to the aesthetic regime, its effects are consistent with the changes he describes. In particular, his claim that things in the aesthetic regime "speak and are silent" themselves reflects the emphasis in empiricism that ideas are found within objects. Furthermore, he argues that when nineteenth-century novelists attempted to "transpose into the art of words the anonymous existence of [Dutch] genre paintings," they conferred a "new visibility on these paintings; in as much as their sentences educate a new gaze by teaching people to read, on the surface of the canvases recounting episodes from everyday life, a different history from that of significant or insignificant facts" (14). While his statement focuses on how artists changed their approaches to their media, his observation that artists shifted toward "episodes from everyday life" and away from distinguishing between "significant or insignificant facts" also reflects the new cultural emphasis on documenting as much of life as possible that permeated the legal, medical, and journalistic cultures of the nineteenth century.

The permeation of documents within nineteenth-century culture also provided the basis for a new visual mass culture, which Nancy Armstrong analyzes in *Fiction in the Age of Photography*. Armstrong's argument about the relationship between novel writing and photography in the nineteenth century resembles Rancière's claims about novel writing and painting. She contends in her introduction, "What is Real in Realism?", that realism in literature is beholden to nineteenth-century visual culture. At the heart of her argument is the idea that mass produced images did not create a barrier between observers and reality. Instead, they established the terms for expressing what is real. Only by connecting to "the social classifications" set by visual culture could authors make

"visual information" intelligible to a mass audience through "verbal narrative," and the intelligibility of visual information was necessary in order to make the world available to readers (3,7).

Armstrong's argument about visual culture supplements Rancière's artist-centric claims by elaborating upon how audiences and methods of production may participate in image operations in the aesthetic regime. Like Rancière, Armstrong considers the relationship between the "verbal" (or "sayable") and the "visual" (or "visible") in order to conceptualize of the artistic image as "a differential system," for which "Victorian culture supplied the social classifications that novelists had to confirm, adjust, criticize, or update if they wished to hold the readership's attention" (3). Although their emphases differ, both authors conclude that, in the nineteenth century, images were more than reproductions of preexisting objects, ideas, or feelings; they were original expressions that manifested as operations or systems. Both authors also suggest that, as the concept of realism developed and grew increasingly popular throughout the century, images became central to novel writing.

While it is possible to interpret documents within works of fiction metonymically or metaphorically—and I consider some interpretations in these veins in later chapters— this project focuses on interpreting documents within works of fiction as images. Because documents can be literally as well as figuratively "read," they are uniquely complex images that exemplify Rancière's concept of images as "operations" and the combinatory capacity of images in the aesthetic regime. When a document appears in a work of fiction, it involves at least seven image elements. There is the document as it physically appears in the text. There is the document as it is described in the text. There is the

referent, the genre, and the message of the document, and there are the characters' and the

readers' reactions to the document, which are based, in part, on their respective

understandings of the document's genre. In contrast, a non-document image in a work of

fiction typically involves four image elements: the image as it is described in the text, the

image's referent, the characters' reactions to the image, and the readers' reactions.

Rancière provides a framework for understanding how these elements work

together as an operation when he distinguishes between an image's "punctum,"

"studium," and "combinatory capacity." He suggests that understanding the "combinatory

capacity" of images is the key to reading in the aesthetic regime when he defines the

"triple power" of the image: "the power of singularity (the *punctum*) of the obtuse image,

the educational value (the *studium*) of the document bearing the trace of a history; and the

combinatory capacity of the sign, open to being combined with any element from a

different sequence to compose new sentence-images *ad infinitum*" (30-1). Unlike his

versions of the "punctum" and the "studium," which can be read in the representative

regime as well, the "combinatory capacity of the sign" evolves in the aesthetic regime

when writers and critics have access to the "boundless Store/Library/Museum where all

films, texts, photographs and paintings coexist" (30).[24] According to Rancière, when

media began to coexist—not just spatially and temporally but within a shared framework

of reading and interpretation—it became possible to uncouple an image from one media

object and recouple it with a new media object. This enabled writers to borrow images

from other media and older genres of fiction and insert them into their contemporary

works without heeding all of the conventions that surrounded the original image. For

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[24] Although Ranciere is referring to the cross-media allusions and appropriations that redefined paintings
and novels, along with other mediums, in the nineteenth century, it seems fitting that the rise of the
"boundless Store" should coincide with the expansion of documentary archives.

example, Oscar Wilde was able to uncouple the image of a living portrait from the halls of *The Castle of Otranto* and recouple it with a dandy's apartment in *The Picture of Dorian Grey* without following the traditional conventions of the Gothic genre, such as setting the story in a southern European country during the middle ages.

Prior to the nineteenth century, representations of documents appeared in novels in the codified manner previously outlined. Document-images could express a codified idea because it was part of "an ordered deployment of meanings, an adjusted relationship between what is understood or anticipated and what comes as a surprise" (114). This "ordered deployment of meanings" constitutes the internal logic of a novel in which things do not simply appear without reason. Because a document was subordinated to the internal logic of the novel in the representative regime, it did not draw its original genre into the novel and, thereby, affect the way readers understood the rest of the novel's composition. For example, an uncovered birth certificate in a mid-eighteenth century novel could provide a codified expression of authority that established the novel's plucky young protagonist as an aristocrat without inviting readers to consider how the conventional legalese of a birth certificate interacts with the novel's own rhetoric.

Hence, Rancière would ascribe only a dual power to the image of the birth certificate in question, its punctum and its studium. He explains the punctum, or the obtuse image, by drawing on Barthes's discussion of photography. Ranciere contends that the "immediate pathetic effect" of the punctum has an "affective power of *that was: that*" (10). With regards to the image of the birth certificate, its discovery may shock, terrify, or relieve a reader before she has an opportunity to "decode" the meaning of its studium, which carries the "information transmitted" by the image (10). However, within the

representative regime, the reader's responses to both its affective power and its decoded meaning remain completely dependent on the internal logic of the novel.

In contrast, the same birth certificate in the aesthetic regime could affect how readers understand the novel not only by shocking them or providing a crucial piece of information for the narrative but also by connecting the novel's previous method of conveying ideas to readers through images they can visualize with a world in which the image of a birth certificate conveys its own set of ideas. In the aesthetic regime, the birth certificate is a birth certificate first and a plot device second. In order for it to "speak" meaningfully in the novel, readers must uncouple the image of the birth certificate from the "ordered deployment of meanings" that produced it—the procedures by which civil and religious governing bodies record children's births and progenitors for the purposes of establishing citizenship and parental responsibility, keeping an accurate census, and collecting monies—and recouple it to the system of meanings created by the novel's narrative—in this case, the process by which a young man leaves his childhood home, learns a series of lessons through his encounters with new environments, and ultimately finds his place in society.

While the difference between the two methods of understanding the document-image of the birth certificate may seem trivial—after all, in both regimes, the birth certificate establishes the plucky young protagonist's new place in society, potentially concluding the novel in a satisfactory manner—it is important because it indicates how the two regimes offer different bases for epistemological authority. In the representative regime, the birth certificate is authorized to speak because it is consistent with the novel's portrayal of the protagonist's encounters, lessons, and rewards (and this portrayal itself is

authorized by its consistency with preexisting genre conventions). In the aesthetic regime, the birth certificate could be authorized to speak by its consistency with the novel's internal logic, its consistency with older genre conventions (i.e. the use of birth certificates to conclude narratives in other novels), its consistency with the formal production of legal documents, or any combination of reasons. How readers perceive the basis for the document-image's speech influences how they interpret its role in the novel. It could be the protagonist's reward for successfully navigating his encounters. It could be an arbitrary resolution to the narrative after an unrelated climax. Or, it could be a symbol of how the protagonist's journey into maturity is inseparable from a journey into a strictly regulated system of normality in which there is no room for fanciful adventures. As readers combine these possibilities in various ways, rewards can be arbitrary, regulated normality can be rewarding, and normality can be arbitrary.

Ultimately, this project supports three central, interrelated claims: one, Gothic literature responds to an epistemological problem in the empiricist tradition revolving around the connections between sensory uncertainty and linguistic gaps; two, reading and interpreting documents play vital roles in the Gothic tradition; and three, examining documents in Gothic fiction as image operations illuminates how they participate in a story's epistemological drama. In order to support these claims, this project presents four chapters that discuss a broad range of Gothic texts from Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* to Stoker's *Dracula*. These chapters are organized according to three interrelated principles. First, the chapters examine Gothic texts in loosely chronological order in order to establish that Gothic narratives and images evolve over time alongside technological developments and the growth of empiricism's role in daily life. Second, Chapters Three,

Four, and Five each focus on specific forms of discourse—legal, medical, and the natural sciences and journalism—and their relationships with documents. Third, each chapter examines a different dimension of how Gothic fiction fabricates sensory uncertainty to create terror and the role that documents play in this endeavor.

Chapter Two establishes that the act of interpretation has always been central to Gothic narratives by analyzing critical moments in *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Monk*, *Frankenstein*, and *Northanger Abbey*. By examining several texts written on the cusp of the nineteenth century, this chapter suggests that Gothic narratives register anxiety about the interpretative possibilities that arose during the shift from the representative to the aesthetic regime. In particular, it claims that, as new interpretive freedoms became apparent, authors like Lewis, Shelley, and Austen developed narrative strategies that revolved around images of documents to situate their readers and direct their readings. Finally, it demonstrates that the most successful protagonists in Gothic fiction are those who can negotiate the interpretive possibilities created when they treat images as operations rather than things in and of themselves.

Building upon the claim that successful Gothic protagonists must be able to treat images as operations, Chapter Three presents readings of *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* that focus on how the novels' heroines acquire epistemological authority in part by learning how to utilize the images they encounter as mechanisms for validating both their external knowledge claims and internal self-understandings. The chapter illustrates Jane Eyre's and Maud Ruthyn's growing epistemological authority by analyzing their interactions with various aspects of legal discourse, including lawyers, witnesses, wills, and written testimonies. This illustration demonstrates one of the ways in which Gothic literature

capitalized upon the nineteenth-century information culture to reinvigorate old tropes like the cursed legacy. By incorporating legal documents composed by missing or deceased individuals into the bodies of their novels, Charlotte Brontë and Sheridan Le Fanu are able to invoke the specters of those individuals for their readers and heroines alike. The presence of these specters, in turn, dramatizes Jane's and Maud's attempts to escape the tyranny of the past by asserting their own authority over themselves.

While Chapter Three focuses on how characters can interpret image operations in order to develop epistemological authority over themselves, Chapter Four considers how writers and characters can employ image operations in order to develop epistemological authority over another human subject. Through its analysis of the frame narratives that structure Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly*, this chapter contends that the rhetoric of medical discourse creates the distance necessary between an observer and a patient to turn the patient into a diagnosable object and that the authors of Gothic literature could take advantage of this rhetoric to dramatize the haunting incommensurability of human experiences. Specifically, it examines how both texts use the terms "degeneration" and "corruption" to illustrate the gaps in human understanding and language that form when individuals suffer from both spiritual and physical ailments.

Finally, Chapter Five continues to build upon the idea that interacting with image operations can help an interpreter develop authority over a subject by exploring how Gothic writers drew upon scientific and journalistic discourses to help readers engage with inhuman subjects, or portray subjects as inhuman. This chapter highlights the power of document-images to create knowledge, rather than simply conveying knowledge about

the objects they represent, by analyzing Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Arthur Machen's "The Great God Pan." Both works incorporate document-images of journalistic text and scientific text in order to accomplish several things. First, they provide readers with a familiar point of access into the strange worlds that Stoker and Machen create. Conversely, they challenge readers to envision a world beyond the "imagined communities" created by the news. Likewise, they challenge readers to imagine how their conventional sources of information would respond to extraordinary circumstances. Finally, they portray both the contrast and the interdependence between scientific and journalistic approaches to recording, conveying, and interpreting empirical knowledge. Ultimately, by incorporating document-images that resemble and dissemble objects from several possible image operations, *Dracula* and "The Great God Pan" exemplify the possibilities for creating narratives in the aesthetic regime that fabricate terror because they force the readers to fabricate hyper-real monsters that gain their narrative force from readers rejecting alternate explanations for the stories' events.

Gothic literature has been justly criticized on account of its plot contrivances, forced melodrama, and weak characterization for almost two hundred and fifty years. Yet, like the haunting specters it portrays, the Gothic persists, and its spawn dominate popular culture today, perhaps more than ever before.[25] The discrepancy between the Gothic's perceived lack of quality and its evident cultural power has been the starting point for a whole tradition of scholarship. Indeed, as the second chapter of this project demonstrates, some of the most influential Gothic writers in history conscientiously responded to this discrepancy two hundred years ago by equivocating about their relationships with the maligned genre. Whereas previous scholarship has considered the ways in which Gothic

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[25] The local Barnes and Noble contains several shelves devoted to "Teen Paranormal Romance."

literature can, despite a lack of emotional resonance, exorcise psychological demons,

expose cultural anxieties, or reinforce popular ideologies, this project considers the ways

in which Gothic literature invites a different approach to reading in order to explore a

new set of epistemological concerns.

CHAPTER II

HAUNTED TEXTS AND BAD READERS IN GOTHIC FICTION FROM *THE*

CASTLE OF OTRANTO TO *FRANKENSTEIN*

Fred Botting, E. J. Clery, Robert Miles, and Michael Gamer have each explored the ways in which Gothic literature developed between 1760 and 1830. They contend that there are recognizable differences in Gothic works depending on when they were written, and they highlight the differences in aesthetic philosophies, political dimensions, and attitudes toward the supernatural of Gothic works written in different decades. However, they rarely discuss the differences that developed throughout the decades in how Gothic characters acquire, process, and interpret knowledge. By emphasizing the knowledge ostensibly promoted by each novel in the end—whether it is triumphantly in line with an ideology of Protestant, English, and Enlightenment supremacy or cautiously exposing the beguiling appeal of the irrational—existing scholarship does not differentiate between the epistemological methodologies that characters use to develop that knowledge. Hence, in order to support my central claim that Gothic literature consistently responds to an evolving epistemological dilemma, this chapter argues that Gothic fiction registers the shifts described by previous scholars in the evolving ways that characters acquire, interpret, and communicate knowledge. Specifically, it examines how characters interact with images, especially document-images, in *The Castle of Otranto* (1756), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Monk* (1796), *The Italian* (1797), *Northanger Abbey* (1819), and *Frankenstein* (1818) in order to demonstrate that Gothic writers responded to the gradually diminishing power of images as codified expressions of ideas that coincided with the gradual democratization of reading throughout the century.

Gothic scholars commonly divide Gothic literature's decades as a coherent genre into three periods, Early, High, and Late, and examining the shifts between these periods reveals the concerns shared by diverse Gothic works. "Early Gothic" refers to Gothic literature published between 1764 and 1789, most notably the novels of Horace Walpole and Clara Reeves; "High Gothic" refers to Gothic literature published between 1789 and 1813, especially the works of Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis; and "Late Gothic" refers to Gothic literature published between 1813 and 1837, most famously Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. These periods reflect important changes in both culture and Gothic literature. Walpole's blend of ancient and modern "romance" responds to the Enlightenment ideals of the eighteenth century and the novels they inspired. Radcliffe's relatively polite Gothic, filled with young ladies who remember to wear hats and the explained supernatural, and Lewis's supremely grotesque Gothic, filled with spell-casting demons and graphic descriptions of mutilation, offer competing responses to the French Revolution and its terrors. Likewise, Shelley's portrayal of a philosophical debate between a man and his terrifying creation and Austen's depiction of a young woman's confusion about the relationship between real and fictional monstrosities offer distinct responses to the excesses and uncertainties of the Regency era and Romantic movement. By the time Victoria assumed the throne in 1838, the British Empire had endured a full generation of the anxiety initiated by the French Revolution without actually seeing its worst fears realized. The rise of a newly stable monarchy coincided with technological advances in communication and transportation, and the safer, more accessible world of the 1840s seemed to doom the Gothic novel in Britain, at least in its most overt forms.

Although scholars like Botting and Clery explicitly associate the development and popularity of works in the Early Gothic period with the empiricist philosophies that provided the basis for many of the cultural changes that took place during the Enlightenment, they emphasize how the stories reflect the products of empirical reasoning rather than the process of knowledge production. For example, while Botting suggests that the Gothic illuminated "the reason and virtue" of the eighteenth century by functioning "as the inverted, mirror image of the present," he focuses on the secularism, commercialism, and industrialism instigated during the Enlightenment (5). Clery also touches upon the relationship between Early Gothic literature and knowledge production when she assesses the influence of Edmund Burkes's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. She explains that Burke's philosophy presents "imaginative transport not only as desirable – one rhetorical option among others – but as a necessity, mentally and even physiologically" (28). Here, Clery connects the Gothic to the process of knowledge production by noting the importance of contemporary discussions about the relationship between reason and imagination in its inception. However, her argument, based on the presumption that *The Castle of Otranto* is more conceptually imaginative than the novels that preceded it, focuses more on the writing conventions to which Walpole was responding than the ways in which the course of his novel revolves around how its characters develop knowledge.

Walpole's devotion to the imagination contributed to the success of his novel and the initial popularity of the Gothic genre. During the 1790s, or the High Gothic period, the popularity of the genre peaked, and scholars have linked its success to ways in which it functioned as an imaginative outlet for British citizens concerned about the revolutions

in France. Although Radcliffe's essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" was intended to separate her work from writers like Lewis who indulged in greater grotesqueries, scholars continue to discuss their works together in order to examine the range of effects that the French Revolution had on British literature. The tradition of discussing Radcliffe and Lewis in association with the French Revolution actually began with their contemporary reviewers, most notably the Marquis de Sade, who argued in his "Reflections on the Novel" that the violence of the Revolution forced novelists to develop more imaginative forms of terror to keep pace with the horrors of reality (Clery 156). Moreover, as Robert Miles explains, the conventional Gothic plots established by Walpole and exploited during the Early Gothic period, such as the typical plot involving children who rebel against their parents in order to marry for love rather than family aggrandizement, "acquired a new edge" amidst the debates about revolution that preoccupied British intellectuals like Burke and Wollstonecraft (48).

Finally, scholars suggest that the Late Gothic period was a victim of the genre's success in the 1790s and that genre lost popularity as it became overly conventional and imaginatively bankrupt. In "Gothic fictions and Romantic writing in Britain," Michael Gamer argues that "Gothic writing's ascent to popularity in the 1790s forced writers and reviewers to reconsider and redefine what constituted literary value" (91). In particular, he notes that Sir Walter Scott's review of Charles Maturin's *The Fatal Revenge* illustrated how the genre's "associations with female readers, circulating libraries, repetitive narratives, and mechanistic production served to define its class position within eighteenth-century literary hierarchies" (92). Clery describes the political implications of this class position when she explains that the success of Gothic fiction presented a

revolution parallel to the French Revolution because "it was the unthinkable victory of popular demand and market forces over the legislation of writing from above" (134-5). Hence, Romance writers like Mary Shelley and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who were interested in exploiting "popular conventions associated with the Gothic" but eager to avoid being labeled as authors of "low" fiction, actively dissociated themselves from the existing signifiers of the Gothic's class position (Miles 92). Just as the French Revolution spurned the imaginations of writers in the 1790s, the compulsion to dissociate themselves from popular, low fiction pushed writers in the early eighteenth century to transform Gothic conventions again.

i. Early Gothic

In *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800*, Clery argues that when Walpole self-consciously introduced "a new species of writing" with *The Castle of Otranto*, he also undertook the task of educating the British public "in a new mode of reading" (71). She explains that, as a work of "modern supernatural fiction" the novel initially presented an interpretative paradox that threatened to subvert its "progessivist schema" (69). In order to avoid this kind of subversion, Walpole not only provided a "lavish supply of clues" that are consistently explained within a "few paragraphs" to satisfy readers' "curiosity" but also modeled the act of interpreting the clues for his readers (Clery 71). Ironically, this emphasis on satisfying readers' "curiosity" swiftly, rather than sustaining suspense, has created an interpretive paradox for several more recent critics, who identify *Otranto* as a novel dependent on terror that, nonetheless, fails to incite any.[26] The

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[26] Marshall Brown, Cynthia Wall, and George Haggerty have all drawn attention to an apparent consensus that *Otranto* fails to inspire even a shred of terror. Brown suggests that "serious students of the gothic" see it as a "piece of clanky machinery" while Wall claims that it "works with such *consistent* ineffectiveness" that it must have been intended as a satire all along (Brown 19, Wall 187). Haggerty goes further than

assumption that *Otranto* is invested in the idea of terror stems from Walpole's reference to "Terror" as the "principle engine" of the story, but the idea that there is a disjuncture between the novel's investment in an idea of terror and its failure to incite that terror in readers is only sensible if objects "speak and are silent" themselves (Walpole 40, Rancière 13). Yet, everything in the novel indicates that it is firmly rooted in a literary culture with a stable order of relations governing what its images express.

Of the numerous images in *Otranto*, four stand out for their importance to the narrative and their places in literary history: the manuscript that Walpole claims to have "found in the library of an ancient catholic family" in his first, fictitious preface; the portrait of Manfred's grandfather that "quit its pannel [sic]" and "marched sedately"; the "form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude" that seems to strike down the walls of the castle before proclaiming that Theodore is the true heir of Alfonso; and the combination of Ricardo's "fictitious will" and Jerome's "authentic writing" that clarifies the perplexing history at the heart of the novel's events (39, 60, 145-7).[27] With these images, the novel invokes the codified expressions of the representative regime in order to satirize its predecessor, the ethical regime. In *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, Rancière explains, "In [the ethical] regime, there is properly speaking no art as such but instead images that are judged in terms of their intrinsic truth and of their impact on the ways of being of individuals and of the collectivity" (28). In other words, the ethical regime is

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Brown and Wall by arguing that the "clanky" and "ineffective" formal characteristics of all eighteenth-century Gothic novels, not just Walpole's, prevent the stories from conveying terror: "Gothic intentions [to invoke terror] are repeatedly undermined by an insistence on a kind of development of character or setting or plot that leaves the subjective world answerable for the demands of external reality" (382).

[27] The other supernatural portents in the novel—the statue of Alfonso with a nosebleed and the skeleton "wrapt in a hermit's cowl"—have not received as much critical attention, presumably because they belong to the novel's subplot about Frederic's and Manfred's illicit desires for Matilda and Isabella rather than the novel's main storyline about the rightful ruler of Otranto.

marked by accepting an image as the thing itself. Notably, two of the images, the manuscript and will, are documents, while the other two, the portrait and the giant form of Alfonso, portray supernatural occurrences. The contrast between the roles that these two types of images play in the novel contributes to the text's satiric properties.

Walpole's characterization of the manuscript's original audience place them within the ethical regime by suggesting that they would be incapable of recognizing the priest's "art." Instead, it implies that they are responding to what they see as the "intrinsic truth" of the novel's images when they allow those images to confirm their errors and superstitions. Although Walpole did not have access to Rancière's language, concepts, or definitions, his first preface distinguishes between good readers and bad readers in ways that resemble Rancière's distinctions between the representative regime and the ethical regime. In particular, Walpole's library-scrounging, manuscript-translating alter-ego emphasizes the power of images in order to highlight the consequences of bad reading. While addressing how the "[m]iracles, visions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events" enable the novel to "be faithful to the manners of the times" in which it was supposedly written (sometime between 1095 and 1243), he suggests that an "artful priest" may have "avail[ed] himself of his abilities as an author to confirm the populace in their ancient errors and superstitions" (39-40). Here, believing in "miracles" and "visions" is synonymous with "ancient errors and superstitions," and Walpole's alter-ego contends that, although flourishing letters are innately opposed to "the empire of superstition," a work like *Otranto* "would enslave a hundred vulgar minds beyond half the books of controversy that have been written from the days of Luther to the present hour" (39-40). Yet by presenting the novel to an audience of English Protestants in the

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eighteenth century, he implies that historical circumstances have changed enough that he does not have to fear "vulgar minds" falling prey to the story's promotion of saint Nicholas.

While, according to Walpole's narrator, a vulgar mind accepts the image as the thing itself—it does not distinguish between a vision and a description of a vision—a more enlightened mind not only recognizes the distinction between an image and the thing itself; it assesses the image according to established artistic criteria, the bases for better and worse judgments, rather than just its resemblance to an object. Hence, the narrator of the first preface assumes that his readers will share his opinion that "the sins of the fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation" is a weak moral, especially with the amendment that catastrophe "may be diverted by devotion to saint Nicholas" (41). He makes this assumption because he suggests that his readers will be able to distinguish between "the interest of the monk" and "the better judgment of the author" (41). This distinction implies that, if a vulgar mind accepts images of miracles and other preternatural events as confirmation of superstitions, a more enlightened mind understands that literature must obey certain forms and that betraying those forms in favor of a weak moral requires abandoning "the better judgment of the author."

In contrast, Walpole's "borrowed personage" encourages his audience to evaluate the work according to what Rancière refers to as "an entire grid of expressive conventions" when he argues that the "rules of drama are almost observed throughout the conduct of the piece" (Rancière 29, Walpole 40). In particular, he encourages readers to notice that "all the actors comport themselves as persons would do in their situation," "there is no bombast" or "unnecessary descriptions," and that everything "tends directly

to the catastrophe" (40). In this regard, he responds directly to the rules of decorum derived from Aristotle's arguments about art, which emphasize imitation and unity, and Rancière's arguments suggest that artistic rules and guidelines were popular throughout the representative regime because they facilitated crafting imitations, including imitations of things that never existed, that could not be mistaken either for something entirely new or for the original thing: "This regime places statues of goddesses and stories of princes alike in a specific category, that of imitations" (29). Rancière expands upon the idea of imitation by suggesting that an imitation is the result of "an active form imposed on passive matter" (29-30). Here, Rancière distinguishes between an imitation as a work of art and an imitation as an imperfect copy of an original by suggesting that, in the representative regime, an imitation would draw attention to its own artifice and that the quality of the active alterations, rather than the success of passive similarities, would determine the success of the imitation. Again, Walpole's preface anticipates Rancière's ideas as it praises the "form" of the novel while criticizing its "matter."

Hence, if the artful monk's moral is voiced in spite of the novel's structure as established by the "author," then another moral, the author's moral, should be derivable from examining the novel's form in spite of what the characters say. In order to show this, the course of the novel demonstrates that "devotion to saint Nicholas" does not protect the ambitious; instead, the wholesale failure of reason secures their power. Nor is it divine intervention that finally punishes the ambitious, but the logical consequences of their own actions and the reestablishment of reason. Thus, in *Otranto*, the guarantee, apparently divine in nature, that the good will prosper and the evil will suffer is more available to enlightened reason than the superstition that seems to promise it. In order to

recognize this, readers must accept that the novel's most exuberant supernatural occurrence, the rise of the giant suit of armor at its conclusion, is actually superfluous to the resolution of the story. The death of Matilda at the hands of her father in a case of mistaken identity fueled by jealous rage is the true climax of the novel, and it provides the real impetus for the story's resolution. After realizing that he has stabbed his daughter, not Isabella, Manfred woke "as from a trance, beat his breast, twisted his hands in his locks, and endeavoured to recover his dagger from Theodore to dispatch himself" (141). His attempt to kill himself marks the breaking of his spirit several pages before "the form of Alfonso" appeared in the ruins of Otranto and proclaimed Theodore "the true heir of Alfonso" (145).

Manfred veils his decision to resign his dominions as a response to the "will of heaven," but, in order to do so, he must continually mingle his responsibility for the death of Matilda with the unrelated actions of his ancestor, Ricardo (147). When he finally confesses the deeds of his treacherous ancestor, he aligns the sin of his ancestor with his own sin as if they were related by claiming that he wants to "atone for usurpation and a murdered child" (146). Likewise, he only explains that his grandfather poisoned the rightful ruler of Otranto, forged a fictitious will, and was "pursued" by his crimes, so that he can bemoan "yet he lost no Conrad, no Matilda! I pay the price of usurpation for all!" (146). Taken literally, this alignment supports the debunked moral proposed by the first preface. However, seen as a disruptive imposition by the "monk," this alignment suggests that awaiting "the will of heaven" has only ever delayed or misdirected, but never secured, justice on earth.

From the disjunction between the monk's supposed moral and the ideas promoted by the actual form of the novel, it is easy to contend that the novel satirizes its Italian-Catholic cast of characters as superstitious and easily beguiled. Yet, by drawing the first preface into the narrative through their shared emphasis on constructing history, the novel also satirizes the ethical regime's approach to reading. When Walpole claims that terror is the "principle engine" of the story, he is not suggesting that the story should terrify readers. Indeed, if readers were terrified, it may align them with the maligned readers of the ethical regime. Instead, he is suggesting that readers should recognize that the characters' reactions to supernatural occurrences are artistically rendered to resemble the concept of terror. In this way, Walpole wields the "certain system of relations between the sayable and the visible, between the visible and the invisible" to portray through images the invisible idea of terror. He wields the same system to take advantage of terror as an engine for making the sayable (a portrait quits its panel and marches "sedately") visible and the visible ("the door on the left hand") sayable. Without terror, the former would have been inconceivable and the latter would have lacked dramatic merit. Within the representative regime, the standardized triangulation of the sayable, visible, and invisible enables readers to appreciate the supernatural, the mundane, and the emotions that bring them together as measurable imitations. Walpole is able to take advantage of the system in this manner because the document-images function differently than the other images. Whereas the other image must exist as poor resemblances to reveal the barbarity of superstition, the document-images must seem recognizable in order to situate the readers in a world of reason.

ii. High Gothic

Clery defines one aspect of *Otranto*'s influence when she refers to "the creeping democratisation [sic] of the republic of letters represented by the success of the popular novel" (134). As aforementioned, the success of the popular novel represented a threat to the established hierarchy of taste, and Clery goes on to contend that this threat "somehow seemed to come to a head in the feverish 1790s, and find expression in the Gothic publishing phenomenon" (134). However, as the "extension of literacy and the commodification of literature" democratized taste in novels, the same phenomena also democratized interpretive possibilities. Writers in the 1790s could not assume that the relationships between images and ideas were as simple as they were for Walpole. Everything in *Otranto* is an imitation—portraits, statues, lineages, terror—and no one, not the author, not the fictitious translator, not the intended audience, and certainly not the characters, confuses the copy for the original or doubts the validity of the original.[28] In contrast, Radcliffe and Lewis experiment with the idea of imitation and interrogate the concept of the original by creating characters with enough psychological complexity to doubt their senses and act on erroneous perceptions. In this way, the novels of the 1790s delve deeper into exploring how images function in the representative regime than *Otranto* could in its endeavor to distinguish between the representative and ethical regimes.

By introducing the popular narrative gimmick of the "explained supernatural," Radcliffe not only sanitized her Gothic stories enough to garner an immense reading audience but also created a tool for questioning the role of faulty perceptions in the

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[28] Jerrold Hogle's "The Gothic Ghost of the Counterfeit and the Progress of Abjection" elaborates further on the role of imitations in *The Castle of Otranto*.

development of human knowledge. [29] Lewis's novel, *The Monk*, has often been read in conjunction with Radcliffe's novels, especially *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*, and several critics have observed something akin to a debate about how to write Gothic stories taking place between the three novels.[30] The debate begins with Radcliffe inventing the explained supernatural to help readers enjoy stories that are only available with the help of some Gothic excesses. In *Udolpho*, Emily St. Aubert thinks that she sees a decomposing corpse and Ludovico thinks that he sees a ghost. At the end of the novel, the narrator informs the reader that Emily actually saw a wax statue of a decomposing corpse and Ludovico actually saw a pirate under a bed sheet. By giving readers access to information about the world that the characters lack, Radcliffe allows them to enjoy a story about characters responding to extraordinary circumstances without asking them to accept those circumstances as the "facts" of the story as Walpole does. This separation not only enhances readers' appreciation of the author's travelogue-like descriptions of European countrysides but also gives them an opportunity to reflect on how they create knowledge in contrast with the characters.

Lewis's novel responds to the explained supernatural by dismissing it as disingenuous and suggesting that readers really want to enjoy the extraordinary and terrible. In *The Monk*, Lewis presents an extraordinary circumstance—Rosario/Matilda

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[29] As Clery notes, the explained supernatural was so successful that many writers began to take advantage of it as well, including Charlotte Smith, Eliza Parsons, and Regina Maria Roche (for a complete list, see *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800*, p. 108).

[30] Clery examines how contemporary reviewers, most notably Sir Walter Scott, and the course literary history split Radcliffe/Lewis, like Walpole/Reeve, before them into "the binary liberated/repressed" based on their willingness or unwillingness to embrace "uninhibited supernaturalism" (109-110). She highlights the distinctly gendered aspect of this binary, and her observations are consistent with other scholarship on the relationship between gender and Gothic fiction. In "Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis," Robert Miles summarizes the scholarly tradition of referring to the "female Gothic" and "male Gothic" to distinguish between stories about "an orphaned heroine in search of an absent mother" and "the son's conflict with authority" (43-4). In "The 1790s: the effulgence of Gothic," Miles emphasizes the differences between Radcliffe's focus on "sensibility" and Lewis's desire to be "transgressive" (52).

looks just like Ambrosio's favorite Madonna—and quickly provides a sensible explanation—Rosario/Matilda was the model for the painting. At this point, *The Monk* has presented the same kind of "explained supernatural" that Radcliffe utilizes, and the inclusion of this explanation into the story provides the basis for interpretation that Lewis is actively responding to Radcliffe's technique. As the story goes on, Lucifer reveals that Matilda is actually a demon who assumed the form of the Madonna at his behest in order to seduce Ambrosio. In this way, Lewis implies that readers who find extraordinary occurrences more acceptable in light of a flimsy, after-the-fact explanation are, like Ambrosio, fooling themselves in order to pardon the pleasure they find in something illicit.

Finally, Radcliffe demonstrates the value of the explained supernatural by incorporating the explanation into the story in order to enhance its drama, not just excuse readers' enjoyment thereof. Radcliffe begins *The Italian* with a perfect duplicate of Lewis's opening for *The Monk*—both begin with two young men attending a sermon delivered by a highly esteemed, famous, and secretly evil cleric, so they can try to socialize with beautiful young women. Again, the overt similarity invites comparison between the two stories. And again, Radcliffe utilizes the explained supernatural to excuse Vivaldi's encounter with what he believes to be a ghost, which turns out to be a corrupt monk attempting to intimidate the young man. However, unlike *Udolpho*, *The Italian* does not withhold the truth from the characters. Instead, the novel's climax features Vivaldi and his principle antagonists, Schedoni/Count di Bruno, Nicola, and Ansaldo, in the hands of the Inquisition. As the Inquisition presses the men for information, they reveal the truth to one another and the readers at the same time. As with

Udolpho, this technique enhances readers' appreciation of the novel's picturesque descriptions of geography while allowing them to contrast their understanding of the situation with the understandings held by the various characters. However, it also enables readers to place themselves in a position similar to the Inquisition and evaluate the merit of each character's statements as he makes them.

Although the stylistic back-and-forth that takes place between the most popular novels of the 1790s may put Radcliffe and Lewis at odds with one another, all three novels share an interest in the issues surrounding an epistemological model that emphasizes the individual as a knowing subject. In other words, all three novels build suspense by portraying an isolated character encountering a phenomenon that may or may not be supernatural. In this regard, Lewis's exuberant supernatural serves as an epistemological counterpoint to Radcliffe's explained supernatural, not just a "spoof" of its delicate sensibility (Miles 52). Unlike *Otranto*, in which characters equivocate about what the strange events they witness may signify but never doubt their supernatural origins, the novels of the 1790s feature characters that doubt their senses and question their understandings of what they perceived. Hence, whereas *Otranto* relies on the conventions of the representative regime to satirize the credulous denizens of the ethical regime, the novels of the 1790s betray anxiety about the changing status of the image and development of new interpretive possibilities by overemphasizing the stability of images' meanings. For this reason, it is important that the two most prominent images in this back-and-forth, the waxen statue and the Madonna, also function as documents to the extent that they are treated as records, not just fantasies. While the statue serves as a record of what happens to the body after death, the portrait serves as a record of the

biblical mother of Christ as well as the appearance of its anonymous model. Placing these document-images at the heart of characters' epistemological struggles suggests that, whereas documents were more reliable than supernatural portents in *The Castle of Otranto*, documents in the 1790s contributed to the hazards opened up by the new interpretative possibilities.

It is certainly possible, within the context of the representative regime, to read *Udolpho*, *The Monk*, and *The Italian* as conventional historiographies like *Otranto* that attempt to distance the enlightened eighteenth-century England of their authors and readers from the barbaric fifteenth-century Continent of their characters. As historiographies, these novels associate unenlightened behavior with tyranny, hypocrisy, superstition, and idolatry, and the novels work on several levels to highlight these traits. By featuring lascivious aristocrats as would-be tyrants and cold, ambitious clergy as remorseless hypocrites, the novels function as political and social commentaries. By portraying how pervasive superstition can disguise the true nature of phenomena and illustrating how the idolatrous worship of "great men" or religious icons can cloud moral reasoning, the novels operate as epistemological dramas that build tension by describing how characters interact with images.

Within the milieu of the eighteenth century, *Udolpho*'s waxen statue of a corpse behind the black curtain, Emily's fainting spell, and Radcliffe's refusal to describe what Emily saw until the story's conclusion would have played out like a staging of contemporary epistemological thinking. More than a century's worth of empiricists, most notably John Locke, David Hume, and Edmund Burke, rejected any epistemology that relied on *a priori* knowledge, including Descartes's. For Descartes, *a priori* knowledge

defined a universal humanity, and anything or anyone that did not possess this knowledge

was subhuman by default. Thus, by rejecting *a priori* knowledge, the empiricists were

establishing a new criterion for belonging to the human race. Instead of possessing *a*

priori knowledge, humans translate sensory experience into knowledge of the world.

Since this new definition prioritizes the individual subject over the universal type,

novelists like Radcliffe focused their efforts on giving readers the impression that their

characters were thinking and feeling human subjects. Hence, Emily's ability to translate

visual data into terrifying knowledge is more important to Radcliffe's project than what

that data is. By withholding Emily's visual data from the readers, Radcliffe prioritizes the

moment of translation over the moment of perception, and by suggesting that Emily's

translation was "incorrect," she prioritizes the act of translation over the knowledge itself.

While her ability to translate sensory data into knowledge humanizes Emily, her

superstitious folly helps the novel historiographically promote the virtue of British

empiricism in the eighteenth century.

In *The Monk*, Ambrosio's lust for the painting of the Madonna that adorns his wall

and his subsequent affair with Rosario/Matilda when she reveals herself as its model

seems to support Plato's denunciation of artists, the Iconoclasts' agenda, and the Second

Commandment. The icon of the Madonna prevents Ambrosio from worshiping either the

real Madonna or God, and as a result, he bases his knowledge of the world around him on

a false foundation. However, as a historiographic text, the novel implies that only a

degenerate monk would fall prey to Matilda's wiles because enlightened Englishmen of

the present day, free of superstition and grounded in empiricism, would never confuse an

icon for the thing itself; therefore, they could easily resist an empty simulacrum like

Matilda. In this regard, the novel is not so much serving as an Iconoclastic text as suggesting that the unenlightened needed more Iconoclasts.

Yet, in order for the readings above to be comprehensible, readers must accept the document-images of the waxen statue and the Madonna as expressions of terror and lust respectively, and both *Udolpho* and *The Monk* betray anxiety about the stability of any reading, even the most conventional or flattering. If readers reject these codified expressions, Emily and Ambrosio would lack the humanity necessary to model epistemological struggles. As Haggerty's accusations of ineffectiveness indicate,[31] many twentieth-century readers reject the codifications of terror and lust in eighteenth-century Gothic novels because the novels' images fail to satisfy the aesthetic regime's focus on readers' "sensory apprehension" (Rancière, *Aesthetics* 29). Like Walpole, and unlike later authors, Radcliffe and Lewis do not reproduce documents within their texts. Instead, the extent to which both novels attempt to reify the representative regime's "criteria of technical perfection" implies that both authors were at least somewhat aware that ways of reading were changing.

In *Udolpho*, Radcliffe repeatedly describes sights as "picturesque" or "sublime" as Emily travels through the continent. Since both terms had been popularized into artistic discourse by critics like William Gilpin and Edmund Burke, they participate in the novel's overt strategy to engage with serious literature, along with the novel's poetic epigraphs and Emily's literary sensibilities. In particular, referring to objects in nature as "picturesque" or "sublime" narrows the possible definitions of terror because it associates her concept of terror with the classifications provided by Burke in *A Philosophic Enquiry*

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[31] George Haggerty explains this idea in "Fact and Fancy in the Gothic Novel."

into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. Burke defines terror as "openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime." He explains:

> No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as *fear*. For fear being an apprehension of pain or death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain. Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too, whether this cause of terror be endued with greatness of dimension or not; for it is impossible to look on anything as trifling, or contemptible, that may be dangerous (101).

Burke's emphasis on "sight" and "dimension" grounds his theory about sensations in empirical language about perception and knowledge. In this way, Burke associates "terror" and the "sublime" with the ideas contained in objects that Locke describes. Although "fear" interferes with reasoning, and therefore acquiring knowledge, terrifying objects can supply ideas when perceived without danger. Radcliffe draws upon this idea in her famous distinction between "terror" and "horror." She contends in "On the Supernatural in Poetry" that terror "expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life" (168).[32] By referring to the picturesque and sublime, Radcliffe reinforces the relations between the sayable, visible, and invisible that would keep readers' understandings of terror in line with her own. In other words, Radcliffe's references to the picturesque and the sublime make it easier for readers to perceive an idea of terror within an object, rather than being terrified by the object. Yet, the persistence with which she reinforces this triangulation—the word "sublime" appears thirty-five times and Emily is portrayed anachronistically as a model student of literature and picturesque painting by

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[32] In "The 1790s: the effulgence of Gothic," Miles explains how the "recourse to the sublime adopted by Radcliffe and her school," beginning with Radcliffe's first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dubayne*, led to explosive popularity of Gothic novels throughout the end of the eighteenth century.

eighteenth-century standards—suggests that Radcliffe could not simply rely on the dominance of the conventions themselves.

Whereas *Udolpho* overtly reminds readers of existing practices for understanding and evaluating art, *The Monk* betrays anxiety about the new interpretive openness of the aesthetic regime by suggesting that Ambrosio's downfall begins when he rejects the codified ideas of reverence, purity and holiness inscribed in the Madonna in favor of his lust. In order to make Ambrosio's lust visible without altering the expression of the Madonna, *The Monk* withholds the image of the painting itself, presenting readers instead with images of Ambrosio looking at the painting. In this regard, the painting can exist as a codified expression of lust because it is devoid of content. There is no ekphrastic description because Ambrosio must be seduced by the iconic painting, not the woman it represents, in order for the novel to present him as a bad reader of images. Hence, where readers might expect a description of the painting that would enable them to recognize and appreciate its significance, they find a lurid account of Ambrosio's reaction to the thing itself:

> What beauty in that countenance!' [. . .] 'how graceful is the turn of that head! What sweetness, yet what majesty in her divine eyes! How softly her cheek reclines upon her hand! Can the rose vie with the blush of that cheek? Can the lily rival the whiteness of that hand? Oh! If such a creature existed, and existed but for me! Were I permitted to twine round my fingers those golden ringlets, and press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom! Gracious God, should I resist the temptation? (65).

Ambrosio's fantasizing foreshadows what will happen when Rosario/Matilda reveals her face, and by doing so, it retroactively fills in details. Even though the narration does more telling than showing with regards to their sexual encounters, readers still know that Ambrosio will "twine [. . .] those golden ringlets" around his fingers and "press [. . .] the treasures of that snowy bosom" with his lips. Folding the foreshadowing into the narrative like this serves the novel's historiographic function by uniting Rosario/Matilda and the painting into a single icon that stands between the monk and the divine.

However, the second instance of foreshadowing, Ambrosio's lusty dream, so far exceeds this kind of folding-in that it becomes analogous with the novel itself (rather than an icon or a person). Having seen her exposed breasts, and only her exposed breasts at this point, Ambrosio assumes Rosario/Matilda's face and person must be beautiful. His metonymic leap is answered by the metaphorically potent painting of the Madonna, leading to his portentous dream sequence:

> During his sleep, his inflamed imagination had presented him with none but the most voluptuous objects. Matilda stood before him in his dreams, and his eyes again dwelt upon her naked breast; she repeated her protestations of eternal love, threw her arms round his neck, and loaded him with kisses: he returned them; he clasped her passionately to his bosom, and—the vision was dissolved. Sometimes his dreams presented the image of his favourite Madonna, and he fancied that he was kneeling before her (89).

Where the painting announces its own presence, the dream is all signification. The mere digression into narrating dreams alerts readers about the impending ominous foreshadowing, and narration can rarely capture dream logic. As a result, dreams like this

one lack verisimilitude. Instead, they become just another part of the plot. Thus, when the Madonna, who is also Rosario, Matilda, and an anonymous model steps out of the frame to embrace Ambrosio, it is not just a foreshadowing of Lucifer's revelation at the end of the novel; it is that revelation happening now.

This narrative doubling appears to be an attempt to organize and codify the mess of image elements that contribute to Ambrosio's seduction—the Virgin Mary, the anonymous model, the novice Rosario, the aristocrat Matilda de Villanges, the demon in Lucifer's employ, the painting itself, and Ambrosio's dream. In the aesthetic regime, these image elements could interact in a variety of ways, depending on the expectations and assumptions of readers. However, in accord with the conventions of the representative regime, the doubling elides the historical Virgin Mary and the anonymous model, reduces Matilda to a single person, and puts the iconic painting at the heart of Ambrosio's seduction.

As novels composed in response to social revolution, amidst literary democratization, and at the cusp of the transition from the representative to the aesthetic regime, *Udolpho* and *The Monk* not only betray anxiety about these shifts but also present early indications of how reading will change in the coming century. Within the representative regime, Emily's fainting spells mark the moments when she gets too close to the sublime and it becomes the terrible. In this way, fainting humanizes Emily and enables her to serve as a model for how humans translate sensory perception into knowledge of the world, which, in turn, allows readers to live vicariously through her observations about the Continent during her travels. However, in the aesthetic regime, where the distinction between the sublime and the terrible is less stable, Emily's fainting

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spells may mark a troublesome moment in empiricist philosophy, the moment in which sensory perception becomes knowledge. By fainting at precisely the moment she should be forming knowledge, Emily reifies the gap in empiricist philosophy between perception and understanding. This suggests that even the most basic images from the natural world require active interpretation in order to be understood, not just the passive translations described by the empiricists.

Likewise, Ambrosio's seduction reads differently in the aesthetic regime. Instead of being seduced by an icon, he is destroyed by his inability to recognize the interplay of image operations at work in the icon. In both regimes, Ambrosio is a terrible reader. In the representative regime, he gives the iconic painting erotic power over himself that Lucifer, subsequently, capitalizes upon. In the aesthetic regime, Ambrosio does not necessarily imbue the painting with erotic power because it is iconic. Instead, he imbues it with erotic power because he does not recognize how it exists as an interplay of image operations. By restricting his understanding of the image elements to his preexisting adoration of the icon, he prevents himself from recognizing how Rosario/Matilda, or even the painting itself, might not be the same as the Madonna. As with Emily's fainting, Ambrosio' seduction suggests that perceivers must actively interpret the images they encounter if they want to develop productive knowledge of the world. Thus, as they move into the aesthetic regime, Gothic novels begin to distinguish historiographically not just between the superstitious and the skeptical or the idolatrous and the rational but also between good readers who retain interpretive control over images and bad readers who give images power over themselves.

The climax of *The Italian* stages this distinction between good readers and bad readers as the Inquisition presses Vivaldi to share second-hand information and inferences while the young man refuses to authorize any knowledge he has not formed from first-hand experience. If Vivaldi allowed the inquisitors to bully him into authorizing the knowledge Nicola gave him, Vivaldi would be authorizing Nicola's interpretation of the relationship between Schedoni and Ansaldo as well. In other words, he would be accepting and transmitting a pre-codified image of Schedoni as a jealous lover and murdering brother. Since this is exactly what the Inquisition, one of the most barbarically Gothic institutions in British literature, wants Vivaldi to do, it is aligned with unenlightened bad reading by default.

By refusing to authorize Nicola's information, Vivaldi prompts his inquisitors to seek out first-hand accounts. In order to do so, they must, eventually, allow Vivaldi to identify Nicola as his informant, Nicola to name Ansaldo as Schedoni's confessor, Ansaldo to cite the Count di Bruno as a murderer, and Schedoni to label Nicola a malicious revenger. With all four men serving as witnesses in this way and responding to each other's claims with contradictory assertions, the inquisitors begin to search for a means of discerning validity within the competing statements. Thus, throughout the scene, the title of "accuser" is given to Nicola, instead of remaining anonymous, the inquisitors press the witnesses to identify each other, not just themselves, and the Vicar-general deems their accusations "not proofs, but assertions" (406). Ultimately, the scene affirms Vivaldi's decision while exposing the difficulty of attempting to engage a plurality of voices without any method of reconciling individuals' claims into communal knowledge.

By putting individual claims in competition with one another, *The Italian*

introduces one of the problems that will dominate legal, scientific, and artistic struggles

in the following century. In this regard, it builds upon the work done by earlier Gothic

texts to establish the value and limitations of an individual's knowledge. While *Udolpho*

and *The Monk* explore how individuals create good or bad knowledge in isolation, as well

as the factors like superstition and lust that influence their knowledge-creation process,

The Italian begins to consider how knowledge is created within social contexts. The

absence of documents from the exchange in *The Italian* stands out, especially in contrast

to their prominence in *Udolpho* and *The Monk*, and indicates that, without an authorized

form, they threaten to become part of the problem with reconciling multiple voices.[33]

iii. Late Gothic

Twenty years after the publication of *The Italian*, the popularity of the Gothic

genre was in decline. Yet, even as authors abandoned the trappings of continental

antiquity in favor of more contemporary tales, writers interested in exploring the powers

and limitations of perception continued to utilize Gothic imagery, which offered

recognizable challenges to the relationship between perception, reason, and knowledge,

as focal points for their inquests. These inquests became even more focused on the

isolated readers who confronted perplexing and terrifying images, often in the forms of

documents. In *Northanger Abbey* (1816) and *Frankenstein* (1818), Jane Austen and Mary

Shelley not only address Radcliffe's influence on the field of fiction as a whole but also

rise to the challenge that Radcliffe posed in *The Italian*. Whereas *The Italian* uses the

Inquisition as a device that forces conflicting perspectives to seek resolution by collating

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[33] The following chapters explore the ways in which document-images can introduce new voices into a text as well as the ways in which a document's form can help reconcile a plurality of voices.

the information with the greatest empirical authority, *Northanger Abbey* and *Frankenstein*
reveal how communication can break down when each party maintains faith in different
sources of epistemological authority. In particular, the Late Gothic novels focus on how
characters create knowledge from documents, especially novels and history books, and
how the range of interpretive possibilities enables them to create knowledge that conflicts
with established beliefs.

By portraying, and in some ways enacting, the breakdown of communication,
these early nineteenth-century novels present a new response to the changing status of the
image. While the Gothic novels of the 1790s express anxiety about the status of images
by overcompensating with their attempts at codification, both *Northanger Abbey* and
Frankenstein adopt narrative strategies well suited to expose not only the severe
limitations of eighteenth-century codifications but also their oftentimes dangerous social
implications. Austen's coy narrator constantly undercuts the kinds of expectations that
fueled earlier Gothic fiction with a keen satiric edge, and Shelley's complex, layered, and
competing narratives leave readers without a stable authoritative voice. Furthermore, both
novels emphasize the freedom of interpretation in the aesthetic regime by portraying
scenes in which their principle characters encounter document-images as they read
popular books and confront the same interpretive questions that their readers must
address. In these portraits, Catherine Moreland and the creature are initially cast as naïve
newcomers encountering civilization for the first time. Although neither novel depicts the
kind of completely blank slate described by Locke, both novels draw attention to their
protagonists' ignorance. The beginning of *Northanger Abbey* details Cather's deficiencies
as a heroine by describing all of the things she has not learned or experienced.

Frankenstein is even more explicit about the creature's initial ignorance when it describes his early inability to discern between his senses. As ignorant newcomers to their respective civilizations, Catherine and the creature serve as ideal figures for questioning the various factors that mediate other characters' perceptions.

One of the ways in which the novels portray their protagonists as ignorant is by having the narrator, the protagonists, and other characters treat the knowledge they do possess as natural, rather than something they developed through experience. Examining the facets of Catherine and the creature that narrators and the characters themselves accept as "natural" or "inherent" presents an additional layer of insight into the freedom and limitations of reading in the aesthetic regime. Although both novels abandon authoritative, codified expressions and suggest that readers at large must learn to find meaning in images on their own, neither story suggests that readers can develop these meanings freely. Instead, both stories indicate that readers are often unaware of the most influential forces shaping their interpretations. Viewing Catherine as ignorant requires treating her early education into patriarchal society as natural. Likewise, viewing the creature as a blank slate requires naturalizing his compulsion toward socialization altogether.

Thus, *Northanger Abbey* and *Frankenstein* respond to the changing status of the image at three levels. First, at the structural level, they abandon authoritative attempts to codify expressions. Second, within the stories, they portray characters whose seemingly naïve encounters with uncodified document-images reflect the experiences of readers in the aesthetic regime. Third, since they are unable or unwilling to portray their characters

as completely ignorant, the novels hint at the deeper power structures, such as patriarchy, that influence reading.

Although both novels draw on Gothic tropes and feature naïve protagonists, *Northanger Abbey* and *Frankenstein* appear almost completely unrelated in their premises and narrative structures. In the preface to the 1818 edition, *Frankenstein* establishes itself as a work of speculative fiction founded on the theories of "Dr. [Erasmus] Darwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany" (Shelley 3). Although the preface admits that the novel was inspired by German ghost stories and rests on a "supernatural occurrence," it rejects the idea of relying upon a "series of supernatural terrors" (4, 3). Overall, the preface attempts to distance the novel from the Gothic novels of the 1790s, which oftentimes incorporated several stories of terror and connected them with the thinnest thread of extraordinary circumstances. Far from adhering to the classical principles of unity favored by Walpole, the novels of Radcliffe and Lewis give seemingly every character, manor, and castle a history infused with terrifying specters, explicable or not. In this way, their sprawling narratives verged on becoming geographically and temporally expansive anthologies of terror.

In contrast, *Northanger Abbey* immediately establishes itself as an overt satire of Gothic and sentimental fiction with its opening line: "No one who had ever seen Catherine Moreland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be a heroine" (Austen 37). The next few pages detail Catherine's deficiencies as a heroine—her stable family and bustling household, her lack of fine accomplishments or interest in the arts, her propensity for active, outdoor play, and her failure to catch the attention of any "amiable youth who could call forth her sensibility" (41). In addition to sketching

Catherine's character, these pages demonstrate how conventional Gothic and sentimental fiction had become by the start of the nineteenth century. The defensiveness that shapes the preface to *Frankenstein* probably stems in part from this slide into conventionality as well.

Although the satire in the first few pages is not restricted to Gothic fiction, the passion for Gothic novels that Catherine develops in Bath accentuates the relationship between Austen's story and Radcliffe's and Lewis's novels. Whereas *Frankenstein*'s references to Gothic fiction downplay its importance and influence, *Northanger Abbey* plays with the tension between the popularity of Gothic novels and their poor reputation.[34] Henry Tilney's confession that not only has he read novels but he has read the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe with "great pleasure" lightheartedly undercuts the notion, implicitly upheld by the preface to *Frankenstein* and paradoxically upheld by the characteristics of most Gothic heroes and heroines, that "gentlemen read better books" (120). Although critics have often responded to Catherine as a young woman seduced into delusions by Gothic novels and correspondingly read *Northanger Abbey* as a critique of Gothic excesses,[35] the novel's generally affectionate treatment of Gothic fiction—after all, the respectable Tilneys are just as fond of Radcliffe's novels as Isabella—suggests that it offers a stronger critique of poor readers than poor reading material. As the story unfolds and Catherine develops as a character, the novel's critique appears more focused on the forces and circumstances that produce bad readers than the readers themselves.

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[34] In this regard, within their first few pages, both novels participate in the strategic dissociation from conventional Gothic novels that Gamer describes as characteristic of Late Gothic fiction.

[35] Waldo Glock explicitly refers to Catherine's "Gothic delusions."

In addition to seemingly unrelated premises as speculative fiction and Gothic satire respectively, *Frankenstein* and *Northanger Abbey* also rely on different forms of narration. *Frankenstein* conveys its tale of woe through a series of embedded narratives competing for legitimacy. Walton's letter to his sister, Mrs. Saville, contains Frankenstein's story, which contains the creature's tale, which contains the history of the De Laceys. Walton's letter also recounts his face-to-face conversation with the creature after Frankenstein's death. This conversation disrupts the unified, nesting dolls structure offered by Mrs. Saville – Walton – Frankenstein – the creature – the De Laceys. By disrupting the unified structure of containment, the creature's conversation with Walton contributes to the difficulty of identifying an authoritative point of view within the novel. By confronting Walton with his humanity directly, the creature undermines Frankenstein's attempts to portray him as fiendish. Without the creature's confrontation with Walton, the novel would potentially create a hierarchy of viewpoints that validated Walton's faith in Frankenstein.

In contrast, Austen's narrator within *Northanger Abbey* relates the novel's events with a unified voice, but its winking, satiric tone keeps the novel's critique of reading Gothic fiction playfully ambivalent. Although the novel's opening pages satirize some of Gothic and sentimental fiction's more stale conventions, its conclusion suggests that some conventions are more troubling and pervasive than the trends that dominate popular fiction. In particular, the narrator's presentation of the novel's ostensible moral—"I leave it to be settled by whomsoever it may concern, whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience"—opens up several layers of critique (Austen 240). Most overtly, the closing words of the novel

suggest that the patriarchal conventions which enable "parental tyranny" are less desirable than anything that might promote filial disobedience, including misunderstandings perpetuated by too much Gothic fiction.

Yet, the novel's closing sentiment is only a denunciation of the patriarchal conventions that promote parental tyranny if readers focus on Henry and Eleanor, who displease their avaricious father by pursuing disadvantageous matches, rather than Catherine, whose parents never develop serious expectations for her or chastise her after General Tilney sends her away from Northanger Abbey.[36] Unlike Henry and Eleanor, Catherine does not face her greatest challenge when she incites the General's displeasure; she encounters the greatest difficulties when she disagrees with or disappoints Henry. On three occasions, Catherine risks Henry's displeasure—when she falls for John Thorpe's ploy to steal her away from her plans with the Tilneys, when she suggests that General Tilney was complicit in his wife's death, and when she accuses Captain Tilney of being just as much of a schemer as Isabella. On these occasions, Catherine expresses her dismay about the Thorpe siblings' deceits and her own misunderstandings. Since the novel focuses more on Catherine's relationship with Henry than Henry's and Eleanor's relationships with their father, Catherine's growth from occasion to occasion reveals the importance of becoming a good reader within the novel.

Catherine's dismay on the occasions when she displeases Henry has fueled critical interpretations of Catherine as a naïve and delusional girl who must be educated by the more experienced and rational gentleman. For example, Levine proposes in "Translating the Monstrous: *Northanger Abbey*" that Austen's satire belongs among the "novel[s] of

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[36] Mrs. Morland dismisses the affair with a congenial "it is no matter now; Catherine is safe at home, and our comfort does not depend upon General Tilney" (226).

disenchantment," a category which he believes is central to the novel tradition (337). He

argues that such novels perform a normalizing function for society by depicting heroes

and heroines "who must learn to reject youthful illusions in order to accept a less

romantic, a more tediously quotidian reality" (337). In Levine's analysis, Catherine's

"youthful illusions" stem from her encounters with Gothic romances and Henry Tilney

serves as Austen's authorial stand-in. Because Levine reads Henry as Austen's stand-in,

he accepts the normalizing function of disenchantment as a moral condition for Catherine

and suggests that Austen depicts social order as genuinely superior to personal desire, not

just more powerful. Although he grants that the social order's victory remains

complicated in light of the satire's transgressive qualities, his account of the novel

indicates that it supports a status quo in which the General and his eldest son must be

read as immoral aberrations that enable Catherine's rise in social status (345).

Yet, when readers recognize that all three of the male Tilneys exist on the same

spectrum of authoritarian patriarchal figures as Claudia Johnson does in *Jane Austen:*

Women, Politics, and the Novel, then Catherine's youthful illusions and Henry's role in

her disenchantment both become more complicated. At the same time, the role of Gothic

literature and the quality of Catherine's reading skills become more important. Johnson

contends that far from being aberrations, the General and the Captain are just

exceptionally vivid examples in Austen's pattern of depicting "guardians of national,

domestic, and even religious authority as socially destabilizing figures" in a "distinctively

progressive way" (47). Within this framework, Johnson suggests that, rather than

unequivocally requiring disenchantment from Gothic illusions, Catherine could benefit

from the lessons and warnings about the status quo that the Gothic offers, once she is able

to discern between the "stock gothic *machinery*" and the "central gothic *figure*, the tyrannical father" (35). Unlike the thunderstorms, manuscripts, and bewildering floor plans, the figure of the tyrannical father, played by General Tilney in this case, is a genuine threat, and Henry's defense of, first, his brother and, then, his father—as well as his generally condescending behavior toward Catherine—contribute to the double standards and oppressive expectations of a patriarchal culture.

Thus, in order to enter into a happy marriage at the end of the novel, Catherine must develop the skills, especially the interpretive skills, necessary to maintain her own subjectivity in the face of Henry's greater social power,[37] which he has demonstrated a willingness to wield in support of causes that benefit neither Catherine nor a morally superior social order. In this regard, the sequence of conflicts between Catherine and Henry illustrates a progressive shift in their relationship. When John Thorpe deceives Catherine into missing her walk with the Tilneys, she recognizes that she was the victim, not the transgressor, and successfully expresses as much to Henry and Eleanor. Yet, when she recognizes that Henry doubted her character more than his sister, she does not object to his lack of generosity. Instead, she tacitly accepts his ire as legitimate. In contrast, when Captain Tilney seduces Isabella and contributes to the dissolution of Isabella's engagement with Catherine's brother, James, Catherine resists Henry's argument that his brother's actions should be easier to pardon than Isabella's. Instead, she dismisses Henry's faulty argument that, if Isabella had been "a very different creature," then Captain Tilney would have given her a "very different treatment"[38] by asserting "It is

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[37] Not only is Henry male, he is also older, wealthier, and more educated than Catherine.

[38] Henry's logic in this argument runs perilously close to the basis for drowning young women in order to determine whether or not they are witches because the kind of "creature" Isabella was could not be

very right that you should stand by your brother" and then pushing Henry to compliment

her "out of further bitterness" (213). As a mark of her growth since she tacitly accepted

Henry's ire after the Blaize Castle outing, Catherine's response indicates that she has

stopped finding that it is "no effort" to "believe that Henry Tilney could never be wrong"

(128).

The principle source of the shift in Catherine's character between the two

incidents is also the novel's most dramatic, and simultaneously most comedic,

engagement with the Gothic, when Catherine confesses her suspicion that the General

murdered his wife to Henry and Henry scolds her about her overactive imagination. In

order to understand how Catherine becomes more confident and self-possessed after this

scolding instead of internalizing her initial shame, disappointment, and misery, it is

important to look closely at how Catherine interprets documented information throughout

the novel. Despite her comically exaggerated reactions, Catherine consistently

understands the world and its representations better than other characters. For example,

when she discusses history with Henry, she insightfully explains why she is not fond of it:

> I read it a little as a duty, but it tells me nothing that does not either vex or weary
>
> me. The quarrels of popes and kings, with wars or pestilences, in every page; the
>
> men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all it is very tiresome: and
>
> yet I often think it odd that it should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be
>
> invention. The speeches that are put into the heroes' mouths, their thoughts and
>
> designs the chief of all this must be invention, and invention is what delights me
>
> in other books (122).

determined until she responded to Frederick's flirtations. If she had James and Catherine fooled, there is no
substantial reason for believing that Frederick could have identified her as a heartless schemer before he
began to woo her that does not implicate him as well.

In this passage, Catherine demonstrates that she is a much more astute reader than most critics have credited her. Not only does she implicitly recognize that the classist and sexist dimensions of historiography exclude her from the intended audience of historical texts, she identifies the role that "invention" plays in historical writing and its connection to "invention" in fiction writing. By identifying the ties between history and fiction, Catherine prepares herself for recognizing the role of invention in other facets of social life as well.

In contrast, when Henry famously dismisses Catherine's fears that his father may be a Gothic monster by exhorting her to remember the "country and age" in which they live, that they are English and Protestant, he asks her a sequence of questions that betrays his own reliance on codified expressions rather than personal interpretation:

> Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing; where every man is surrounded by a neighborhood of voluntary spies, and where roads and newspapers lay everything open? (196).

Since he does not recognize the role that "invention" plays in the image of the English as a peaceable, enlightened people, Henry accepts the codified images given to him by the institutions responsible for the inventing—the schools, the legal bodies, the newspapers, and the history books—without reservations.[39] In other words, Henry continues to act as

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[39] Ironically, Henry's rhetoric exposes his own anxiety by preventing him from associating an English, Christian identity with any kind of terror; why would every neighborhood need a host of spies if being English and Christian was enough to guarantee domestic tranquility? Within its historical moment, as revolutions in France and the American colonies revealed that being Christian, even being English, is not enough to deter violence and terror, these anxieties are even more transparent.

a reader in the representative regime,[40] in part, because the institutions reproducing the codified expressions also maintain Henry's social advantages, while Catherine acts as a reader in the aesthetic regime, in part, because the codified expressions available to her—that John Thorpe is a pleasant young man, that General Tilney is a respectable gentleman, and that there is nothing for women to fear in a Christian nation—do not cohere with her experiences.

Contrary to what most of the other characters and many contemporary critics believe, Catherine does not suffer from a lack of sense or an inability to understand what actions, statements, dispositions, conventions, or documents signify. However, she struggles with articulating what she understands and tends to utilize the most readily available language. Hence, when she senses that the General is a cruel, ambitious man, she paints a picture of him as a Gothic villain. Likewise, when Catherine listens to John Thorpe's boasts, she recognizes that he is an insufferable braggart (86). Yet, having been assured by "such high authority" as Isabella and James that "his manners would recommend him to all her sex," she cannot explain why she distrusts "his powers of giving universal pleasure" (87). While the immediate targets of Austen's satire in these passages may be Catherine's credulity and the social conventions for describing siblings and friends, Catherine's dilemma also illuminates the fact that her early education failed to furnish her with a reliably communicable means of evaluating someone's character, especially a man's character. Her understanding of "what men ought to be" remains "unfixed" because the patriarchal institutions of power represented by the schools, legal

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[40] Henry's assessment of Radcliffe's works is consistent with readings within the representative regime. He notes that his hair stood on end as he read *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, but does not express any interest in the novel's social implications (120). In this way, he evaluates the novel according to its ability to convey a codified expression of terror.

bodies, newspapers, and history books maintain themselves by keeping women like Catherine "enchanted."

Catherine's most sustained reflection on the virtues of Radcliffe's works demonstrates how reading Gothic novels within the aesthetic regime helps disenchant her from the patriarchal assumptions that prevent her from recognizing Henry's faults:

> Charming as were all Mrs Radcliffe's work, [. . .] it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the midland counties of England, was to be looked for [. . .]. Among the Alps and Pyrenees, perhaps, there were no mixed characters. There, such as were not as spotless as an angel, might have the dispositions of a fiend. But in England it was not so; among the English, she believed, in their hearts and habits, there was a general though unequal mixture of good and bad. Upon this conviction, she would not be surprised if even in Henry and Eleanor Tilney, some slight imperfection might hereafter appear; and upon this conviction she need not fear to acknowledge some actual specks of in the character of their father, who, [. . .], she did believe, upon serious consideration, to be not perfectly amiable (197-8).

Although this passage begins with Catherine accepting that Radcliffe's works do not accurately depict "human nature" as it exists in central England, its conclusion resembles Mighall's historiography hypothesis about Gothic literature. After she stops trying to match Radcliffe's descriptions with English characters, Catherine develops a better understanding of the English character by considering the contrast. Indeed, Catherine's interpretation goes a step beyond Mighall's broadest conclusion. While Mighall suggests that Gothic novels made England seem more enlightened than southern Europe,

Catherine recognizes that it may be more complicated as well as more enlightened. If England does not possess as many fiends as "the Alps and Pyrenees," it may not possess any "spotless" angels either. Prior to reading Gothic novels, Catherine may not have been prepared to accuse General Tilney of murdering his wife, but she certainly would not have been prepared to recognize that virtuous and decent people like Henry and Eleanor may still have "some slight imperfection."

In the end, Catherine forms her conclusions by synthesizing (or "harmonizing" as Ranciere might say) her interpretations of Gothic novels with her experiences in Bath and at Northanger Abbey. Despite Henry's grand speech about England's virtues, Catherine cannot relinquish what her experiences suggest about General Tilney's "not perfectly amiable" character. As a result, she develops the ability to recognize Henry's faults, an ability that she employs almost immediately when Henry defends his brother. Later, when Henry follows her to Fullerton to ask for her hand in marriage and explain his father's abrupt dismissal of her from Northanger Abbey, he "blushe[s] for the narrow-minded counsel which he was obliged to expose" in relating the General's true pecuniary interest, and subsequent lack of interest, in Catherine (236). Henry's unmanly "blush" highlights how this scene functions as a reversal of the scene at the theater in which Catherine apologized for missing their walk. In both scenes, one character must apologize to another due to the duplicity of a third party. Yet, in the first scene, only Henry's pride is vindicated, while at the conclusion of the novel, Catherine feels vindicated in her interpretation of the General's "character" and "cruelty," an interpretation that draws upon Catherine's first-hand encounters with the General, the information provided by Henry and Eleanor, and a worldview informed by Gothic literature (236).

Frankenstein inverts Catherine's story, in which a typical girl encounters Gothic literature, when it portrays a Gothic monster[41] encountering documents in the form of traditional literature. Despite this inversion, the creature and Catherine resemble one another as readers because both of them reconcile their readings with their experiences through trial and error. Despite telling Frankenstein that he "can hardly describe" the effects of discovering Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a volume of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, and Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*, the creature goes on to provide a detailed reflection on each work. Ultimately, the creature's reflections reveal more about his thoughts and feelings than the works themselves, and when the creature employs his preternatural eloquence to harmonize his life with his unconventional interpretations of a serendipitous literary sampling, he reveals how his lack of society has shaped his unique perspective in ways that he does not fully understand. While the creature's initial interpretations reflect his nearly perfect naïve empiricism, his subsequent actions demonstrate that what he really exposes by combining his interpretations and his experiences is that he can neither appreciate life nor understand himself in isolation. This revelation, in turn, undercuts the elevation of the isolated, neutral observer and thinker within most philosophical traditions, including empiricism. Thus, the creature's tragic story of annihilation continues to invert Catherine's comedic story of social rejuvenation by revealing how his isolated interpretations contribute to resentment and violence while her interpretations and social connections check one another.

As with *Northanger Abbey*, *Frankenstein* does not explicitly restrict how the creature's reading list should be interpreted, how his interpretations compare with more

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[41] By referring to a "Gothic monster" here, I am not suggesting that the creature in *Frankenstein* is a monster; rather, I am suggesting that Shelley takes advantage of a popular trope, the Gothic monster, in order to create and subsequently subvert expectations.

codified interpretations, or how exactly his interpretations influence his subsequent actions. As with Catherine, the creature seems to develop both unrealistic fantasies and a deeper understanding about humanity from his literary encounters. The chief difference between the two characters' relationships with literature stems from their social situations. While Catherine is marginalized within an established patriarchal system, the creature's place outside of established society leaves him both radically marginalized and radically free. As a result, where Catherine must find the resources to maintain her own agency within an oppressive system, the creature tries to find a way to enter society, and eventually create a society of his own, by struggling to understand the sources of social discord that contribute to his isolation and vindictive bitterness.

In his analysis of the relationship between *Frankenstein* and the realist tradition, Levine associates the novel's depiction of social discord with the problem of evil: "As we shall see, the novel provides a Godwinian explanation for the monster's actual evil, but the underlying structure of the book implies an irrational and dangerous world, which cannot be comprehended by rational theory and which is strained with enormous energies latent and repressed" (24). Levine's arguments focus on Frankenstein's virtues and faults as a realist hero whose genius and ambition come into conflict with novel's traditionally realist "moral ideals" of "compromise, moderation, commitment to family and community" in ways that produce ambivalence throughout the novel, which is never fully prepared to condemn his ostensible greatness (24). Yet, his argument that Frankenstein's story resembles other stories in which youthful ambitions and fantasies are, or ought to be, curbed by commitment to a communal good, including Catherine's story, is applicable to the creature as well. While Frankenstein must learn that unlimited power over creation

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carries equal potential for destruction, his creature must learn that his powers of reason cannot explain everything or reveal a path to social acceptance.

As they proceed toward learning, though not necessarily accepting these mutual lessons, Frankenstein and his creature resemble Henry and Catherine. Like Henry, Frankenstein is often blinded by his own privilege. Just as Henry's view of English society is incompatible with Catherine's perception of his father's cruelty and his brother's faults, Frankenstein's understanding of what marks someone as civilized is incompatible with the creature's grotesqueries, and as a result, he cannot accept the creature's eloquent pleas, which would normally denote its humanity.[42] Like Catherine, the creature cobbles together an understanding of society from uneven sources, and like the young woman, he often perceives more than he can articulate. In particular, the creature struggles to account for his violent impulses. After killing William with the hope of plunging Frankenstein into a "desolation" similar to his own and reading the child's portrait of Elizabeth as a reminder of the world's contempt for him, the creature feels "transported" with so much rage that he proclaims it a "wonder that at that moment, instead of venting [his] sensations in exclamations and agony, [he] did not rush among mankind, and perish in the attempt to destroy them" (Shelley 117-8). The creature's sense of wonder in this instance highlights his inability to understand exactly why he directs his bitterness, rage, and despair into violence against his creator instead of himself. In other words, why does he choose the example offered by Satan over the example offered by Werther? Just as her education and society do not prepare Catherine to articulate her real criticisms of John Thorpe and General Tilney, the creature's "Godwinian naiveté" cannot

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[42]Criscillia Benford elaborates upon the tension surrounding the creature's eloquence in "'Listen to my tale': Multilevel Structure, Narrative Sense Making, and the Inassimilable in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*."

account for "the power of irrational energies which he himself enacts" (Levine 25).

Hence, the creature's literary interpretations, which emphasize the many thoughts,

feelings, and images that his "unformed" mind only "party understood," do just as much

to expose the creature's unexplained impulses as to explain his view of the world (Shelley

104).

For example, the creature cannot grasp the conventionally tragic depiction of

Werther's unmourned and unhallowed grave because his place outside of society prevents

him from interpreting the importance of mourning rituals. Instead, in his reflections on

Goethe's popular and influential novel, the solitary creature blends the text with his own

experiences by generalizing Werther's unrequited love into any affection which takes for

its "object something out of self" (Shelley 103). Although he does not "precisely

[understand]" why he weeps for the hero's extinction, the creature still develops

connections between Werther's "sentiments and feelings" and his own experiences (103).

Implicitly, the creature interprets a similarity between his feelings about the De Laceys

and Werther's feelings about Charlotte on the basis of his unnuanced understanding of

"domestic manners" (103). Likewise, he sees a similarity between "the wants which were

forever alive in [his] own bosom" and Werther's dissatisfaction. Yet, the creature

ultimately cannot read the novel the way other people do because he is "dependent on

none, and related to none" (104).

The creature's lack of society continues to influence his literary reflections when

he interprets Plutarch's paeans on "virtue" and "vice" as the terms relate to "pleasure and

pain alone" (104). "Perfectly unacquainted with towns, and large assemblages of men"

and possessing only a "very confused knowledge of kingdoms," the creature cannot

develop a conventional understanding of Plutarch's biographies. For example, he glosses over Romulus's primary achievement, the construction of Rome, and associates the emperor with "a young soldier, burning for glory and slaughter" (104). As a result, he favors "peaceable, law-givers" whose compassionate intentions seem more consistent with his understanding of the benevolent De Laceys.

As isolated reflections, the creature's interpretations of Plutarch's biographies may indict conventional readings and the atrocities they condone in the names of honor, glory, and civilization. The creature's innocent perspective, ostensibly untainted by social conditioning, allows him to recognize the inexcusable brutalities in history that English schoolchildren have unconsciously learned to gloss over as essential parts of an almost teleological narrative of British destiny. In other words, to the extent that readers sympathize with the creature, they are seemingly invited to reconsider the concepts of virtue and vice and question the various classist and imperialist systems that promoting violence throughout Europe.

However, the creature's praise for the law-givers in Plutarch's biographies, and the implicit criticisms that it conveys, is complicated by the readers' awareness of his own manipulation of a broken legal system. By framing Justine for William's murder, the creature exposes not only that his bitter experiences with the De Laceys have eroded his faith in law-givers but also that his original associations between virtue, vice, pleasure, and pain are essentially meaningless. As soon as the creature takes pleasure in causing Frankenstein and his family pain, he demonstrates why legal systems usually rely on more complex conceptions of the communal good, even if those conceptions can be perverted in disastrous ways. Yet, without a community of his own, the creature does not

come to this conclusion. Instead, he draws upon his incomplete understanding of virtue, vice, civilization, and justice to defend his horrific actions against his creator. By eloquently defending his actions, the creature reveals how the determined application of reason, guided by only the broadest principles, can be used to justify almost any atrocity.

In this regard, the creature's troubling acts of self-justification suggest that there is more to the connection he interprets between himself and Milton's Satan than their mutual sense of "envy" (105). If *Frankenstein* hints that the origin of evil in society is tied to the "irrational energies"—Satan's pride, Frankenstein's ambition, and the creature's rage—that moral philosophers and realist novels alike attempt to dismiss in favor of moderation, compromise, and reasoned discourse, then it also suggests that the persistence of evil is tied to the corresponding power of rationalization. Satan, Frankenstein, and the creature share the ability to justify their own actions and dismiss opposing viewpoints without actually acknowledging their underlying motivations. Satan can argue against God's inequities without acknowledging his own envy. Frankenstein can justify his enthusiasm for creating a "new species that would bless [him] as its creator and source" without acknowledging his own underlying fears,[43] and the creature can justify his wrath against the creator that abandoned him without acknowledging sadistic impulses (36). In each case, the ability to rationalize their behaviors enables a lack of deeper self-reflection.

By accepting the range of interpretative possibilities within the aesthetic regime, *Northanger Abbey* and *Frankenstein* reveal new facets of, and possibilities for, reading ability while remaining committed to the Gothic project of exploring how characters

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[43] The novel offers multiple indications that Frankenstein fears the feminine, mortality, and human finitude, all of which he could hope to ameliorate by perpetuating himself through his own power alone.

respond to uncertainty. In doing so, they build upon the work of the eighteenth-century Gothic texts that created terror and tragedy out of readings shaped by characters' superstitions, greed, and lust. These early nineteenth-century novels illuminate a complex reading process, in which characters interpretations belong in a web of communication, education, socialization, and feelings. Within this web, a character's interpretations may influence both her beliefs and how she articulates her thoughts, but they may not always do so simultaneously. An interpretation may create a thought that a character cannot articulate, or it may provide new language for expressing a preexisting belief. Ultimately, these works expose the risks of interpreting the world in isolation and the difficulties of merging interpretations in a world with unevenly distributed authority. These new problems form the basis for Gothic works in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, in which characters struggle as much to communicate their extraordinary experiences as they do to understand them and the rise of expertise creates a new form of social authority.

<div align="center">iv. Conclusion</div>

From its inception, through the height of its popularity, and into its dissolution, the Gothic genre featured characters interacting with document-images. These interactions were part of the genre's exploration of how individuals process experiences into knowledge, especially when those experiences are extraordinary. Because the presence of document-images in Gothic fiction was so persistent that the trope of the discovered manuscript was both "ridiculed and valorized in several later gothic (or antigothic) novels," the changes in the roles that document-images play within Gothic texts are indicative of both changes in Gothic fiction and changes in popular

epistemology as the population became more literate and the space for individual interpretations grew (Hoeveler, 80).

Early Gothic fiction, especially *The Castle of Otranto*, relied on the codification of images within the representative regime to establish that some images were better representations of objects than others. In particular, *The Castle of Otranto* treats its document-images as legitimate representations of objects in the material world while treating its images of supernatural occurrences as representations of terror, rather than material objects. This distinction enabled Walpole's novel to satirize an artistic regime that did not distinguish between images and the things they represent by aligning supernatural portents with the poor readers of the middle ages and written records with the more enlightened readers of the eighteenth century.

Yet, as the Gothic genre grew in popularity throughout the eighteenth century, the stable codifications that made Walpole's satire possible began to dissolve within a larger pool of readers, a pool that began to resist top-down standards for what constituted "art" and how it should be interpreted. In response, authors like Radcliffe and Lewis began to reinforce the codifications that their images required to express their concepts of terror and lust. In order to reinforce these codifications, both authors portrayed characters interacting with document-images in both appropriate and inappropriate ways and described the consequences of their errors. While this strategy may have temporarily sustained the codification of some expressions, it also reflects the anxiety that their dissolution was causing.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Gothic texts seemed less invested in reinforcing the fading codifications than in continuing the exploration of uncodified,

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individual interpretations that Radcliffe and Lewis initiated but intentionally cut off. Hence, novels like *Frankenstein* and *Northanger Abbey* devote more space to portraying the thoughts and feelings that their characters develop in response to their sustained interactions with document-images, especially novels and historical texts. Both Frankenstein's creation and Catherine Moreland develop unconventional thoughts about various aspects of history, society, and the law as they filter their experiences in the world through their encounters with documents. As they articulate, and act upon, these thoughts, their respective stories alternate between vindicating their views and revealing how those views can contribute to poor communication, isolation, conflict, and self-destruction.

Overall, Gothic fiction prior to the Victorian era evolved in response to simultaneous increases in the democratization of reading and the role of empirical reasoning in everyday life. As authors struggled to convey ideas without relying on images as codified expressions, individuals struggled to convey the knowledge they formed through independent experiences with material objects. When institutions of power dealing with the law, medicine, science, and journalism began to develop rhetorical standards of conveying empirical information within specific fields of discourse, writers began to experiment with these standards to expand the range of information that could be conveyed through fiction. As the following chapters demonstrate, beginning with the third chapter's analysis of legal rhetoric in *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas*, many writers in the Victorian era used Gothic tropes alongside formal rhetoric adopted from various forms of discourse in order to put pressure on the two-way relationship of knowledge and rhetoric and expose the ways in which rhetoric can influence experiences.

CHAPTER III

CURSED LEGACIES AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL AUTHORITY IN *JANE EYRE* AND

UNCLE SILAS

"It is always more satisfactory to see important points written down, fairly committed to

*black and white" – St. John Rivers (*Jane Eyre*, 381)*

Jane Eyre and *Uncle Silas* both portray a young woman's struggle to obtain

autonomy over her body, her beliefs, and her fortune, and critics have read both stories as

overt parables about various aspects of women's lives in the nineteenth century. They

have been read as parables about psychological maturation,[44] sexual awakening, religious

transformation,[45] and colonial grievances.[46] Regardless of their differing, though

commonly overlapping or intersecting emphases, all of these readings share the

understanding that each novel features a socially disadvantaged figure who must

overcome a series of symbolically significant obstacles in order to obtain some kind of

cultural authority and personal fulfillment. These readings consistently focus on how

each novel's narrative trajectory follows the redistribution of power from its traditional,

and inevitably corrupt, possessors to the protagonist, whose trials have prepared her to

wield her newfound power more justly. More concretely, Jane Eyre and Maud Ruthyn

begin their trials as young, female, impoverished orphans, and each of these

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[44] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar draw upon psychoanalysis to explicate Jane's quest toward psycho-sexual maturity in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress" from *Madwoman in the Attic*.

[45] In *The Brontës and Religion*, Marianne Thormählen describes the centrality of transgression, penitence, and redemption within *Jane Eyre* and contends that Jane and Rochester can only come together at the end of the novel because they have first achieved spiritual and religious harmony. In "The Numinous in Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* and Robert Aickman's *The Late Breakfasters*," Gary William Crawford interprets Maud's travails in *Uncle Silas* as an extended crisis of faith that concludes in her decision to embrace Swedenborgian theology.

[46] Ann Gaylin argues in "The Gothic Properties of *Uncle Silas*" that Silas, as a corrupt manager of Maud's estates, represents the English colonizers of Ireland who stripped the land and threatened the rightful inhabitants.

characteristics places them at a disadvantage within their patriarchal, and particularly

patrilineal, societies. Their stories end when they have enough experience to fend for

themselves, when they have created families for themselves, including offspring that will

not suffer as orphans and husbands who ostensibly respect their wishes, and when they

have inherited substantial wealth.

   While acquiring experience, families, and wealth certainly enable Jane and Maud

to influence others and actualize their plans, this chapter contends that the novels frame

their heroines' journeys as primarily epistemological struggles, and their conclusions

emphasize the validation of each narrator's knowledge, rather than the realization of their

ambitions. In both novels, an early source of conflict involves an older woman

undermining the narrator's credibility with a patriarchal figure: Mrs. Reed tells Reverend

Brocklehurst that Jane is a liar, and Madame de la Rougierre complains to Austin about

Maud's "contumacy and temper" (Le Fanu 54). Correspondingly, the climax of each

novel involves the narrator maintaining faith in her own judgment while an authority

figure pushes her to take an action that she knows is wrong: Jane responds to Rochester's

phantom summons rather than marrying St. John Rivers and serving as a missionary's

wife, and Maud flees Knowl when she accepts the evidence that Silas is evil rather than

fulfilling her father's wish to restore the family name. These corresponding scenes

indicate that Jane and Maud each must struggle to gain control over the representation of

her own thoughts. Each woman ultimately testifies to her own epistemological power by

narrating her understanding of the course of events that enabled her to acquire it.

   Ann Gaylin provides a brief account of the connections between Maud's

reclamation of her property and her reclamation of her story:

> Although authority figures in *Uncle Silas* deny Maud's version of events and
> withhold information from her, the ending of the novel confirms her account and
> makes the reacquisition of Knowl, her ancestral demesne, coincide with her
> ability to know all the secret stories that had been kept from her and to tell them
> with authority (101).

Gaylin's observation highlights that the connections, for Maud, between possessing Knowl, knowing Knowl's secrets, and telling her "version of events" are not precise causal relations; rather, they "coincide." Maud must possess Knowl in order to tell her story; however, she also must know Knowl in order to possess it. Jane's story is more diffuse than Maud's, covering about a decade and four distinct settings (five, with Ferndean), rather than just three years and two settings (only one of which is dramatically significant). As a result, the relationships between the secrets Jane uncovers, the property she inherits, and the story she tells are more complex. Nonetheless, her ability "to know all the secret stories" of the Reeds, Rochesters, and finally Eyres coincides with her inheritance of the wealth she needs to possess the home she desires, initially Marsh End and eventually Ferndean, and her ability to tell their stories "with authority."

The fact that, for both Jane and Maud, epistemological authority and material wealth coincide highlights the push within nineteenth-century culture to reify authority, even as authority was becoming more specific, individuated, and situational. Moreover, as expertise in a specific field began to supplant the broad epistemological authority that preexisting social rank offered, novelists could critique the authority offered by social rank (or at least the ways in which socially powerful individuals exercised that authority) by examining what a character who had already earned her epistemological credibility

would do with social power as well. Hence, both Jane and Maud not only acquire social

authority but also overtly break with the traditions that ultimately guarantee that power.

While Jane insists on dividing her inheritance equally between herself and her cousins,

Maud must abandon her father's project to save the family name. By doing so, both

women demonstrate greater faith in the contingent and situational knowledge they have

acquired from their own experiences than the seemingly timeless precedents offered to

them by the vanguards of tradition like St. John Rivers and Austin Ruth. Alison Milbank

connects the acts of resisting social oppression and developing epistemological authority

in her reading of *Jane Eyre* from "The Victorian Gothic in English novels and stories,

1830 – 1880":

> However, in Charlotte Bronte's fiction there is not just an interest in registering
>
> the mental effects of social repression, but an effort to escape the 'iron shroud' of
>
> mental solipsism itself. Thus, for example, Jane Eyre's fearful and violent inner
>
> drama is put at the service of an epistemology, a means by which the world
>
> beyond the self might be known (152).

Although Milbank does not further elaborate upon the details of Jane's epistemology in

her survey of nineteenth-century British Gothic, her remark draws attention to the vital

connection between social situation and epistemology. Her comment suggests that Jane

(and implicitly characters like Maud who face similar situations) must develop a new

way of knowing because the ways of knowing promoted by her culture exist to maintain

the systems of oppression that instigate her "fearful and violent inner drama."[47]

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[47] This idea is consistent with contemporary feminists arguments about "Standpoint Theory" and the "Epistemology of Ignorance." "Standpoint Theory," most famously articulated by Sandra Harding as mentioned in the Introduction, suggests that those who suffer from oppression can develop superior knowledge of the world because they must not only understand their objects of inquiry but also the

At face value, the decisions that Jane and Maud make to break with the patriarchal traditions that have previously caused them suffering may seem like mundane, or moderately exceptional, matters. However, both *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* employ Gothic tropes in different ways to validate the superiority of their heroines' subjective interpretations. Without the ancient, foreboding manors, the cold but tempting tyrants, the locked room mysteries, and most importantly the ancient curses passed along the generations through legal wills and familial propensities, Jane's and Maud's decisions may reflect a series of utilitarian arguments against a system that threatens the livelihoods of much of its population, but they would not offer the same critique of a system that perpetuates itself by inhibiting its constituents' abilities to recognize moments of crisis when they arise. Ultimately, both novels imply that their heroines' social disadvantages, combined with their educational advantages and uncommon wit, enable them to seize an image in a moment of crisis and not only establish a more satisfying present condition for themselves but also struggle against the seemingly immutable past that has been tyrannizing their lives.[48]

In order to unite the heroines' struggles against the past with their epistemological struggles to acquire authority over their own stories, both novels take advantage of the combinatory capacity of images in the aesthetic regime to create previously unavailable sentence-images out of Gothic and legal images. In turn, these new sentence-images

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structures of power that threaten to interfere with their observations. "Epistemology of Ignorance" presents the corresponding theory that the inquiries of privileged individuals suffer from their investment in maintaining their own privilege. For example, a male scientist may resist validating evidence that suggests women's brains and men's brains do not process information in significantly different ways. Or, more pertinently, Mr. Rochester may resist any evidence that suggests Bertha's behavior is a response to her circumstances (including him) and not irrevocable insanity inherited from her parents.

[48] The language of "seizing an image in a moment of crisis" comes from Walter Benjamin's "On the Concept of History," which I address in greater detail later in the Conclusion of this dissertation.

contribute to the historiographic and epistemological differences between the nineteenth-century Gothic mode and earlier Gothic literature. In particular, sentence-images combining legal documents and Gothic texts produce a new form of haunting by creating uncertainty about the absence of something or someone when its presence is felt within a scene: for example, when the rhetorical presentation of a will or legacy makes a dead relative seem as present to the readers as any of the characters actually described. While the trope of the cursed legacy has made the presence of dead relatives felt within the lives of Gothic heroines since *The Castle of Otranto*, the deployment of legal documents in the nineteenth century extended its epistemological effects. The sentence-images combining the Gothic and the legal in *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* establish a condition in which overcoming uncertainty, and thereby ending all haunting, requires the heroines to recognize, seize, and manipulate legal documents to establish epistemological authority over their own narratives.

i. Gothic and Legal Images in *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas*

The emphasis on individual readings and interpretations that played a prominent role in early nineteenth-century texts like *Northanger Abbey* and *Frankenstein* continued to create new possibilities for old Gothic tropes throughout the century. By mid-century, several authors had revisited the relationship between inheritance and legitimacy that shaped storylines in *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In *The Castle of Otranto*, the discovery of Alfonso's real will not only verifies that Theodore is the rightful ruler of Otranto but also suggests that Theodore's perspective will replace Manfred's in the more enlightened world that his ascension to power establishes. In this way, from the beginning of the Gothic genre, inheritances have served as a mechanism

for simultaneously rewarding protagonists and symbolically endorsing their views. However, in the more domestic fiction of the nineteenth century, characters are more likely to inherit a fine estate or a decent per annum than a fiefdom or a principality. As a result, nineteenth-century protagonists do not necessarily epitomize their communities, and their inheritances are less likely to convey the broad social significance of their virtues and perspectives. Instead, an inheritance offers a mid-nineteenth century Gothic protagonist the opportunity to reify her authority over her own story, especially if she recognizes the inheritance as an opportunity to contest with a past that is always trying to recreate itself in the present moment.

Jane Eyre and *Uncle Silas* exemplify this dynamic because both novels utilize three key narrative mechanisms: first, both novels derive tension from a female orphan's uncertainty about the knowledge she derives from her own experiences; second, both novels are narrated by wealthy heiresses who do not reveal their authority to readers until the ends of their stories; third, both novels feature key plot developments that revolve around inheritances that the protagonists must actively engage, rather than passively receive. In this last regard, both novels participate in the portrayal of documents as images outlined in the previous chapter. As with earlier Gothic fiction, documents in *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* serve as a device for distinguishing between the interpretative abilities of the protagonists and their antagonists. However, in these later novels, the trope of the "cursed inheritance" is detached from the sentence-images of High Gothic fiction and inserted, along with several other important Gothic tropes, into the more realistic fiction of the mid-nineteenth century. Inserting these images into *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* emphasizes the influence of the past in novels that may otherwise appear to

focus on contemporary protagonists contending with contemporary obstacles in contemporary settings.

In a reciprocal manner, inserting legal discourse into the Gothic mysteries of *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* also emphasizes the ways in which legal discourse is a form of empiricist epistemological discourse. While wills, legacies, and inheritances, cursed or not, were prevalent in eighteenth-century Gothic stories, authors rarely depicted them with detailed attention to legal accuracy. By setting stories in medieval continental Europe, Gothic novelists in Britain freed themselves to portray legal institutions in whatever manner best suited their purposes. Thus, Radcliffe portrays the Inquisition as both prepared to use torture in order to elicit a confession and relatively unconcerned with the validity of such a confession. Whether or not Radcliffe's portrayal of the Inquisition has any historical precedent is immaterial; for Radcliffe's readers, this depiction functions historiographically by separating the barbaric practices of fifteenth-century Italians from the more enlightened practices of eighteenth-century Englishmen. In contrast, although their references may be imperfect, Brontë and Le Fanu depict the law in the nineteenth century as a largely mundane, disinterested institution focused on ensuring that money travels properly from one party to another. Unto this end, legal forces in *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* exist to stipulate conditions, certify identities, and enforce contracts, including marriage contracts. However, when *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas*, along with other nineteenth-century Gothic novels, combine mundane legal images of codicils and impediments with Gothic images of unsolved murders and goblin caves, they illuminate the epistemological assumptions at work in the ostensibly disinterested forces of the law.

Furthermore, issues of legal discourse in *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* also involve lawyers. Regardless of the legal issue at stake in an eighteenth-century Gothic novel, no one ever avails herself of legal counsel (nor is it easy to imagine that anyone could). Describing the internal turmoil of Gothic protagonists as they struggle with the vagaries of the law enables their writers to highlight the subjective experiences that define the High Gothic. However, when lawyers appear in nineteenth-century fiction, it enables Gothic writers to explore how the law functions as a form of inquiry and an avenue of communication. Again, combining Gothic images with legal images produces new sentence-images, which in turn make new ideas about the Gothic and about the law available. In particular, lawyers intruding into Gothic mysteries makes it possible for Gothic stories to explore epistemological questions of proof as an aspect of knowledge distinct from awareness or realization. At the same time, when Gothic mysteries loom over the heads of lawyers, novels can portray them as empirically trained investigators, not just penny pinchers and petty bureaucrats.[49]

Two recent studies, David Punter's *Gothic Pathologies* and Bridget Marshall's *The Transatlantic Gothic Novel and the Law, 1790-1860* discuss the long and complicated relationship between Gothic literature and the law. Although Punter focuses on how the law shapes psychological hauntings in Gothic texts while Marshall examines how Gothic narratives can expose, and possibly provide an alternative to, the injustices perpetuated by legal systems, both studies emphasize the ways in which both the Gothic and the law consist of hyper-self-referential texts. Punter responds to an understanding of the law as an abstract and infinitely self-referential totality that maintains its authority

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[49] I explore this particular aspect of lawyers, which becomes even more pronounced in the late nineteenth century, in greater detail in Chapters Three and Four.

through the textual "imposition of certainty, the rhetorical summation of the absence, or the loss, of doubt" (2). In other words, by finding authority in self-referential texts, rather than contingent bodies, the law can remain pure and absolute regardless of circumstances. Thus, he describes the law as that which "will[s] away the body," and he contends that "where the law is, bodies cannot exist or plead" (3). He goes on to argue that this property helps to explain how the law operates as "a key factor in the constitution of the Gothic" due to its "presumed antiquity, its imperviousness to reason, its status as a discourse of mystery, [and] its ability to mortify the body" (21). Punter's argument draws attention to the oftentimes adversarial relationship between a heroine's first-hand experiences and her encounters with legal bodies in Gothic fiction. While the heroine's experiences determine what version of events is true within a Gothic text, especially within the first-person narratives of the nineteenth century, these experiences are commonly invalidated by parties with greater legal authority, in part because they do not have precedence within legal texts. Marshall responds to this dilemma within Gothic literature by arguing that the sophisticated meta-textual work of Gothic stories, including the prevalence of frame narrations and the inclusion of legal documents within texts, provides readers with the opportunity to experience the horrors of the justice system from a safe distance. Furthermore, she argues that by presenting readers with the evidence directly, in the form of confessions, testimonies, and documents, Gothic stories treat the narrative, rather than the legal verdict, as the truest source of justice. Hence, even though *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* feature a host of unpunished crimes and foul deeds, Jane and Maud can both justify themselves and create a broader sense of justice through their narratives. In particular, they can use their narratives to establish how acquiring their

inheritances is not just a matter of personal enrichment; rather, it is crucial to social and familial justice.

While Punter and Marshall focus on how the law regulates human bodies (and subsequently, how Gothic fiction criticizes, resists, or otherwise complicates that regulation), their arguments provide some insight into how to read the intersections of the Gothic and the law in matters that do not involve incarceration, such as inheritances. First, it is important to remember that even when incarceration is not at issue, the law still regulates bodies. In matters of inheritance, the law brings the dead body of the benefactor and the living body of the recipient into relation with one another in part by establishing the standards for identifying either body as the referent for the name written in a legal will. Second, by emphasizing the self-referential tendencies of both legal and Gothic discourses, Punter and Marshall indicate the importance of narrative for establishing ownership. Even though Jane and Maud inherit their fortunes, both of them must also narrate their stories in order to control those fortunes. In this regard, the role of wills, legacies, and other legal matters within *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* as Gothic-legal document-images is essential to the novels portrayals of their heroines' struggles for autonomy. Hence, the most overt Gothic tropes and most explicit legal discussions in both novels frequently coincide. When Gothic tropes coincide with legal discussions, it reveals that the law can do more than regulate bodies; the law can also sustain the historical narratives and biases that haunt Jane and Maud until they take control of their own stories.

ii. *Jane Eyre*

Throughout her story, Jane is haunted by her ignorance on several subjects, including her family's history, her lover's past, and her own identity. These hauntings become most acute when Jane fails to acknowledge her own ignorance. Because she is an orphan, she fails to recognize that her family's history can still affect her. Because she sees Rochester as her soulmate, she fails to reckon with his worldly experience and sexual knowledge. Furthermore, because she finds some independence as a schoolteacher at Marsh End, she fails to acknowledge that she has suppressed her own desires. In each of these cases, the novel manifests the gaps in knowledge that haunt Jane through a document-image, a letter from her uncle, Mason's testimony, and her own signature. By presenting each of these documents as an obtuse image, the novel illustrates the moments in which young Jane comes to terms with her own ignorance without Jane the narrator interfering by giving readers her processed interpretation of the documents, which would obfuscate her prior ignorance in favor of her current understanding. In this way, the novel highlights Jane's ongoing epistemological struggle to control her own understanding of the world and not just the incidents that contribute to social and emotional maturation.

In *Jane Eyre*, legal matters consistently appear next to traditionally Gothic images. Indeed, after learning about her inheritance for the first time from St. John Rivers, Jane thinks, "Besides, the words Legacy, Bequest, go side by side with the words Death, Funeral," and the novel seems committed to making the ghastly dimensions of even the most mundane legacies startlingly apparent (382). Deaths in *Jane Eyre* are simultaneously marked by a lack of spiritual or emotional peace, satisfaction, or fulfillment as well as contentious and bitter concerns about money. The novel's treatment

of Jane's mother exemplifies these connections when it only reveals two pieces of information about her: she was disinherited after marrying a poor clergyman, and she died young, leaving her infant daughter an orphan. Helen Burns is the only character who seems to die peacefully and contently in *Jane Eyre*, and she is only able to do so because she ostensibly recognizes that her disposition is unsuitable for the struggles of the material world.[50] In contrast, Mr. Reed dies after coercing his wife into promising to care for Jane, and a young Jane fears that his spirit may linger due to Mrs. Reed's failure to keep her word (17). Mrs. Reed dies prematurely after her son and heir, John Reed, squanders his inheritance and kills himself, and Jane marks her passing, first, with an anxious memory of Helen's "doctrine on the equality of disembodied souls" and, eventually, with a "sombre tearless dismay at the fearfulness of death in such a form (240). Finally, when Bertha sets Thornfield ablaze before plunging to her death, she leaves behind not only the burnt and ruined husk of Rochester's ancestral manor but also the maimed figure of Rochester himself. Also, prior to her physical death, Bertha's madness and secret incarceration function as kind of social death that enables her to become the specter that haunts Jane and Rochester.

Mr. Reed's death and last wishes become the subjects of both legal and Gothic images in the famous Red Room scene. While explaining why no one in the household used the Red Room enough to keep it warm, Jane notes that "Mrs. Reed herself, at far

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[50] Of course, it is easy to read Helen's claims that she is "very happy" as self-deluding or even bitterly ironic (81). Her reasoning is that her father "is lately married, and will not miss [her]" and that she "shall escape great sufferings" because she "had not qualities or talents to make [her] way very well in the world" (81). This line of reasoning not only subtly mocks Jane's desire for a family by showing how unloving families can be but also suggests that Helen has completely internalized the worst criticisms that she's encountered at Lowood. In this regard, she doesn't die peacefully and happily so much as she dies defeated and resigned. However, in her attempts to console Jane, she connects the idea of dying peacefully and happily to the idea of escaping material concerns. Regardless of her sincerity, her comments establish the standard for a peaceful passing in *Jane Eyre*, and Helen is the only character whose death does not leave Jane with thoughts about hauntings and damnation.

intervals, visited it to review the contents of a certain secret drawer in the wardrobe, where were stored divers parchments" before explaining that Mr. Reed died in the same room nine years earlier (14). How Jane knew about the supposedly "secret drawer" and "divers parchments" is something of a mystery, but her description "Gothicizes," to use Mighall's expression, Mr. Reed's last wishes, which are addressed throughout the scene as well as later in the novel, by gesturing toward the Gothic trope of the discovered manuscript. Jane's thoughts about the drawer and parchments lead directly to her reflections on her uncle's death, her belief that her uncle would have "treated [her] kindly" if he had survived, and finally her fear that Mr. Reed's spirit will "rise before [her]" in the Red Room (16, 17). However, Jane does not make these connections on the basis of natural wit alone. When she interprets the gleaming light on the wall as "a herald of some coming vision from another world," she is responding to two separate second-hand reports that have mentally prepared her "for horror" (17). First, she is responding to the servants' reports that her uncle forced her aunt into her legal adoption. Second, she is responding to "what [she] had heard of dead men, troubled in their graves by the violation of their last wishes, revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed" (16-17). The influence that servants' reports and superstitions about "dead men" have on young Jane indicate that she is a long way from controlling her own understanding of the world.

Critics have commonly identified the Red Room scene as a crucial cipher for understanding the rest of *Jane Eyre*, and the sequence of events that contributes to Jane's terror illuminates several aspects of the novel's uses of the Gothic and legal imagery. Most importantly, the Red Room scene demonstrates that death will be a Gothic matter

throughout the novel, and somewhat more subtly with its reference to Mr. Reed's

documents, it connects death with the law as mutually Gothic concerns. This connection

is borne out by the drama that surrounds inheritances throughout the novel. Furthermore,

Jane's after-the-fact demystification of the gleaming light as "a gleam from a lantern"

reveals the influence of Radcliffe as well as the novel's empiricist bias. The older Jane

uses the experience she has acquired since she was ten to provide a rational explanation

for the light that her young self was incapable of surmising while Brontë employs the

trope of the explained supernatural to indicate which Gothic tradition she is referencing.

Finally, the way that word-of-mouth rumors shape Jane's experiences indicates some of

the problems that the rest of the novel will explore with its Gothic-legal sentence-images.

First, the scene implies that person-to-person communication is inevitably corrupted in

the material world by demonstrating the unintentional consequences that minor acts of

communication can have on a young woman whose understanding of the situation is

incomplete, as all understandings clearly are throughout the novel. Second, the scene

draws attention to the problem that empiricism does not offer much of a corrective for

poor interpretation or a mechanism for rating the value of information. Indeed, as

previous Gothic novels have demonstrated, without a higher truth to measure knowledge

against, the relative values of empiricist interpretations are determined by their abilities to

persist through time. Theodore's understanding of the world is only superior to

Manfred's because he is in a position to tell the world about it while the contrite villain is

cloistered in a monastery. It is seemingly a happy coincidence that Theodore's views are

so much more compatible with those of Walpole's readers than Manfred's would have

been. In Jane's case, her belief that the gleaming light is a herald of her uncle's spirit only

proves to be an invalid interpretation because the terror it causes contributes to her

subsequent illness. Since this kind of interpretation threatens to extinguish itself by

causing the demise of anyone who accepts it, Jane spends the rest of the novel struggling

to remain grounded as she encounters inexplicable phenomena.

All of these factors influence the next significant intersection of Gothic and legal

imagery, the death of Mrs. Reed. Mrs. Reed's deathbed exchange with Jane reflects

Radcliffe's portrayal of Madame Cheron, the death of Mr. Reed, and the Red Room

scene. Like Madame Cheron, Mrs. Reed is a vain and worldly woman who reluctantly

adopts her sibling's orphan but fails to treat the child kindly, and like Emily St. Aubert,

Jane treats her dying aunt with compassion. Mrs. Reed's death, which the novel connects

to the anxiety and depression she feels in relation to her son's dissipation and suicide,

also alludes to Madame Cheron's death from neglect at the hands of Montoni. In both

cases, a cruel and materialistic woman dies in response to the even more intense cruelty

of an even more materialistic and tyrannical man while a long-resented niece tends to her.

Alluding to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in this way intensifies the Gothic dimension of

Mrs. Reed's seemingly mundane passing.

The death of Mr. Reed, however, presents the most direct parallel for Mrs. Reed's

final moments. Both Mr. and Mrs. Reed die in a contentious state that revolves around

Mrs. Reed's reluctance to provide for Jane. In this regard, Mrs. Reed's final conversation

with Jane is an extension of her final conversation with Mr. Reed. When Mrs. Reed

produces the letter from Jane's uncle Eyre, it retroactively enhances the legal dimension

of the Red Room scene. As one of the most explicitly legal documents in the novel, the

letter in which John Eyre records his desire to adopt Jane and make her his heir appears

in its entirety:

"Madam,

"Will you have the goodness to send me the address of my niece, Jane Eyre, and

to tell me how she is: it is my intention to write shortly and desire her to come to me at

Madeira. Providence has blessed my endeavours to secure a competency; and as I am

unmarried and childless, I wish to adopt her during my life, and bequeath her at my death

whatever I may have to leave."

"I am, Madam, &c. &c.

"John Eyre, Maderia" (238-9).

The concrete image of the letter enables it to fill the imaginary gap left by the "divers

parchments" in Mr. Reed's old wardrobe, especially because the scene in which Mrs.

Reed directs Jane to bring her the letter contains some of the ritualistic mystery implied

by her earlier infrequent visits to secret drawer in the wardrobe. In this regard, Mrs.

Reed's relationship with her deceased husband's parchments serves as a metonym for her

relationship with his ward, the young Jane. Like the parchments, Jane presents a mystery,

and like the parchments, Mrs. Reed avoids the girl whenever possible. Mrs. Reed

vocalizes her ongoing spiritual conflict before giving Jane the necessary directions:

"Well: I must get it over. Eternity is before me: I had better tell her. Go to my dressing-

case, open it, and take out a letter you will see there" (238). Mrs. Reed's reference to her

concerns about the afterlife, followed by her abrupt transition from talking about Jane in

Jane's presence to talking to Jane, creates a preamble for the appearance of the letter that

makes the image of the letter and the physical transmission of the letter, rather than the

contents of the letter, part of Mrs. Reed's spiritual struggle, ongoing conflict with her dead husband, and continued resentment of Jane. In other words, the concrete image of the letter is the site of Mrs. Reed's conflict with the past, which imbues it with Gothic force regardless of its straightforward message.

In this regard, the letter functions as an "obtuse image" in that it strikes readers with its presence before the meaning of its text becomes apparent. As an obtuse image in the text, John Eyre's letter announces the depth of Mrs. Reed's resentment for Jane, the enormity of Jane's shock, and the most tangible presence in the novel of John Eyre himself. Although Jane never meets her uncle and, therefore, never describes him to the readers, when she holds the letter he wrote and presents it to the readers, he is just as present for the readers as he is for Jane, and in many ways, he is more present than Mrs. Reed who lacks the power of the *punctum* in part because she contains the *studium* created by the literary trope of cruel aunts and step-mothers. Because Mrs. Reed is more spiteful caricature than sympathetic character, her spiritual struggle has little resonance with readers. In contrast, John Eyre's signature strikes readers because it creates a mystery of sorts; it draws attention to a blank space, a gap in their knowledge that they share with their narrator and they can begin to fill through the power of their imaginations.[51] Hence, the letter serves as the herald of an uncle with an uneasy spirit much more than the gleaming light in the Red Room could. Unlike the gleaming light, John Eyre's signature does not require rumors from the servants and physiological deprivation to evoke the man himself.

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[51] Although it is possible to imagine a caricature of John Eyre as kindly patriarch that serves as a counterpoint to Mrs. Reed's wicked aunt, the revelation later in the novel that he has left the Rivers family out of his will due to an old grievance indicates that Jane's relatives share similar personalities, even if they have different biases.

Without the previous scene in the Red Room, the letter certainly would not have this power. It would still represent a legal matter that Mrs. Reed has manipulated against Jane out of spite, but it would not necessarily enhance the Gothic dimension of the novel. However, because the Red Room scene has already connected death, last wishes, familial-financial matters, and deep-seated resentment with spiritual conflict, sensory uncertainty, and haunting presences, the repeat of the death chamber, the drawer, and the parchment imbues the obtuse legal image with the trace of the Gothic. The letter has clearly haunted Mrs. Reed, who "is racked by the recollection" of her decision to withhold the letter from Jane and tell John Eyre that Jane had died at Lowood. Moreover, the letter goes on to haunt Jane, as it sets in motion a series of events that includes the disruption of her first wedding and the unveiling of her true identity while she is masquerading as Jane Elliot.[52]

Both the foiling of Rochester's unlawful attempt to take Jane as his second wife and the revelation that Jane Elliot, humble school mistress, is really Jane Eyre, wealthy heiress, are the work of Mr. Briggs. The novel never provides a physical description of Mr. Briggs, and critics have not been much more attentive to him. However, his voice and, more importantly, his papers are crucial to not only the forward momentum of the novel's plot, which relies on moving Jane from one situation to the next, but also the combination of Gothic motifs with legal concerns that keeps the novel focused on Jane's struggle to develop her own authority amidst the systems of power that attempt to usurp her understandings of herself and the world.

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[52] Since John Eyre works with Mr. Rochester's brother-in-law, Richard Mason, Jane's letter to her uncle, which informs him that she is still alive and planning to marry Mr. Rochester, sets in motion the disruption of her own wedding by prompting John Eyre to hire Mr. Briggs to prevent the unlawful union. Later, aware that Jane is alive, Mr. Briggs once again sets out to find her after her uncle dies, which leads to her exposure by St. John Rivers.

Mr. Briggs's first appearance in *Jane Eyre* serves two vital functions for the narrative: first, it stalls the union between Jane and Rochester; second, it reveals that Bertha is the source of Jane's mysterious hauntings at Thornfield. Both the legal and Gothic functions of his appearance highlight Jane's continuing need to establish epistemological authority over her own thoughts and feelings, which Rochester had begun to dominate. Jane's comically absurd willingness to leave Grace Poole's presence in the manor and the rending of her wedding veil unquestioned indicates that legal concerns are only a fraction of the problem that would destroy her happiness with Rochester. Taken as a whole, the problem is that Rochester knows more than Jane, and he knows it with greater certainty, even though what he knows only remains valid while his privilege to make assertions about the world remains unquestioned. He knows about Bertha and the law. He knows about money and sex. He knows about Jane. He has created an image of Jane for himself, and he has imposed it upon her. He is able to do so because his image of Jane, as a penniless orphan elevated by the virtue of her uncompromising spirit and unflinching gaze to be his soulmate and the young Mrs. Rochester, is much more unified and complete than any image of herself that Jane has been able to craft while constantly feeling conflicted about the disparity between her own sense of self-worth and value placed upon her by society. When Jane thinks that the "robed and veiled figure" that she sees in the mirror on her wedding is "so unlike [her] usual self that it seemed almost the image of a stranger," she momentarily recognizes that Rochester has usurped her ability to define herself for herself (286).[53]

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[53] In "'Portrait of a Governess, Disconnected, Poor, and Plain': Staging the Spectral Self in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre," Laurence Talairach-Vielmas argues that Brontë revises the Gothic trope of using specters to examine women's inner lives by using spectral language to describe Jane's physical transformations as well: "Charlotte Brontë negotiates the tensions surrounding the aesthetic feminine ideal

Although Bertha's haunting presence has been felt in the novel repeatedly before

the wedding—when her laugh echoes through the halls of Thornfield, when she sets fire

to Rochester's bed, when she bites and stabs her brother, Mr. Mason, and when she rends

Jane's veil—Mr. Briggs's announcement of an "impediment" is the first time that her

presence is felt as "Bertha Rochester" and not mistakenly as Grace Poole or some

creature out of Nurse Bessie's stories. Notably, Mr. Briggs manifests her presence by

reading an official-sounding "paper from his pocket":

> I affirm and can prove that on the 20th of October, A.D.-----, (a date of fifteen
>
> years back) Edward Fairfax Rochester of Thornfield Hall, in the country of-----,
>
> and of Ferdean Manor, in ----shire, England, was married to my sister, Bertha
>
> Antoinetta Mason, daughter of Jonas Mason, merchant, and of Antoinetta his
>
> wife, a Creole—at ----church, Spanish-town, Jamaica. The record of the marriage
>
> will be found in the register of that church—a copy of it is now in my possession.
>
> Signed, Richard Mason (290).

As with John Eyre's letter, Mason's signed testimony establishes the existence of a

person, simultaneously new and old,[54] in Jane's life at the same time and in the same way

that said person is presented to the reader. This form of presentation enables Brontë to

temporarily suspend the influence of Jane's narrative biases (an influence that has

directed readers through the series of improbable events and even more improbable

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through her revision of Gothic stereotypes. Indeed, she uses the motif of the spectre both to define the inner self and to map out her heroine's physical changes. The Gothic scenes in the novel are all related to mirrors and deal, therefore, with outer appearance" (134). As Jane becomes more like the image of herself that Rochester has imposed upon her, she becomes less able to unite her lively interior with her spectral exterior. This culminates in the mirror scene before the wedding.

[54] Just as Jane acknowledges that she may have some "low relations called Eyre" before John Eyre's letter introduces, she knows that someone is haunting the halls of Thornfield before Mason's statement introduces Bertha (24). In both cases, the documents retroactively insert a character into spaces previously occupied by the unknown.

rationalizations outlined above). As the novel makes it increasingly clear that a host of factors impede Jane's ability to understand and represent herself and her surroundings, moments like this give readers opportunities to compare their responses with Jane's and possibly recognize her limitations.

If Brontë allowed Jane, as a retrospective narrator, to describe Mr. Briggs's revelation, it would diminish Bertha's presence in the scene because it would be clear that Jane has already digested the information and processed it into part of her narrative. By giving readers a document when they might expect a shock-infused explanation, Brontë creates actual shock. As an obtuse image, the document announces its own presence where earlier Gothic novels would have provided a thorough explanation, with a possible reference to a supporting document;[55] and as with John Eyre's letter, by doing so, the document rhetorically fabricates the presence of a person who is not actually in the scene. In other words, instead of describing Jane's feelings of bewilderment and uncertainty (and, indeed, the usually quite reflective Jane is exceptionally silent about her own sensations during the exchange between Briggs, Rochester, and Mason, as well as the introduction of Bertha), Brontë gives the readers an image that may leave them bewildered and uncertain about Rochester and the nature of his relationship with, and influence over, Jane. Furthermore, by establishing Bertha's presence as Rochester's lawful wife before portraying Bertha as a "clothed hyena," Brontë amplifies its potential impact (293). The "clothed hyena" is the solution to a series of Gothic mysteries in an ancient manor. For readers familiar with the Gothic tradition from Walpole through the *Blackwoods*' stories that Brontë read, the clothed hyena's savage villainy would be the

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[55] For example, in *The Castle of Otranto*, Jerome explains the history of Theodore's lineage before noting that he has an "authentic writing" that validates his claims.

logical solution to the mysterious laugh, attempted arson, and vicious attack that have plagued Jane's tenure at Thornfield.[56] In contrast, the existence of Rochester's wife, as a legal entity temporarily distinct from any particular human form, is a new, if brief, source of uncertainty.

The series of angry inquiries that Rochester launches at Briggs after he proclaims the existence of an impediment illuminates the room for the uncertainty created by the document-image. In an attempt to undercut Briggs's authority, Rochester resembles a cross-examiner trying to find a gap or a contradiction in a witness's knowledge. His questions demand empirical, or at least demonstrable, answers. He demands Briggs's identity. Then, he asks Briggs to provide an account of his wife, "her name, her parentage, her place of abode" (290). When Briggs satisfies these queries with the signed testimony, Rochester challenges him to prove that his wife is still alive. Finally, he commands Briggs to produce his witness "or go to hell" (290). This series of inquiries gradually eliminates uncertainty about Briggs and the validity of his assertion as it creates uncertainty about Rochester and his past. With each demand, Rochester reveals that he knows more about the situation than he is admitting because, as he lashes out at Briggs verbally, it becomes evident that he is testing the lawyer, rather than genuinely seeking answers. By creating new room for uncertainty focused on Rochester, rather than the haunting of Thornfield, Briggs and his sheet of paper finally force Jane to recognize how much she does not know.

Briggs's second, less direct appearance in the novel highlights a distinctly different reason that Jane must continue to establish her own epistemological authority.

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[56] When describing the creature that tore her veil, Jane notes that it looked like "the foul German spectre—the Vampyre," explicitly preparing readers for the uncovering of a Gothic creature later in the novel (284).

While the revelation of Bertha's existence demonstrated how much Rochester had been dominating her thoughts and feelings, Briggs's hand in exposing "Jane Elliot" as Jane Eyre indicates that Jane must still struggle to maintain her own identity. For a chapter or so, Jane Eyre's life as "Jane Elliot," humble but talented school mistress and adopted relation to the virtuous Riverses of Marsh End, seems like an idyllic situation. Yet, when Jane contrasts her "useful existence" during the day with her "strange dreams" at night, she seems to recognize that the idyllic situation is not really hers (366); it belongs to Jane Elliot, and she can never quite be that person. Just as Jane could not recognize herself in the mirror before the ill-fated wedding, Jane cannot recognize her narrative in the life of Jane Elliot, so her brain produces "many-coloured, agitated" dreams "where, amidst unusual scenes, charged with adventure, with agitating risk and romantic chance, [she] still again and again met Mr. Rochester" (366-7). These dreams indicate that the material security offered to her alter ego comes at the expense of authority over her own story.

Thus, when St. John Rivers, on the lookout after receiving an inquiry from Mr. Briggs about the missing heiress Jane Eyre, discovers Jane's proper name scribbled on a piece of sketch paper, he presents it to her in a manner that creates a simple but effective image: "And the pocket-book was again deliberately produced, opened, sought through; from one of its compartments was extracted a shabby slip of paper, hastily torn off [. . .] and I read, traced in Indian ink, in my own handwriting, the words 'JANE EYRE'" (381). Here, the ritualistic opening of the container and searching for the scrap of paper recalls Mrs. Reed's directions to Jane about the letter from John Eyre and her former visits to Mr. Reed's old parchments. Even though Jane and St. John are equally aware of the missing governess's identity, their performance becomes part of a process that summons

the presence of Jane Eyre. Just as previous documents have manifested Mr. Reed, John Eyre, and Bertha Rochester, the image of Jane's name momentarily produces the presence of a second Jane, and Jane Eyre/Elliot is forced to recognize the disparity between herself and her alter ego and "renounce the *alias*" (381). The Gothic trappings surrounding another legal image produce yet another moment, however brief, of uncertainty, in which Jane must actively identify herself.

Renouncing her life as Jane Elliot is the final pivotal step in Jane's path toward epistemological authority. She has struggled with her senses in the Red Room. She has witnessed the willful manipulation of her past by Mrs. Reed. She has resisted the domination of her thoughts and feelings by Rochester. Finally, she accepts her own identity. Along the way, document-images that combine Gothic and legal discourses force Jane to confront the uncertainties about her past, her relationship with Rochester, and who she really is. A letter from her uncle provides the first indication that she is not so poor or obscure as she believes. Mr. Mason's testimony, conveyed through Briggs, enables her to realize that she has let Rochester blind her to the truth about her relationship. Finally, seeing her own name in print forces her to acknowledge that she has suppressed her own desires so much that she is at risk of losing her sense of self all together. In each case, working through the initial uncertainty created by the document-image helps Jane develop more control over her own knowledge. As a result, Jane ends her story with enough faith in her own authority to use the law to her own advantage as she splits her inheritance four ways and maintains her independence while pursuing the family and relationships that she desires.

iii. *Uncle Silas*

Sheridan Le Fanu's most famous novel differs from *Jane Eyre* in several important ways for the consideration of the potential for document-images that bring together Gothic and legal discourses in nineteenth-century fiction. First, unlike Jane, Maud knows that she should be an heiress, even though she spends most of the novel penniless. Second, where document-images in *Jane Eyre* create uncertainty through rhetoric that seems to manifest a dead, distant, or unknown figure in a scene, document-images in *Uncle Silas* create uncertainty about the very possibility of really knowing a person. The novel's central question—is Silas evil?—becomes a forced issue due to the strange codicil in Austin Ruthyn's will that entrusts Maud to her uncle's care. This blending of metaphysical with legal inquiries creates haunting in a novel that lacks *Jane Eyre*'s sequence of terrifying eruptions of violence in the night. Thus, where *Jane Eyre* portrays its heroine's struggle to mature into a woman who can successfully wield epistemological authority, *Uncle Silas* reveals its heroine's struggle to understand what really constitutes "knowledge" and what factors can undermine or validate her understanding of the world. In this regard, *Uncle Silas* is much more explicit about its function as an epistemological text than *Jane Eyre*. Early in the novel, Maud acknowledges that curiosity is her primary motivation, and at the same time, she remarks upon the connection between the desire for knowledge and the desire for power:

> Why is it that this form of ambition—curiosity—which entered into the
>
> temptation of our first parent, is so specially hard to resist? Knowledge is
>
> power—and power of one sort or another is the secret lust of human souls; and

here is, beside the sense of exploration, the undefinable interest of a story, and

above all, something forbidden, to stimulate the contumacious appetite (42).

While reflecting upon her curiosity about Silas, Maud implicitly demands sympathy from

the readers by describing her curiosity in terms of "the undefinable interest of a story."

Without her curiosity, her "sense of exploration," or her interest in "something

forbidden," there would be no story "to stimulate the contumacious appetite" of the

reader. By connecting Maud's curiosity with the reader's curiosity, Le Fanu puts the

reader in a position to work through the novel's central question with Maud as, like Jane,

she reflects upon the experiences of her youth and develops a similar kind of

epistemological authority over the mysteries of the aptly named Knowl.

When Maud claims at the conclusion of her story that the "world is a parable—the

habituation of symbols," she distinguishes the purpose of her story from the purpose of

Jane's (Le Fanu 480). Whereas Jane seemingly uses her "autobiography" to set the record

straight for herself and others and, thereby, demonstrate that she has the necessary

knowledge and understanding to control her fortune, relationship, and autonomy, Maud

treats her story like an essay on culture, theology, and metaphysics. By narrating her

story, she is actively working through her understanding of the world in order to clarify

for herself how her uncle Silas could be evil. Maud, who refers to public testimony as a

"horror," does not offer anything like Jane's proclamation of "Reader, I married him"

because she is more interested in using her narrative as means of processing her

experiences than as a forum for defending her unconventional choices (Le Fanu 479,

Brontë 448). She wants to interpret the symbols necessary for understanding the parable

of the world.

Within *Uncle Silas*, the image of Austin's will provides a cypher for interpreting the world as a parable. Whereas *Jane Eyre* features a series of document-images that haunt Jane with her ignorance about herself, her past, and the people around her, the image of Austin's will establishes the terms for understanding how Maud is haunted by her ignorance of society's conventions, her family's history, and the concept of evil. Initially, the will seems to establish a simple legal relationship, in which Maud's uncle is appointed her guardian. However, the will operates at multiple layers. It participates in social conventions that reward hollow formalities with real power. It serves as an extension of Austin's mania for upholding the Ruthyn family name. Finally, it creates a test of Silas's character by enabling him to inherit the Ruthyn family wealth if he eliminates his niece. Although Maud cannot recognize these dimensions of the will at first, she exposes them by telling her story. Hence, when Maud chooses to reject the will's authority and flee from her uncle, she is also implicitly rejecting the social niceties, patriarchal desires, and insistence on empirical proof that obscure the metaphysical truth of Silas's evil.

The first chapter establishes the novel's investment in metaphysics and the doubt and anxiety that stems from spiritual beliefs by introducing Austin Ruthyn's Swedenborgian beliefs, especially the belief that there are layers of reality inaccessible to human senses in which it would be evident that a man like Silas is actually a fiend in human flesh. The chapter makes repeated references to tomes that, far from conveying digestible knowledge, seem to create mysteries for Maud. The chapter ends with Austin's demand that Maud remember the key and the cabinet. All of these factors suggest that the novel's primary sources of conflict and tension will be related to perception and

knowledge. At the same time, when Maud's knowledge of the key and the cabinet becomes crucial to the revelation of the clause in Austin's will that makes Silas Maud's guardian, the novel imbues the legal document with some of the "suspicion of necromancy" that inspires in Maud "something of awe and antipathy" in the initial chapter (33).

The first third of *Uncle Silas* develops the novel's primary concern with the difficulty of really knowing another human being by portraying a series of authority figures confronting Maud with her lack of knowledge about another person and challenging her to perceive that person, and the world around her, in a different way. The Swedenborgian minister who visits Austin tells Maud that her mother is just beyond the veil of human sight. Maud rankles when her cousin Monica, or Lady Knollys, criticizes her infatuation with Captain Oakley and when her father insists on allowing Madame de la Rougierre, who Maud fears enough to describe as "ghostly," to remain her governess on the strength of Silas's recommendation (84). Maud also tries to know Silas through his portrait (40, 88, 92), and Monica claims that Silas is a fiend in human form (194-5). In each of these cases, the authority figures in Maud's life do not just ask her to reconsider her conclusions; they challenge her to reconsider the bases for her conclusions by hinting at a larger and more complicated world of spirits, desires, vices, and money.

Yet, these same authority figures exacerbate Maud's struggles to understand the people and world around by refusing to explain what they know and how they know it because they prioritize sustaining their family ties over her knowledge and security. Most importantly, Austin imposes an "injunction" against anyone talking to Maud about Silas (41). Although Monica quarrels with Austin about this injunction, she is never

completely transparent in her conversations with Maud either. She uses her own power over Captain Oakley to drive him away from Knowl, but declines to tell why "London dandies" want money if it is "not to keep, of course" (94). Likewise, although Monica puts Maud "on [her] guard" by telling her that Rougierre is her "enemy," she is no more willing than Austin to explain the governess's character to the young woman (105). With regards to both Captain Oakley and Rougierre, Monica's refusal to explain things explicitly stems from the complexity of familial relations. Although she disapproves of her cousin Captain Oakley too much to let him seduce Maud, she loves him enough to support him and hope that he can marry a wealthy widow. Likewise, although she believes Austin's plan to entrust Silas with Maud's life is "madness," she respects his authority enough to remain silent about Rougierre's and Silas's pasts (103). Ironically, Monica's commitment to favoring familial relationships in spite of behavior she finds questionable is just a dim reflection of the same impulse that she accuses Austin of being mad for following. For both Monica and Austin, understanding the world may be related to experience, but it is also inseparable from their devotion to genteel family ties. By denying Maud the information that she seeks, they inadvertently push her toward the competing epistemologies that shape all Gothic fiction, empiricism and superstition. In particular, when they refuse to explain the mysteries that she perceives around her (Swedenborg, Silas, Rougierre, her father's journey, and death), Maud tries to find knowledge through direct experience with the objects of her inquiries and through superstitious fantasies about them.

Through its portrayal of Maud's superstition and heightened sensitivity, *Uncle Silas* twists the relationship between empiricism and the supernatural established in

eighteenth-century Gothic texts. When Walpole's characters encounter real ghosts and Radcliffe's characters encounter fake ghosts that they think are real, it provides opportunities for the eighteenth-century writers to portray their characters' subjectivities by describing their reactions to the empirical process in a dramatic situation. In contrast, when Maud projects her supernaturally-infused fears onto the material world, it provides Le Fanu with the opportunity to portray how her internal psychodrama influences her reactions to the empirical process in any situation.[57] For example, after reflecting upon her dim knowledge of the Swedenborgians and her failed attempt to read one of the texts, Maud describes the scene outside of her window in mystical terms:

> Leaning on my hand, I was now looking upon that solemn wood, white and shadowy in the moonlight, where, for a long time after that ramble with the visionary,[58] I fancied the gate of death, hidden only by a strange glamour, and the dazzling land of ghosts, were situate; and I suppose these early associations gave to my reverie about my father's coming visitor a wilder and sadder tinge (46-7).

Here, Maud, who encapsulates many of the categories that Walton suggests require "re-inscription" with her perpetual anxiety about her father's incommunicative domestic habits, Silas's unspeakable history, and the Swedenborgian's indecipherable theology, fills the empty space of the "solemn wood" outside her window with "the gate of death," "a strange glamour, and the "land of ghosts." By projecting her anxieties onto the woods,

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[57] In regards to this technique, Victor Sage, James Walton, and Gary Crawford have argued that Le Fanu reinvigorates the tropes of Gothic ghost stories by moving the metaphors for women's interior lives into the literal interior of his narrator and protagonist. Walton explains that "hauntings" in Le Fanu's work "consist in the re-inscription of a sexual, domestic, historical and ultimately theological tragedy upon the same darkness or void" (194). In other words, beginning with the death of her mother, Maud manufactures her own hauntings by inserting "specters into empty space" (2).

[58] Here, Maud is referring to the Swedenborgian who walked with her and discussed the spirit world after her mother died several years earlier.

Maud narrativizes the internal process of interpretation rather than the external process of sensory encounters. She places greater emphasis on her "early associations" than she does on the material properties of the woods.

Hence, the novel systematically works through the ways in which her "early associations" like familial loyalty, superstition, class prejudice, and gender identity affect, usually in debilitating ways, Maud's quest to overcome the gaps left by the authority figures in her life and understand her own story. All of these factors are evident in the scene surrounding the reading of Austin's will. Prior to opening the will, Maud questions Doctor Bryerly, Austin's confidante, minister, and physician, about his medical qualifications. Even after Bryerly notes that he has "a doctor's degree" as a "Doctor of Medicine," Maud asks if her father had "no other medical adviser" (162). Her doubts seem to stem directly from Bryerly's lack of conventional social respectability (162). As a devoted Swedenborgian who pronounces "'pretty' as it is spelt," Bryerly does not conform to the conventions that Maud associates with respectable members of society, unlike "*Sir* Clayton Barrow" of London who also "took [Bryerly's] view" of Austin's condition (161, 163, emphasis added). Embarrassed about the "disparaging" tone of her questions, Maud initially declines to summon any other gentlemen to hear the reading of her father's will, claiming to "have confidence" in her father's intimate associate (163). Thus, while her inquiries indicate some of her class prejudices toward less genteel individuals and her superstitious wariness about Swedenborg, Maud's decision to trust her father's confidante suggests that her familial loyalty is stronger than both sources of doubt.

In contrast to Bryerly, who represents an almost embarrassing religion, who has a personal interest in Austin's legacy, which funds the Swedenborgian cause, and who has an uncertain knowledge of the law, the men that the doctor summons to witness the reading of Austin's will represent conventionally respectable social niches. Dr. Clay is a blandly respectable authority in a conventionally accepted religion. Mr. Danvers is responsible for maintaining the profitability of the Ruthyn estates, and Grimston is a legal expert who helped Austin draft the original will.

The novel portrays all three men as professionally and personally interested in Maud's well-being but emotionally uninvolved, and their inability or unwillingness to share Maud's sorrow about the death of her father is essential to the disinterestedness that marks them as legal professionals. When Mr. Danvers and Grimston criticize Silas's representative at the proceedings, Mr. Sleigh, for hoping there will be further "litigations, or, at all events, law costs" because he would profit personally from them, they demonstrate the superiority of their own professional virtue, which protects Maud's pecuniary interests rather than their own (171). Likewise, Dr. Clay is more interested in making sure that Mrs. Clay will have a chance to "pay her respects" to Maud before she leaves Knowl than he is in controlling Maud's religious life (173). Meanwhile, Maud wonders how the men can discuss things like bridge maintenance while they await the reading of the will (166). As a result of their professionalism, Dr. Clay, Mr. Danvers, and Grimston are all equally content with the final codicil in Austin's will, which entrusts Maud's life to Silas, because it was composed in proper legal rhetoric by Austin while he could attest to being "of sound mind and perfect recollection" (170).

By recreating the will's legal rhetoric, the novel presents an image that clearly

engages the triple power of images in the aesthetic regime to underscore the legal,

metaphysical, and personal dimensions of the story's central question about Silas's

character. Maud recites the contents of codicil in a convincing facsimile of formal legal

diction: "It appointed my Uncle Silas sole guardian, with full parental authority over me

until I should have reached the age of twenty-one, up to which time I was to reside under

his care at Bartram-Haugh, and it directed the trustees to pay over to him yearly a sum of

£2,000 during the continuance of the guardianship for my suitable maintenance,

education, and expenses" (172). With phrases like "until I should have reached" and "up

to which time" as well as terms like "sole guardian" and "suitable maintenance," Maud's

description employs the unusually precise grammar and specific terminology of legal

discourse. The formal composition of these clauses distinguishes Maud's recollection of

the codicil from her usual descriptions, and creates an obtuse image similar to John

Eyre's letter or Richard Mason's sworn testimony. Like the letter and the testimony, the

codicil announces its own presence independently of its easily comprehensible, if socially

"strange," content (172). Hence, like John Eyre's letter, the obtuse image of the codicil

becomes recognizable as the site of an ongoing contest with the past, not just because of

what it says but also because its mere presence is disruptive. Although Maud may not

immediately realize it, the codicil becomes the physical representation of the trial Austin

asked her to undertake in defense of the family name. In this way, it also carries the

"trace," to use Ranciere's expression with regards to the "educational value" of an image,

of Austin's struggle with the incidents in Silas's past that have haunted him by

besmirching the Ruthyn family name and by forcing him to doubt his own brother's

character. It carries the trace of Silas's low marriage to a comely barmaid, the early death of Silas's wife, presumably due to neglect, and the mysterious death of Mr. Charke under Silas's roof. Finally, by extending Austin's will beyond the grave and forcing Maud into a contest with the past transgressions of her forbearers, the codicil takes advantage of its combinatory capacity to connect Maud's fate with the stories of other Gothic heroines, especially Emily St. Aubert, who have been entrusted by their information-withholding fathers to neglectful guardians. This connection infuses a moment of domestic policy with the power of Gothic mystery and gives readers, who lack Maud's enthusiasm about meeting a distant relative, a reason to investigate the secrets of Bartram-Haugh.

By functioning as both a legal document and a Gothic trope, the image of the codicil, as well as the novel's depiction of how different characters interpret it, draws together the threat of Gothic mystery and the banality of social conventions. While Maud finds the idea of satisfying her "mysterious curiosity about [her] uncle" to be "rather pleasurable," Monica looks "ghastly and angry" (172). Meanwhile, Abel Grimston's nonchalant response suggests that he is unconcerned by Monica's morbid inquiry into who will inherit the property "in case [her] little cousin here should die before she comes of age" (173). Then, apparently failing to register the dark import of Monica's question at all, Dr. Clay speaks immediately after her inquiry is resolved to note that, according to his curate, Maud's "admirable uncle" is "a true Christian Churchman—a Christian gentleman" and a "most happy, happy choice" (173). This jostling from Maud's excitement to Monica's dismay to Grimston's nonchalance and Dr. Clay's satisfaction not only suggests that Silas is a fascinating character who can simultaneously inspire people with awe, fear, and respect but also indicates the ways in which conventional

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epistemological authority can interfere with creating good knowledge. Austin was

satisfied that his knowledge as a family member was superior to the investigator's

concerns that Silas had been involved in the death of Mr. Charke. Grimston is satisfied

that the proper legal production of Austin's will makes the arrangement itself reasonable.

Dr. Clay is satisfied that Silas's token engagement with the established church proves that

he is a proper gentleman. Only Monica, who lacks Austin's patriarchal investment in the

family's reputation and Grimston's or Dr. Clay's professional investment in trusting the

validity of the standards established by the law or the church, is even capable of

suspicion. Yet, even Monica has enough family pride that she is unwilling to admit her

suspicions to Maud explicitly (186).

Moreover, the connection between Austin's will and its Gothic predecessors

underscores the haunting that the codicil initiates. Just as the codicil possesses a triple

power, Maud is thrice haunted, by her father's mania for restoring the family name, by

the specter of Silas's sullied past, and by the law that subjugates her to her uncle's power.

The codicil, which brings these three forces together, also obfuscates the relationship

between signs and referents in Maud's experiences at Bartam-Haugh, causing her to

dismiss empirical data as if it were the product of superstitious dread. Almost everything

Silas does indicates that he is a terrible relative with no regard for the family name, a

sacrilegious man with no regard for religion, and an avaricious murderer who is prepared

to squander his niece's estate and ultimately assassinate her for her inheritance. Yet, the

codicil inhibits Maud's ability to interpret his words and actions correctly. Instead of

seeing a man whose reputation was sullied for a good reason, she sees a "refined and

fluent old gentleman" who withdrew from an unjust society (233). Instead of seeing a

man who equivocates about spiritual matters, she sees a man who eloquently espouses deeply philosophical devotions. Finally, instead of admitting that she recognizes the threat to her well-being, Maud initially suspects that she has gone "mad" (467).

Maud's fear that she has gone mad is part of the novel's emphasis on the importance of self-representation. Silas initially gains power over Maud because he represents himself in a way that convinces people, especially Austin, that he is innocent, and he uses his power to threaten Maud's ability to represent herself internally or socially. Maud's struggle to interpret signs successfully comes to a head when she realizes that Silas is manipulating her correspondences in an intricate plot to convince anyone who might look for her that she is attending school on the Continent and not buried in the yard. Ultimately, Maud recognizes that Silas's real power rests, not in his ability to threaten her physically, but in his ability to control the representation of her disappearance. With this recognition, Maud is finally able to break free from the power of the codicil and simply flee for her life.

In order to break free from the power of the codicil and control her own representation, the novel reveals that Maud must abandon social conventions in favor of her metaphysical inquiries. While family pride, religious convention, and legal authority insist that Silas is a respectable man and that Maud will be safe in his care, Maud's curiosity and anxious temperament compel her to try to understand Silas at a different level. During her time speaking to Monica about Silas and then living with him and her cousins, it gradually becomes apparent that pride, convention, and authority are obstacles to, rather than guides for, her attempts to understand what kind of soul is "clothed in [Silas's] flesh" (194). At first, Maud believes that having any "misgivings about Uncle

Silas" is like "questioning the foundations of [her] faith, and in itself an impiety," and she

subsequently adopts her father's resolve to demonstrate Silas's innocence herself (197).

By using the language of "faith," Maud not only reveals the depth of her resolution but

also the ways in which her convictions stem directly from a lack of real knowledge.[59] She

does not understand the conventions that insist upon the respectability and authority of

patriarchs, religious institutions, and legal documents, nor does she know about the

history of violence that maintains them. In order to survive in the end, Maud must trust

the lowly Meg Hawkes, who is routinely abused by her own father, recognize the

"hypocrisy" of Silas's religious sentiments, and flee the estate to which she is legally

bound (478). After her experiences at Bartram-Haugh, Maud abandons conventional

religion in favor of hiring Dr. Bryerly, "the best and truest of ministers," to manage her

estates; she dreads legal authority and "the horrors of the witness-box," which she

narrowly escapes; and she prays for "the blessed second-sight" that would enable her to

"recognize under these beautiful forms of earth the ANGELS who wear them" (477, 479,

480). These final decisions, guided by Maud's belief that the "world is a parable—the

habituation of symbols—the phantom of spiritual things immortal shown in material

shape," demonstrate that the epistemological authority Maud wields to tell her own story

is contingent upon Maud's decision to divorce metaphysical inquiries from conventional

thinking completely (480).

In the end, Maud presents an interpretation of the "parable" of the world in which

inscribing specters onto the void demonstrates a better understanding of her situation than

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[59] Crawford describes the driving narrative force in *Uncle Silas* as a "crisis of faith": "it is a crisis of faith in which all accepted ideas about life and the goodness of God are being undermined by irrational forces. All of [Maud's] faith in the goodness of the Ruthyn family, and herself as a good Ruthyn, is undermined by her evil Uncle Silas" (3).

placing faith in legal documents ever could. Milbank describes the difference between the two possibilities and connects Maud's emphasis on the continuum between the "material and spiritual" worlds to her "liberation": "The fusing of social with metaphysical liberation in *Little Dorrit* and *Uncle Silas* should not, therefore, be understood in terms of a mystification of the material, but rather in terms of a Swedenborgian transposition of the qualities of the material and the spiritual" (160). In other words, Maud does not prioritize hazy metaphysical ideas about good and evil over clear social relationships in a tangible material world. Instead, when Maud and other characters place their faith in legal documentation, they effectively mystify "the material" in a manner consistent with Punter's description of the law as "a purified abstract whole, perfected according to the processes of taboo, which can find no purchase on the doubled, creviced, folded world of the real" (2). Placing faith in a legal document involved implicitly eliding the law's origins in an impure, fragmented, and flawed material world. In contrast, validating her own perception of the "transposition of the qualities of the material and spiritual" in the world only requires that Maud trust her own phenomenological experiences.

<center>iv. Conclusion</center>

The history of Western philosophy as it exists today begins with Socrates's conviction that one of the most dangerous mistakes that we can make is assuming that our understanding of anything—our world, our families, or even ourselves—is complete. Whereas Socrates sought to persuade people that they need to question their knowledge, contemporary feminist epistemologists emphasize the need to question the structures of power that shape and constrict our knowledge. The document-images that unite legal and Gothic concerns in *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* not only force Jane and Maud to question

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what they know but also highlight for readers the systems of power that influence their understandings in the first place.

Without the letter from her uncle, Jane would not question her status as a penniless orphan, a status that makes her so desperate for any affection at all that she ignores the implications of Rochester's manipulations. Without Mr. Mason's testimony, Jane would not question her assertion that she is Rochester's equal, an assertion that blinds her to the power that Rochester has over her. Finally, without seeing her own name in print, Jane would not question her decision to abandon her own desires, a decision that leaves her leading the same kind of life that she found too limited when she chose to leave Lowood. In a similar vein, without seeing the codicil to her father's will, Maud would not question her father's commitment to the family name or her commitment to her father's wishes, commitments that prevent them from recognizing Silas's fiendish nature. In each situation, the documents do not operate by flatly contradicting Jane's and Maud's existing knowledge or by simply providing new knowledge. Instead, they provide enough new information to create uncertainty for Jane and Maud about the assumptions and rationalizations that they have made or accepted. This uncertainty pushes the young women to interrogate their knowledge beyond the scope of the issues immediately addressed by the documents they encounter, and their broader examinations of their lives ultimately enable them to author their own stories.

Whereas the legal documents create uncertainty that prompts Jane and Maud to develop better understandings of the world, the document-images embedded within Brontë's and Le Fanu's novels connect their heroines' personal uncertainties and epistemological limitations with the larger systems of power that both constrain people

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and offer them new avenues of expression. When Jane discovers that her uncle wants to adopt her, her fiancé is already married, and her pseudonym is suppressing her real passion, the novel demonstrates that her various, legally subjugated statuses—as an orphaned ward, as a dependent woman, and as a woman incognito—constrain her knowledge as well as her choices. Unlike her uncle, Mr. Mason, and Mr. Briggs, Jane does not have the status or expertise necessary to use the law as a means of developing better knowledge. Although the novel indicates that the powerless cannot necessarily take advantage of the law, it also suggests that the law can be used to challenge those with power. In particular, when Mr. Briggs insists that Rochester cannot marry Jane, his command over the law empowers him to resist Rochester's aristocratic attempts to dismiss him. Likewise, in *Uncle Silas*, the law fails to punish Silas and his son Dudley for the murders they commit, but the test that Austin establishes with his codicil reveal enough about them to convince Maud, Dr. Bryerly, and Monica of their guilt. In the process, the codicil as a document-image reveals that family loyalties and social conventions limit Maud's ability to recognize a threat just as much as Silas's legal authority over her limits her ability to live independently.

The uncertainty instigated by the document-images in *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* also connects both novels to the Gothic tradition by establishing the terms in which Jane and Maud are haunted. While Jane may perpetually be at risk of starving or living miserably alone and Maud spends a year at risk of being murdered, they are not haunted primarily by hunger, despair, or avaricious assassins. Instead, they spend their narratives highlighting the previous gaps in their knowledge that, had they persisted, would have prevented them from sharing their stories. When Jane and Maud spend wakeless nights

dwelling, they dwell on the mysteries that surround them, not the threats that face them. By manifesting in language the people and forces that deprive the heroines of the knowledge they need to prevail, the document-images share their hauntings with the readers.

In the end, *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* continue the eighteenth-century trend of portraying their protagonists as successful readers, but in the process, they also posit a world in which reading is becoming more complicated and more closely intertwined with social conventions and professional expertise. Jane may successfully identify the implications within her uncle's letter, Mr. Mason's testimony, and her own signature that enable her to uncover her family's history, escape her lover's domination over her identity, and reclaim her identity; yet, her ability to do so hinges first on Mr. Briggs's legal diligence. Likewise, Maud may eventually recognize her father's codicil as a test of Silas's character and accept that her uncle has failed, but she is initially too overwhelmed by its social authority to read it against the grain. In this way, the power of the document-images within *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* to haunt readers as well as the protagonists underscores the connection between growing influence of documents within nineteenth-century culture and the increasing difficulty of understanding them completely. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, this connection between the proliferation of documents and the increasing difficulty of interpreting them plays an integral role in the creation and systemization of archives, which subsequently regulate knowledge and bodies alike in new ways.

CHAPTER IV

HAUNTING PASSIVITY AND THE INCOMMUNICABILITY OF EXPERIENCES

IN *THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL* AND *IN A GLASS DARKLY*

Whereas *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas*, as well as several of Dickens's novels and

Gaskell's stories, twist new material out of the traditional Gothic imagery surrounding

cursed legacies by including legal professionals, Anne Bronte's *The Tenant of Wildfell

Hall* and Sheridan Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly* add medical professionals and treatments

to the traditional Gothic imagery surrounding stories about excess, corruption, and

madness.[60] Although they are less startling and graphic than their successors, mid-

century stories that combine medical inquests and Gothic tropes bridge the gap between

the Gothic genre of the eighteenth-century, with its statues of rotting corpses and

depictions of starving, neglected, and tortured women,[61] and the grotesque body horror of

the 1890s, with its mutations, doubles, and hybrids.[62] They also take advantage of Gothic

tropes, in their own ways, to create unique instances of haunting that speak to a set of

concerns distinct from the Darwin-induced nightmares that populate the novels of the *fin-

de-siècle*.

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (henceforth referred to as *Wildfell Hall*) and *In a

Glass Darkly* exemplify the ways in which mid-century stories could combine Gothic

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[60] While many more recent scholars, including Mighall and Turley Houston, have demonstrated that the Gothic tropes of cursed legacies, cycles of freedom and oppression, and spectral hauntings survived into the middle of the nineteenth-century in the works of Dickens, the Brontës, Collins, Reynolds, and Gaskell among others, there has been less attention paid to the Gothic narratives about degeneracy prior to the fin-de-siècle.

[61] The waxen statue of a rotting corpse in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the description of Agnes clutching her baby's corpse in the catacombs in Lewis's *The Monk* are popular examples of body horror in early Gothic stories.

[62] *The Curious Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Great God Pan*, and *The Picture of Dorian Grey* emphasize the terror that surrounds "unnatural" bodies.

tropes with medical inquests to create a sense of haunting for both characters and readers. Arthur Huntingdon's "orgies" resemble the barbarous parties enjoyed by Montoni's cronies and anticipate the horrific bacchanalias hosted by Helen Vaughn in *The Great God Pan*. Yet, unlike Manfred and Melmoth, Jennings and Barton do not simply accept the supernatural dimensions of their conditions, nor do they attempt to confront their conditions alone. Instead, they consult physicians and clergymen. And in contrast with the famously uncertain reality of James's story, the frame surrounding Le Fanu's stories exists, in part, to justify the "metaphysical" dimensions of each case.

The elaborate framing at work in both *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly* serves many purposes, and it is responsible for a substantial portion of the critical attention that both works have received in recent years. Several scholars, most notably Jan Gordon and William Crawford have argued that the narrative frames connect the books to the Gothic tradition and emphasize the role of textual recovery at work in both. In this chapter, I argue that the connection to the Gothic tradition facilitated by the narrative frames enables both works to participate in the ongoing exploration of empiricism's rhetorical requirements and limitations by demonstrating the artifice with which medical documents turn a human subject into an object of study. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Jane's and Maud's fictitious first person autobiographies, which include instances of faulty memories, recourses to diaries written earlier in life, and references to explanations and conclusions developed later in life, are well-suited for demonstrating how legal rhetoric can seemingly summon dead or distant persons, in part, because the narrator's perspectives are clearly limited. In contrast, the framed narratives that encapsulate Huntingdon's, Jennings's, and Barton's gradual degradations and eventual deaths can

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incorporate multiple points of view and voices, which increase the sense of distance between the readers and the subjects, while maintaining a unified focus that makes the subjects seem knowable and, subsequently, diagnosable.

Hence, I argue in this chapter that *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly* use Gothic tropes in order to explore the mechanisms employed by medical documents that turn a human subject into a diagnosable object. In both texts, the relationship between spiritual and physical ailments produces gaps in human understanding and language, which both works emphasize by utilizing the simultaneously abstract and concrete terms "degeneration" and "corruption" in ways that could refer to either aspect of human existence. These gaps become a source of haunting for ailing characters, the characters around them, and the readers because they indicate the incommensurability of human experiences and point toward a host of influences that are just beyond the range of human senses. By drawing attention to how the narratives are contained within obtuse images of documents, such as journals, letters, and case files, the frames indicate how these gaps can be crossed, but never closed, through rhetoric that creates the appearance of certainty.

i. Epistemological Dilemmas in *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly*

Although critical responses have explored how the limits of human knowledge and human reason affect Brontë's and Le Fanu's characters, they have not identified these limits as central to the premise of either the novel or the collection of stories. Instead, critics have focused on the efficacy of each work's framing technique[63] as well

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[63] In addition to Gordon's influential piece, which I discuss in detail, Arlene Jackson's "The Question of Credibility in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*," Lorene Birden's "Frank and unconscious humor and narrative structure in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*," and Garrett Stewart's "Narrative Economics in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*," and Melody Kemp's "Helen's Diary and the Method(ism) of Character Formation in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*" all focus on how Brontë's narrative frame influences her novel's relationship with its social context and her own biography. Likewise, Valentina Gabusi's "The

as the debates about gender roles,[64] legal inequities,[65] or health issues[66] encapsulated in

both works. Yet, both works' frames serve to draw multiple voices into the narrative

through a variety of document-images and emphasize the distance between the readers,

the narrators, the characters, and the central events of each story. This distance

underscores the ways in which the characters suffer as much from confronting the

limitations of their own knowledge as they do from romantic frustrations, domestic

abuses, haunting specters, or guilty associations. Furthermore, the characters' attempts,

and ultimate failures, to fill the gaps in their knowledge shape their narratives with

greater consistency and sensibility than their interpersonal conflicts or struggles against

supernatural forces.

    Jan Gordon's "Diary, Letter, Text: Anne Bronte's Narrative Tenant and the

Problematic of the Gothic Sequel" has become a common touchstone for contemporary

criticism about *Wildfell Hall*.[67] In particular, scholars cite the work that Gordon did to

redeem the novel's narrative frame, in which Gilbert Markham writes an improbably long

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Mirroring Frame: Narrative Device and Reflected Victorianism in *In a Glass Darkly*" focuses on how Le Fanu's narrative frame unites the individual stories from the text into a response to Victorian spiritualism.

[64] Maggie Berg's "'Let me have its bowels then': Violence, Sacrificial Structure, and Anne Bronte's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*" analyzes the treatment of animals and the language of hunting in Brontë's novel to argue that Helen's marriage to Markham in the novel's conclusion continues her objectification. Like many pieces on "Carmilla," Jarlath Killeen's "In the Name of the Mother: Perverse Maternity in 'Carmilla'" highlights the story's exploration of, and challenges to, femininity.

[65] Ian Ward's "The Case of Helen Huntingdon" draws upon an in-depth understanding of nineteenth-century laws to explain the radicalism of *Wildfell Hall*'s depiction of Helen's struggle to gain custody over her son. Carol Senf's "Three Ghost stories: 'The Judge's House,' 'An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in an Old House in Aungier Street,' and 'Mr. Justice Harbottle'" reveals a tradition of using the ghost story form to examine the ramifications of corrupt law-givers.

[66] Joan Bellamy's "*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*: What Anne Brontë Knew and What Modern Readers Don't" underscores the connection between Brontë's depiction of alcoholism and her awareness of serious drinking problems in nineteenth-century Britain. Daniel Lewis's "'I saw him looking at me': Male Bodies and the Corrective Medical Gaze in Sheridan Le Fanu's 'Green Tea,'" which I discuss in greater detail later in this chapter, uses Foucault's work from *The History of Clinic* to explicate Hesselius's social function as a physician.

[67] Stewart and Kemp, as well as Deborah Morse and Russell Poole, cite her article in their works.

story to his friend Halford about his relationship with Helen that eventually incorporates her first-person narrative via her transcribed diary, after previous critics, during and after the nineteenth century, suggested that it diminished the novel's dramatic potential. Gordon's argument in support of the frame emphasizes the novel's self-awareness about its own incompleteness. Throughout the course of the novel, characters come into conflict with one another as a result of believing that gossip, overheard conversations, or direct appeals can accurately give them an understanding of another's person's character. Helen, who first appears in the novel in the guise of a poor widow caring for her son, reveals in her diary that she married the rakish Huntingdon because she thought she could understand him on the basis of their conversations. Markham attacks Helen's brother Lawrence after misinterpreting a conversation he overheard between Lawrence and Helen and convincing himself that they were lovers, not siblings. Finally, most of the town accepts the malicious gossip spread by Eliza Millward, the former object of Markham's affections, as proof that Helen is Lawrence's secret lover. In each case, one character believes that he or she has enough information to understand and judge another character, and in each case, the information proves insufficient. When Helen gives Markham her diary, in which she recounts the disastrous events of her married life, she provides him with more knowledge, and higher quality knowledge, about her actual character than the other means of acquiring knowledge have offered him. Yet, the accuracy and utility of this knowledge is still limited, as the novel demonstrates in both dramatic and humorous ways, by Helen's self-understanding, Markham's interpretive skills, and, ultimately, human finitude and fallibility. Hence, if Brontë presented Helen's diary as the definitive,

complete, and absolute account of either Helen's or Huntingdon's character, she would risk perpetuating the harms of mistaking a partial view for the whole story.

Gordon connects the harms of mistaking a partial view for the whole story to the problem of retrieval that haunts all documents: "The dilemma of textuality, succinctly stated, is this: in their belatedness, texts are necessarily incomplete agents of recovery" (728). While Gordon's comment is consistent with the post-structuralist thought to which she is responding directly, it is also an implicit critique of the possibility that textual documents can reproduce empirical knowledge. Gordon's comment, along with Brontë's novel, suggests that language always fails to some extant in its attempt to capture and replicate sensory experiences and, more importantly, individual feelings and insights. Gordon clarifies this idea with regards to *Wildfell Hall* by noting, "Helen Huntingdon's diary/ms. is an attempt to set the record straight, but it leaves gaps in testament and chronology that cry out for closure much as gossip does" (728). In other words, although sharing her diary may ameliorate some of the interpersonal conflicts in Linden-Car, the small town to which she has fled, the gaps in Helen's account of her experiences compound the epistemological dilemma instigated by Eliza's gossip and fueled by Markham's incompetent spying. Helen tries to solve a problem created by excessive and untraceable language with more language, much of which is excessive and untraceable. Like Huntingdon's seductive flirting and Eliza's malicious gossip, Helen's diary accomplishes its purpose, in this case, explaining to Markham why she cannot enter into a romantic relationship while convincing him that Lawrence is her brother, not her lover. Yet, as Markham's comic anxiety and misunderstandings in the last quarter of the novel demonstrate, it does not give the country squire complete insight into her character.

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As with *Wildfell Hall*, *In a Glass Darkly* derives its emphasis on epistemological dilemmas from its frame. Indeed, since each of the stories collected in the book was previously published without the prefatory rationalizations offered by Dr. Hesselius's medical secretary or the editorial intrusions in which the secretary explains that he has excised some of Hesselius's remarks, it is possible to recognize how responses to some of the stories change when critics view them as part of a fictional collection of medial cases instead of independent tales of terror. In particular, when critics respond to the stories individually without regards for the frame, they tend to emphasize the symbolic significance of the stories' various objects of terror, whether it is a spectral monkey or a beautiful vampire.[68] In contrast, when critics take the frame into account, they are more likely to discuss the characters as psychological subjects, the act of diagnosis, and the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity.[69]

With its emphasis on psychology, diagnosis, and objectivity, Le Fanu's collection of ghost stories, unlike *Wildfell Hall*, does not indict accepting a partial perspective as definitive. Instead, it dramatizes, and subsequently problematizes, the distinction between developing a definitive view of a subject and accepting an insufficient view. In perhaps the most commonly cited line from the frame, Hesselius's secretary notes that the German physician "writes in two distinct characters" (5). When he describes the two

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[68] For example, Killeen's aforementioned piece on "Carmilla" focuses on maternal symbolism while Barbara Gates "Blue Devils and Green Tea: Sheridan Le Fanu's Haunted Suicides" analyzes the specters in "Green Tea" and "The Familiar" as symbols of their characters' alienated selves.

[69] For example, Gabusi's aforementioned piece analyzes Le Fanu's frame in order to the different perspectives his stories create for readers while John Langan's "Conversations in a Shadowed Room: The Blank Spaces in J. Sheridan Le Fanu's 'Green Tea'" examines the layers of narrative around Le Fanu's story, including its frame, to argue that it is a mediation on the absence of "firm epistemological ground" (315).

"distinct" writing styles in more detail, he effectively describes the difference between an insufficient view and a definitive view:

> He describes what he saw and heard as an intelligent layman might, and when in this style of narrative he had seen the patient either through his own hall-door, to the light of day, or through the gates of darkness to the caverns of the dead, he returns upon the narrative, and in the terms of his art, and with all the force and originality of genius, proceeds the work of analysis, diagnosis and illustration (5-6).

This passage creates several important associations that shape the rest of the book's exploration of epistemology. First, it associates "laymen" with "narrative." By doing so, it implies that most people understand their experiences as a series of events connected primarily by linear chronology. Second, it associates "genius" with "analysis, diagnosis and illustration," which suggests that, in order to develop superior knowledge about the world, someone must discover how experiences are related categorically rather than temporally. Furthermore, someone must be able to "illustrate" these connections for a third party. The elevation of analysis and diagnosis as elements of genius, over narrative, is important because it indicates that the best knowledge is not necessarily self-evident. Although empiricism has always relied on reasoned reflection as well as sensory experiences, the medical secretary's description places considerably more weight on the reasoned reflection component, which excuses Hesselius's tendency to diagnosis patients he has never personally seen or heard.

Although the distinction between "layman" and "genius" implied by the secretary's remarks seems to correspond genius with the scientific elevation of

aperspectival objectivity described by Daston, Le Fanu's stories complicate this binary in several ways. First, the secretary's remarks use overtly artistic language, rather than medical or scientific terms, to describe Hesselius's abilities. After employing an overwrought metaphor about "the gates of darkness," the secretary emphasizes the physician's "force and originality," rather than his knowledge, expertise, diligence, or careful consideration. Thus, even though "diagnosis" requires recognizable categories, part of Hesselius's "genius" involves creating original categories and convincing people to accept them through persuasive "force." Second, the stories continue to champion the necessity of Hesselius's originality by illustrating the failures of conventional responses to illness. Both strictly materialist physicians and narrowly spiritual clergymen provide no relief for persecuted men and women in Le Fanu's stories. As a result, Hesselius's "metaphysical" approach to medicine becomes a third way to treat patients, and more importantly, it represents a third epistemology separate from the ways of knowing offered by materialism and religion.

Yet, beyond the hero-worshipping secretary's bland testaments about Hesselius's miraculous abilities as a physician, *In a Glass Darkly* does not actually offer any evidence that Hesselius's methods work or, correspondingly, that his epistemology is viable. The physician merely comments, via his secretary, upon second- and third-hand reports of the events in "The Familiar," "Mr Justice Harbottle," "The Room in the Dragon Volant," and "Carmilla." In "Green Tea," Hesselius interacts with the afflicted Rev. Jennings directly but fails to save him. Since the stories do not portray any of Hesselius's successful treatments, they draw attention to the discrepancy between his rhetorically authoritative diagnoses and the lack of evidence that those diagnoses are

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effective. This discrepancy problematizes the collection's ostensible advocacy of Hesselius's epistemology. As a result, just as *Wildfell Hall*'s frame acknowledges the incompleteness of textual recoveries in order to prevent the novel from simply replacing one incomplete view with another, the frame for *In a Glass Darkly* introduces a new approach to understanding the world in order to raise questions about the relationship between authority and epistemology.

ii. Document-Images and Medical Discourse in *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly*

In order for *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly* to raise epistemological questions about the possibilities of recording sensory experiences or creating authority through rhetoric, both books must present readers with obtuse images of documents. Prior to reading and comprehending their contents, readers are confronted with the images of Helen's diary, Helen's letters, Hesselius's medical files, and Hesselius's notes. By reminding readers that documents can be edited, destroyed, repurposed, and archived, these images situate the readers at a distance from the subjects of the narratives. Rather than encouraging readers to identify or sympathize with Huntingdon when he succumbs to his alcoholism or Hesselius's subjects like Jennings and Barton as they succumb to their ailments, encountering these obtuse images of documents put readers in the same position as someone studying a case history and enables them to view the subjects of those histories as objects of medical inquiry.

The frame narratives for both *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly* immediately remind readers that documents can be repurposed. Many scholars have commented upon the ways in which Markham's use of Helen's diary resembles an economic exchange,

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since he is trying to settle his debt with Halford.[70] In addition, Helen, Hargrave, and Markham use books throughout the novel as excuses for starting or avoiding conversations; Helen uses the diary she wrote to ease her troubled mind as a means of demonstrating her innocence; and Markham scours Helen's letters to Lawrence for any sign of her feelings about him. *In a Glass Darkly* begins with Hesselius's secretary converting the physician's medical files into stories that might entertain laypeople. As with Markham's use of the diary, there is an implicit economic dimension to the secretary's decision, since he would presumably profit from selling the stories for entertainment. Furthermore, as the secretary outlines the origin of each story, he suggests that Hesselius discovered some of them, especially "The Room in the Dragon Volant," as stories before choosing to study them as medical cases.

Since the narrative frames create space for interpreting and reinterpreting the purpose of every document contained within the works, the books push the readers farther away from the events and characters of the narratives than a first-person narrative like *Jane Eyre* or *Uncle Silas* would. Moreover, recontextualizing these narratives draws attention to the relationship between form and function and challenges the concept that form could ever be stable. When the frames repurpose the document-images, the images continue to carry traces of their previous functions, and the impossibility of ever fully recovering the original context and purpose of the narrative can contribute to the sense of haunting at work within the stories. Huntingdon, Jennings, and Barton are not just haunted by their ailments; they are haunted by the possibility that their conditions cannot be treated because they are incommunicable. All three men indicate that they have difficulty connecting their sensations, thoughts, and experiences with words, and the

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[70] Stewart's and Berg's aforementioned articles are examples of this vein of scholarship.

frame narratives mimic this difficulty for the readers. Just as physicians and other caretakers must try to reconstruct a patient's condition from the patient's incomplete testimony and oftentimes decontextualized symptoms, readers must try to reconstruct the original narrative after it has been altered and resituated.

Finally, presenting the stories as document-images associates them with the medical archives that became part of social organization in the nineteenth century. As documents, Markham's, Helen's, and Hesselius's papers can be sorted, filed, and referenced as part of the evolving interpretation of what constitutes a normal, healthy body. Previous scholarship on both works has addressed the ways in which Brontë and Le Fanu portray the dissolute (and by comparison, the healthy) human body. Indeed, comparing Brontë's dramatization of Huntingdon's alcoholic dissolution to her experiences witnessing the dissolution of her own brother, Branwell, has been a staple of scholarship about *Wildfell Hall* for many years.[71] Recently, Daniel Lewis drew upon Foucault's ideas in *The Birth of the Clinic* to argue that Le Fanu's "Green Tea" dramatizes the "normative and disciplinary purposes" of "the physician and his gaze" (par. 2). Specifically, he argues that "Dr. Hesselius's medical gaze" attempts to regulate Jennings's unproductive, and therefore insufficiently masculine, body (par. 2).

While existing scholarship has explored how the portrayals of medical treatments in *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly* reflect the disciplinary function of the hospital described by Foucault, it has not examined the connections between the works' shared emphasis on documentation and the power of the archive that Foucault discusses in *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault explicitly connects the disciplinary work of examinations, including medical examinations, to the accumulation of documents in

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[71] For example, Lucasta Miller refers to this association in *The Brontë Myth* (28).

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archives: "The examination leaves behind it a whole meticulous archive constituted in terms of bodies and days. The examination that places individuals in a field of surveillance also situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them" (189). Patients' charts may have initially been a byproduct of the means by which hospitals compelled patients to display themselves. Yet, as these documents became ubiquitous, as a "system of intense registrations" and a "medical code of symptoms" grew alongside the examinations, they became indistinguishable from the institutions that produced them and the subjects they represented (189).

In this regard, medical archives enabled physicians to codify the idea of a "normal" body, against which they could define their patients' bodies as ill or deviant: "the accumulation of documents, their seriation, the organization of comparative fields [made] it possible to classify, to form categories, to determine averages, to fix norms" (Foucault 190). As the archives grew, physicians no longer had to diagnose symptoms on the basis of idealized concepts of human performance. Instead, they could diagnose patients by measuring the functions of their patients' bodies and comparing them to an acceptable range of functioning derived from the data in the archives. *In a Glass Darkly*, which presents its stories as medical files and repeatedly cites nonexistent essays and footnotes, is particularly engaged with the evolving relationship between archiving and diagnosis. Yet, the detailed account of Huntingdon's dissolution contained in Helen's diary and letters must become part of an archive of sorts before Markham can find them among his "old papers." Thus, even though the characters in *Wildfell Hall* do not actively draw from archival knowledge the way Hesselius and his secretary do, the novel,

especially at its most didactic moments, seems aware that the characters' observations will inevitably become part of an archive. Ultimately, the documentary, and therefore archivable, form of each work indicates its concern with the possibility of normatizing the physically and spiritually blurred concepts of "degeneration" and "corruption."

iii. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

While previous scholars have associated *Wildfell Hall* with the Gothic, its engagement with Gothic tropes is usually only incidental to their discussions, and for the most part, critics have been content to acknowledge that it is connected to the Gothic on the basis that the other Brontës' more famous novels overtly drew upon Gothic imagery.[72] Yet, *Wildfell Hall*'s engagement with Gothic tropes contributes to a sense of haunting that is crucial to the story's most climactic moments, especially Huntingdon's death. It has cycles of oppression and escape that culminate in Helen's midnight flight to the novel's eponymous setting. It has several layers of recovered documents, most notably Helen's diary but also Milicent's and Helen's letters. It has a pseudo-Gothic villain in the form of Huntingdon, who like Manfred and Montoni appears most villainous in conjunction with his seemingly more principled counterpart, Hargrave. Like *The Italian* and *The Monk*, it also has an obsession with corruption and damnation. Most importantly, the titular setting establishes the novel's connection to one of the most well-established Gothic tropes, the ancient manor. Markham's early description of Wildfell Hall is so full of Gothic images that it almost becomes a pastiche. This shades everything associated with its eponymous tenant and lends Gothic drama to incidents that may otherwise be read as realistic, if melodramatic, scenes from an unhappy woman's

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[72] Gordon's reference to *Wildfell Hall* as a "Gothic sequel" exemplifies this trend, since she only connects the novel to the Gothic through its similarities with *Wuthering Heights*.

marriage. Overall, the novel's use of Gothic tropes enables it to critique its characters' reliance on their own sensory perceptions and experiences by drawing attention to the flaws that inevitably plague their interpretations in a post-lapsarian existence. These flaws, including faulty perceptions, failures to communicate sensory experiences in language, and failures to act upon knowledge when it is available, haunt the characters into remaining passive instead of accepting the inevitability of errors.

Markham's description of the ancient hall contains several layers that introduce the novel's central concerns about the relationships between interiors and exteriors and limits of interpretation. His very first remark contrasts the building's appearance with its function: "Wildfell Hall, a superannuated mansion of the Elizabethan era, built of dark grey stone, – venerable and picturesque to look at, but doubtless, cold and gloomy enough to inhabit (22-3). The hall's intriguingly violent name, its ancient construction, and its presumably unpleasant living conditions connect it to its Gothic predecessors like Otranto and Udolpho, which were also notoriously bewildering to navigate. Markham further connects Wildfell Hall to the tradition of disorienting locations in Gothic fiction when he notes that "the gigantic warrior that stood on one side of the gateway, and the lion that guarded the other, were sprouted into such fantastic shapes as resembled nothing either in heaven or earth, or in the waters under the earth" (23). Due in part to neglect and strong winds, the hall's decorations no longer convey intelligible information about the time or place to which the hall belongs. Instead, it is an object outside of time and outside the purviews of heaven, earth, or the seas. Thus, while Markham concedes that it is "picturesque to look at," he can only try to understand it in relation to his "young imagination" and "the ghostly legends and dark traditions [his] old nurse had told [him]

respecting the haunted hall and its departed occupants" (23). By mentioning his old nurse's stories, Markham inadvertently indicates that all of his language, which emphasizes terms like "stern," "gloomy," "desolate," "torturing," "abandoned," and "withered," may stem from "ghostly legends and dark traditions" rather than the empirical qualities of the hall and its grounds. Thus, in a single page, Markham introduces the possibilities that form does not match function, objects can fail to convey intelligible information, and descriptions may contain previous layers of interpretation.

The concerns raised in Markham's description of Wildfell Hall retroactively add layers to the previous chapter's preoccupation with the question of its tenant's identity, since the novel's title aligns the hall with Helen Graham. The first chapter provides three different methods of introducing Helen to Markham (and by extension, the reader), and each method proves insufficient. First, Markham's mother and his sister, Rose, discuss the rumors circulating about "the apparent, or non-apparent circumstances, and probable or improbable history of the mysterious lady" (15). Second, after actually meeting Helen, Rose tells Markham about her "appearance, manners, and dress, and the very furniture of the room she inhabited" (16). Third, Markham sees Helen for himself when they both attend church (17). These introductions to Helen fail to help Markham understand her, in part, because he is distracted by his breakfast, his irritation with Rose's excessive details, and Helen's physical beauty respectively.

Markham's initial introductions to Helen also fail to help him understand the mysterious "widow" because they contain too many layers on unreliable interpretation. The first mention of Helen in the Markham household stems from seemingly source-less rumors. Mrs. Markham and Rose have no empirical experiences to discuss; they simply

circulate an increasing mass of non-signifying language. This insignificant circulation

results in Fergus's humorous declaration that he hoped Helen would turn out to be a

"witch," which comically indicates how Gothic tropes can grow out of the distance

between language and experience while suggesting that all rumors convey a communal

bias in favor of scandalous interpretations. When Rose describes Helen and her residence

to Markham, she evidently focuses too much on domestic concerns to interest the

gentleman farmer, who sees her descriptions as coded "trivial." Finally, when Markham

observes Helen in person during the church service, he is too self-conscious about the

impropriety of staring at a young woman when he should be heeding the service to

consider the possible sources of her guarded appearance. Instead, because he is hyper-

aware of the fact that he should not be evaluating her attractiveness, he cannot interpret

his sensory impressions in anyway other way.

In addition to reflecting the novel's concerns with the limits of perception and

interpretation and their effects on interpersonal relations, Markham's description of

Wildfell Hall introduces the novel's preoccupation with degeneracy and corruption.[73] By

referencing "ghostly legends" and "dark traditions," Markham implies that the building's

physical decay is linked to a period of moral decline. Helen's residence in the decrepit

hall is subsequently linked to her own suspected moral decline as well, first by rumor and

eventually by Markham. Ironically, Helen's relocation to Wildfell is linked to moral

decline, but not her own, as the residents of Linden-Car suspect. Instead, the middle

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[73] Russell Poole outlines the novel's consistent preoccupation with "corruption" in "Cultural Reformation and Cultural Reproduction in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*." In particular, Poole explains: "The impurity upon which Helen focuses a special detestation is human 'corruption.' The word, in various senses, including 'evil nature, the old Adam,' is normally associated with her first husband Arthur Huntingdon, along with his friends Grimsby and Hattersley" (860). He goes on to note that the word 'corruption' also appears in association with Markham and with Helen herself.

section of the novel reveals that the degeneracy of her husband, Huntingdon, and the possible corruption of her son, Arthur, drive Helen into the antiquated refuge.

Helen's refusal to communicate links the novel's preoccupation with corruption and degeneration to its exploration of the limits of interpretation. When she initially dismisses the possibility of seeking her brother's help before her first failed attempt at escaping, Helen notes, "even if I told him [Lawrence] *all* my grievances, which I should be very reluctant to do, he would be certain to disapprove the step" (352). In the end, Helen's belief about Lawrence's disapproval turns out to be wrong, but her understanding of the relationship between verbal communication and reasoned understanding remains telling. Helen's comment indicates that she does not believe that someone who heard a full description of "*all* her grievances" would form the same conclusion about the best way to address them that she has. In this way, Helen flatly denies the possibility that language can sufficiently recreate empirical experiences. Helen does not suggest that she is afraid Lawrence will not believe her. She is afraid that Lawrence will not understand her because her words cannot actually replicate her experiences with suffering for her brother. Hence, Helen's belief brings together *Wildfell Hall*'s dual preoccupations with corruption and gossip by implying that verbal communication is always a degenerated imitation of experience. As gossip circulates, it becomes a more and more corrupted version of the empirical experiences that instigated it. For example, through the force of gossip, signs that Helen and Lawrence have a relationship become evidence that they are lovers. Within this context, Helen's refusal to subject the most intimate and traumatic experiences of her life to the degenerative powers of language may be justified, even it proves unwise.

However, Helen's concerns about the insufficiency of language only addresses the first layer of corrupted knowledge, since in the world of *Wildfell Hall*, first-hand empirical experience is already an insufficient means of acquiring knowledge because humans are flawed perceivers. Helen demonstrates her faith in first-hand experience when she confronts Huntingdon about his affair with his friend Lowborough's wife Annabella. After spying on Huntingdon and Annabella from the hedges, she explains to her husband that she has "trusted to the testimony of no third person" (305). Here, her comment reflects her distrust of verbal reports while affirming her faith in her own senses. Yet, although this scene occurs chronologically before Markham spies on Helen and Lawrence in an almost identical passage, it appears later in the novel, and Helen's certainty that she understands the significance of her experience seems ironic in light of the violence that ensues when Markham draws the same conclusion from similar evidence.

While it might seem reasonable to argue that Helen draws the correct conclusion and Markham draws the wrong conclusion because Helen is a wiser and a better interpreter than Markham—and to some extent, this is certainly true—the novel establishes enough similarities between them as observers that this conclusion is too reductive. The novel portrays both Helen and Markham as thoughtful but flawed observers. In particular, the novel uses encounters with document-images to distinguish between characters through their attention to, and good sense about, art, and both Helen and Markham have sharp artistic sensibilities. Markham initially endears himself to Helen by making helpful comments about her painting rather than trying to engage her in small talk, and Helen aids her friend Milicent with "critical observation[s]" about her

drawings (85-6, 144). In contrast, Huntingdon dismissively scans Milicent's sketches without commenting upon them before encouraging Helen to ignore the Vandyke painting that he offered to show her as an excuse to get her away from Wilmot (144, 146). Furthermore, the novel ties artistic sensibility to thoughtful observation in general through Helen's artistic philosophy. While discussing her painting with Markham, Helen explains, "I am always troubling my head about how I could produce the same effect [as the reflection of the light on the water] upon the canvas; and as that can never be done, it is mere vanity and vexation to the spirit" (86). Here, Helen indicates her belief that art should replicate the effects of experiencing nature first-hand. Thus, the characters who can comment insightfully upon art must also be careful empirical observers of nature. Yet, by noting not only that she cannot "produce the same effect" but also that "it is mere vanity" to try, she hints at not just the limits of her own artistic talent but also the limits of human perception.

In addition to failing to recreate sensory data in art, Markham and Helen fail to act upon the faith they claim to have in their abilities to measure other characters' personalities. Despite claiming to have measured Helen's soul, Markham still expresses outrage at "the contrast between her outward seeming and her inward mind" after spying on her walk with Lawrence, and despite judging Huntingdon as neither a "sage nor a saint" by his general countenance, Helen agrees to marry the rake (124, 136). In this regard, behavior is the final layer of corruption in the degeneracy of knowledge dramatized within the novel. In addition to insufficiently conveying knowledge through language or insufficiently acquiring knowledge through faulty perceptions, the characters' actions do not consistently reflect the knowledge they have or claim to have.

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Just as the insufficiency of language in *Wildfell Hall* is not the result of describing things poorly and faulty perceptions are not the results of careless observations, Markham's and Helen's behavioral inconsistencies are not necessarily markers of either poor decision-making or hypocrisy. Instead, both characters self-consciously assess their warring impulses and seem confused about the results. In particular, when Helen's aunt catches her receiving passionate kisses from Huntingdon, she commands Helen to explain what happened. Helen's simple and ashamed admission that she "could not help it" is poignant for several reason (170). First, at the simplest and most sympathy-inducing level, Helen is blamed for Huntingdon's actions. Second, Helen's situation in an oppressive patriarchal society leaves her without a means of arguing that she should not be blamed for Huntingdon's actions. Likewise, Helen's situation leaves her without a means of defining her sexual attraction to Huntingdon, signified by the red blush on her chest that makes her unfit for society according to her aunt, or reconciling that attraction with the implicit violence of his forceful kisses (167-8). Finally, Helen simply does not understand why her resolution to resist the advances of an unworthy gentleman falters. Helen's "I couldn't help it aunt" reflects all of these factors (170). She does not know why should be blamed. She does not know how to defend herself from an unjust accusation. She does not know how much her sexual attraction to Huntingdon influences her behavior, and she does not know how predatory his ostensibly passionate kisses are. Most of all, she does not understand why humans will always transgress in a fallen world.

Hence, Huntingdon's climactic deathbed scenes are crucial to the novel because they provide a new lens on all of the obstacles that Helen and Markham have confronted. These scenes use Gothic tropes to bring together the novel's view of life in a fallen

world, in which perception, communication, and behavior always fail in the end, with the consequences of falling prey to the passivity-inducing influence of its corruption. Huntingdon's inability to repent for his sinful ways shapes the conflict between the dissolute man and his estranged wife, and in the novel's most Gothic refrain since Markham's description of Wildfell Hall, Huntingdon is haunted throughout their discussions by his uncertainty about the afterlife. In one of her letters to Lawrence, Helen explains how her husband focuses on the fate of his body to avoid confronting his fears about his soul: "Often he dwelt with shuddering minuteness on the fate of his perishing clay – the slow, piecemeal dissolution already invading his frame; the shroud, the coffin, the dark, lonely grave, and all the horrors of corruption" (445). Helen's summary of Huntingdon's terror resembles Markham's description of Wildfell Hall. Both employ a litany of popular Gothic terms—in this case, "shroud," "coffin," "grave," and "horrors"—and both describe a slow "dissolution" that leaves an object unrecognizable. Moreover, while Markham alluded to the possibility of "corruption" with his references to "dark traditions," Helen mentions it as the explicit source of Huntingdon's terror. The resemblance between these descriptions helps to situate Huntingdon's death as the counterpart to the tyranny that drove Helen into the ancient manor; Helen's purgatorial year in Wildfell Hall and Huntingdon's death originate from the same corruption.

Prior to his alcohol-induced final crisis, Huntingdon's struggle with his ailments and discussions with Helen revisit all of the epistemological obstacles that the characters have faced throughout the novel. When Helen first arrives at his bedside, Huntingdon's feverish state prevents him from perceiving her well enough to recognize her. Instead, he vacillates between referring to her as one of his lovers and assuming she is some kind of

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hallucination (424-5). After he finally recognizes her, Huntingdon immediately suspects that her motives are a confusing blend of selfish and self-righteous, and this suspicion prevents Helen from communicating with him. In particular, when she agrees to let Huntingdon see his son, he interprets the boy's shyness in his presence as a sign that Helen has been teaching him to hate his father. Even when Helen explains Arthur's shyness to Huntingdon by noting that she did not talk about Huntingdon at all because she wanted their son to "forget" the example set by his father, the invalid cannot comprehend her plan because he continues to view himself as the intended subject of her actions (427). Finally, and most overtly, Huntingdon cannot take the actions that may help him even after he runs out of objections to them. Even after he accepts the sincerity of Helen's arguments that he should repent, he claims that he cannot do so because, if he had the opportunity, he would indulge in his former vices again. When Huntingdon proclaims, "I *can't* repent; I only fear," he demonstrates that he knows what he should do, even though he cannot do it (445). Repenting is the only action that would alleviate his fear, but fear is an insufficient motive for repenting.

Furthermore, Huntingdon's insistence that he "*can't* repent" epitomizes his passivity throughout his final days. Haunted by his uncertainties about Helen, his health, the afterlife, and the possibility of salvation, Huntingdon succumbs to physical and moral paralysis. The novel blurs the two forms of paralysis by equating Huntingdon's inability to repent with his inability to recuperate. Helen's initial description of Huntingdon's condition instigates the idea that his ailments are equally spiritual and physical: : "He suffers much, and has no fortitude to bear him through. The immediate injuries he sustained from the accident [i.e. falling from his horse], however, were not very severe,

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and would, as the doctor says, have been but trifling to a man of temperate habits; but

with *him* it is very different" (423-4). All of Huntingdon's physical problems are

exacerbated by his moral failings. While Helen admits that he "suffers much," she

suggests that the greater problem is his lack of "fortitude." Moreover, with the authority

of the doctor behind her, Helen notes that a "a man of temperate habits" would not have

been injured as badly in the fall.[74] Moreover, throughout Huntingdon's extended

dissolution, the torments of the afterlife and the bodily dissolution of the present function

as metaphors for one another interchangeably. A thirsty Huntingdon claims that he is "in

hell already" and that it makes him feel like his heart is "burning" to "ashes" (427); yet,

when he thinks about what will happen after his death, he focuses on "the fate of his

perishing clay."

      The novel's emphasis on the dual nature of Huntingdon's ailments implies that a

"normal" human body is defined by both its physical performance and its moral rectitude.

The importance of a normal human body enters the novel through the minor role of

Huntingdon's doctor. All of the uncertainty that plagues Helen and Markham in their

personal lives, and haunts Huntingdon in his spiritual crisis, contrasts with the certainty

with which the doctor can, and does, diagnosis the deficiencies in Huntingdon and,

ultimately, predict his death. In a final rebuke to the empirical measurements promoted

by Helen and Markham earlier in the novel, the doctor's diagnosis depends as much on

his assessment of Huntingdon's moral failings as it does on his attention to Huntingdon's

temperature or pulse. When Helen repeats the doctor's diagnosis in her letter to

Lawrence, she notes that he commented on Huntingdon's "habits," rather than the

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[74] Ultimately, Huntingdon's lack of fortitude and intemperate habits, combined with his inability to repent, doom him to an early grave when he succumbs to his alcoholism and drinks himself into a stupor.

strengths or weaknesses of his constitution. Furthermore, he criticizes Huntingdon's habits by distinctly putting them into contrast with the habits of a more "temperate" man, and Helen underscores this contrast by putting "*him*" in italics when insisting that Huntingdon differs from the doctor's proscribed norm.

Thus, Huntingdon's extended deathbed scenes provide some of the only epistemological certainty in the novel by suggesting that there is such a thing as a normal human body. However, in order to make this suggestion plausible amidst all of the existing doubt and uncertainty in the novel, Brontë must use document-images to create considerable distance between the readers and doctor's diagnosis. She begins to create this distance by employing an unprecedented level of narrative mingling. While Markham's voice narrates the first section of the novel through letters based on his journals and Helen's voice narrates the middle section of the novel through the literal reproduction of her diary, Markham's and Helen's voices intertwine in the end as Markham narrates his interactions with Lawrence, comments on his feelings about Helen's situation with Huntingdon, reproduces some of Helen's letters to Lawrence, and summarizes others. By mingling Markham's and Helen's voices, Brontë prevents the story from ever focusing entirely on Huntingdon's ailments. Markham only learns about the development of Huntingdon's condition because he scours Helen's letters to her brother for any indication that she has feelings for himself. As a result, the readers and the narrator have an overtly different relationship to the letters that inadvertently produces better knowledge. This is consistent with the rest of the novel, which suggests that repurposed documents are the most accurate sources of information. Helen's diary, Millicent's letters, and Helen's letters are most effective when they serve an agenda

beyond their original purpose. Helen first uses her diary as a talking cure, but it serves her

best as a reminder to herself and a means of communicating with Markham. Likewise,

her friend Millicent's letters only convince Huntingdon's friend and Millicent's husband

Hattersley that he should reform because they were never supposed to reach him. The

possibility that distance and indirection are crucial to developing good knowledge makes

the novel's documentary and elaborately framed structure even more important than the

critics have already suggested, and in the final section of this chapter, I will return to

these ideas after I examine how *In a Glass Darkly* also employs Gothic tropes to explore

the relationship between uncertainty, haunting, and passivity.

<div align="center">iv. In a Glass Darkly</div>

Unlike *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, *In a Glass Darkly* maintains a consistent and

overt connection to the Gothic tradition, and previous scholarship on the collection has

focused on the ways in which Le Fanu adds new dimensions to old tropes about spirits,

ghosts, and vampires. In particular, critics have argued that Le Fanu adds psychological

depth to the metaphors of Gothic fiction and that he uses them to explore the metaphysics

of Swedenborg's theology.[75] Yet comparing the Gothic tropes in Le Fanu's collection to

their counterparts in Brontë's novel highlights several aspects of *In a Glass Darkly* that

critics have not sufficiently addressed. Specifically, comparing how Le Fanu's characters,

especially Jennings and Barton, respond to their ailments with Helen's and Huntingdon's

responses reveals that unnatural passivity is a marker of the haunted mind in medical-

Gothic fiction and not just a character flaw, as Lewis suggests in his analysis of Jennings.

Likewise, examining the characters' mutual obsessions with degeneracy and corruption

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[75] Jack Sullivan's "'Green Tea': An Archetypal Ghost Story" exemplifies this trend, which began with M.R. James's reflections on Le Fanu's work.

suggests that the ambiguous relationship between the physical and spiritual, or the abstract and the concrete, is a primary source of haunting in much of Gothic fiction. The texts' shared use of frame narratives to emphasize and contain this uncertainty also underscores how document-images always combine the abstract and concrete through their contents and materiality.

However, unlike *Wildfell Hall*, *In a Glass Darkly* does not indicate that uncertainty is the inevitable result of living in a fallen material world. Instead, Le Fanu's stories suggest that uncertainty is the product of definite physical limitations. In contrast to the more conventionally Christian cosmology discussed in *Wildfell Hall*, *In a Glass Darkly* draws upon Swedenborg's writings to describe a universe in which the spiritual realm is an extension of, rather than a transcendence from, the material world. Within the cosmology of *In a Glass Darkly*, uncertainty develops when humans transgress the limits of the material world and encounter the spiritual, which their minds and senses are not prepared to process. The greater emphasis that *In a Glass Darkly* places on the roles of the physician and documentation reflects its view on the origins of uncertainty. Whereas *Wildfell Hall* implies that a healthy body sustained through temperate behavior can mitigate, but never escape, uncertainty, *In a Glass Darkly* explores the idea that the causes of uncertainty can be diagnosed like the causes of an infection and potentially "cured" as well. By replicating Hesselius's diagnoses as medical documents, Le Fanu's stories fabricate a clearer portrait of a "normal" human body than Brontë's novel because they locate the roots of uncertainty in the individual characters' senses, rather than the fallen state of humanity.

Jennings from "Green Tea," Barton from "The Familiar," the eponymous judge from "Mr. Justice Harbottle," Beckett from "The Room in the Dragon Volant," and Laura from "Carmilla" all suffer from bouts of extended, unnatural passivity. Jennings first comes to Hesselius's attention because when his health breaks down, he stops officiating in the middle of his sermons and becomes "apparently quite unable to resume" (7). Barton spends most of his story confined to his bed, and like Huntingdon, he insists that he cannot seek God's help because he does not have "belief enough to pray" (61). After his nightmarish experience with Chief-Justice Twofold, Harbottle's "ferocious joviality" never returns and he loses his "iron energy and banter" (111). Finally, under Carmilla's influence, Laura's "energies seemed to fail [her]" so that she was unable to extricate herself from the vampire's "foolish embraces" (264).

Moreover, the stories explicitly tie the characters' passivity to their sense of haunting. For example, Jennings cannot read his sermon because the spectral monkey that is haunting him stands upon his text, and he cannot pray when the monkey speaks directly into his mind. The Irish Clergyman who narrates "The Familiar" provides the most detailed explanation of the connection between passivity and haunting when he diagnoses Barton's "blue devils": "The mind thus turned in upon itself, and constantly occupied with a haunting anxiety which it dared not reveal or confide to any human breast, became daily more excited, and, of course, more vividly impressible, by a system of attack which operated through the nervous system" (58). While readers can only infer the connections between Helen's unwillingness to communicate or Huntingdon's inability to repent and the uncertainties that haunt them, the narrator's description of Barton's "haunting anxiety" explicitly outlines its causal, and cyclical, relationship with

passivity. Barton cannot determine whether he is being haunted by an actual

manifestation of a dead man or his own guilt. He is simultaneously unwilling to admit

that he sees a ghost, since he would appear insane, and that he is responsible for the

man's death, since it would reveal his guilt. As a result of his internal uncertainty and his

reluctance to seek external validation, Barton's mind "turned in upon itself," heightening

his anxiety. As his anxiety worsened, the narrator suggests, Barton's preoccupation with

it made it harder to "confide to any human breast." The inability to confide in anyone

made Barton more "impressible" and put more stress on his body, especially his "nervous

system," which in turn, made him more anxious. In other words, uncertainty causes

anxiety; anxiety creates a reluctance communicate; a reluctance to communicate puts

stress on the body; and putting stress on the body heightens the anxiety and maintains the

cycle.[76]

As with Helen and Huntingdon, the haunted characters in *In a Glass Darkly* suffer

from conditions that ambiguously blend spiritual and material dimensions. Just as

Huntingdon suffers from the "corrupting" influence of his physically damaging alcohol

consumption and his spiritually damaging self-indulgence, Jennings suffers from the

"degrading" influence of his physically taxing green tea habit and spiritually suspect

"fascination" with Paganism (20). Like Brontë's repeated use of "corruption," Le Fanu's

repeated use of "degrading" captures the ambiguity of his characters' conditions. In both

works, it is unclear if spiritual failings precede corporeal consequences, if material

actions entail spiritual reprisals, or if abstract and material forces are completely

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[76] Hesselius alludes to a similar cycle in Jennings's condition when he refers to the "poison" that led to the clergyman's suicide as "a poison which excites the reciprocal action of spirit and nerve, and paralyses the tissue and separates the cognate functions of the senses, the external and interior" (37). As with the Irish Clergyman's description of Barton, Hesselius's description of Jennings's conditions combines references to sensory uncertainty, spiritual haunting, bodily stress, and paralyzing passivity.

inseparable. This ambiguity not only prevents characters like Helen and Barton from communicating about their concerns but also prevents characters like Jennings, who want to communicate, from accurately conveying their experiences. When Jennings describes his encounters with the spectral monkey that haunts him, he refers to its "unfathomable malignity" as the only "peculiarity" that separates it from other small monkeys in appearance and suggests that its "power to dissipate thought" is "indefinable" (26, 30). By highlighting his inability to describe his extraordinary sensory experiences in empirical terms, Jennings draws attention to both the limitations of his language and the limitations of the epistemologies that shape it.

With the exception of Beckett, whose passivity is drug-induced and temporary, all of the Le Fanu's afflicted characters seek help from a mix of medical and spiritual professionals, and these professionals consistently fail because they provide advice that polarizes the physical and spiritual. Jennings dismisses a renowned physician, Harley, as a "*mere* materialist" who spoke of "optic nerves" instead of giving the "spirit its proper rank" (17, 28). In contrast, the clergyman who narrates "The Familiar" and advises Barton to pray does not address the physicality of his condition. Hesselius draws attention to the limits of the clergyman's diagnosis in his prefatory notes about the story: "The statement is, however, medically imperfect. [. . .] I should have been acquainted with Mr Barton's probable hereditary predispositions; I should have known, possibly, by very early indications, something of a remoter origin of the disease than can now be ascertained" (41). Here, Hesselius's critique of the clergyman's failure to consider "hereditary predispositions" serves as a counterpart to his implied critique of Harley's failure to consider the importance of Jennings's "degrading fascination" with Paganism

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or the possibility that his father "saw a ghost" (21, 12). In both cases, Hesselius advocates utilizing more expansive categories than either "*mere* materialist[s]" or clergymen.

While materialists may categorize a problem with specters as a problem with vision and clergymen may categorize a problem with anxiety as a problem with faith, Hesselius looks for a convergence of factors. However, in order to diagnose a condition by looking at a convergence of factors, Hesselius must defy the conventional epistemology practiced by other professionals. Materialists and clergymen alike believe they have a comprehensive understanding of the world and that new conditions should correlate to existing categories of phenomena. In the materialist worldview, an ailment occurs when something physical causes part of the body to perform differently than it has before. In the Church's worldview, an ailment occurs when someone morally transgresses and incites divine retribution, which can function subtly through internal guilt or overtly through spiritual manifestations. Both worldviews promote the understanding that the correlations between ailments and causes are consistent: If someone is hallucinating, it is almost always a sign of something wrong with the optic nerve; and if someone is anxious, it is almost always a sign of a concealed transgression. In contrast, just as similar overheard conversations in *Wildfell Hall* actually signify different relationships, Hesselius believes that the same symptom can indicate multiple possible causes.[77] A spectral phantom may signify a problem with the optic nerve, but it may also signify chemical abuse, cultural or religious transgressions, a hereditary nervous

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[77] In his concluding letter, Hesselius even notes that "spectral illusions" are "commonly confounded" with the condition he diagnosed in Jennings. He also notes that illusions are "no less simply curable than a cold in the head or a trifling dyspepsia" while his secretary described his prescriptions for Jennings as "curious" and seemingly "mystical" (38, 34).

condition, or the incursion of the spiritual realm into the material. Most likely, for the metaphysical doctor, it signifies some combination of these.

Hesselius's unconventional epistemology enables him to develop a methodology that resembles the modern examination system described by Foucault, rather than depending on an idealized model. While the totalizing worldviews of the materialists and the clergy that Jennings and Barton encounter necessarily rely on idealized concepts of either the human body or religion,[78] Hesselius relies upon correlations and averages derived from the documentation of accumulated data. Hence, both the physician and his secretary emphasize the number of "cases" that Hesselius has treated or studied involving similar conditions. In the conclusion to "Green Tea," Hesselius explains to his friend Van Loo that he has "met with, and treated, as [his] book shows, fifty-seven cases of this kind of vision" (38). In the prologue to "The Familiar," the secretary states that he selected the story out "of about two hundred and thirty cases, more or less nearly akin" to "Green Tea" (41). These statements imply that quantification, not just qualification, is a vital part of Hesselius's approach to medicine. In other words, Hesselius establishes his authority as a physician not just by demonstrating a detailed understanding of how a typical body should work according to the atlases of human anatomy, including his own *The Cardinal Functions of the Brain*, but also by indicating that he has enough experience with the conditions he discusses to isolate the most common ways that they present themselves across the population (38).

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[78] Late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century materialist physicians diagnosed patients, in part, by assessing how their bodies were functioning in contrast to an accepted understanding of how bodies should function according to theoretical standards. Daston and Galison describe how biologists and anatomists viewed these idealized "types" as more "true-to-nature" than individual specimens (42).

Because Hesselius focuses on correlations, rather than comparisons to ideal types, his methodology relies upon extensive cross-referencing. Since his medical secretary excises Hesselius's diagnoses from the stories themselves,[79] the prologues that maintain the original frame narrative throughout the book provide the best examples of Hesselius's diagnostic methodology. In each prologue, the secretary mentions the essays that Hesselius cross-references in his notes on each case. For "The Familiar," Hesselius references his "MS Essay, A. 17" and "A. 19," in which he demonstrates that the "vibratory disturbance" that can open the "interior sense" differs from a "cognitive disturbance" (42). For "Mr Justice Harbottle," he

  " and "Vol. II. Section 17 to 49" of his "extraordinary Essay on 'the Interior Sense, and the Condition of the opening thereof" (83). For "Carmilla," he references his essay "on a subject which he describes as 'involving, not improbably, some of the profoundest arcana of our dual existence, and its intermediates'" (243). By cross-referencing his essays, Hesselius emphasizes the similarities between the "disturbances" and "conditions" that ail the subjects of his studies more than the similarities or differences between the patients themselves.

Emphasizing the conditions more than the patients creates the impression that the patients are an interchangeable factor in Hesselius's case studies. While Hesselius may be interested in helping patients, he is primarily interested in understanding conditions associated with the "interior sense." When Jennings commits suicide, Hesselius defends

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[79] The parenthetical note inserted into "Green Tea" by the medical secretary that states that Hesselius's "opinion upon the case" would not "sufficiently interest a reader of the kind [he is] most likely to meet with, to warrant its being here reprinted" not only excuses Le Fanu from fabricating a detailed diagnosis of a fictional condition but also provides another reminder that the empirical rhetoric of doctors and scientists could be inaccessible to popular audiences. It is also another example of how documents can be manipulated as they are repurposed.

his perfect record with treating "sublimated," "precocious," and "interior" visions by noting that Jennings had not technically become his patient. This often commented-upon callousness reflects the physician's preoccupation with his superior knowledge about the subjects he studies.[80] He cannot admit that he failed to help a patient because it would indicate that there were limits to his professional mastery. Hesselius continues to defend his abilities by claiming that Jennings succumbed to "hereditary suicidal mania," which was a "totally different malady" from the one the physician had undertaken to treat (39-40). The physician's lack of concern for treating Jennings's "mania" as well as his visions highlights how his specialization affects his priorities. Hesselius is not primarily concerned with treating patients; he is concerned with treating a specific set of conditions. Hence, Hesselius concludes his defense by noting, "If the patient do not array himself on the side of the disease, his cure is certain" (40). This final remark demonstrates that the physician views Jennings and the visions as distinct factors in his case study. The possibility that patients may respond to ailments and treatments in unique ways strikes Hesselius as a liability, one for which the patients are responsible. In other words, Hesselius does not treat patients with a certain set of conditions; he treats a certain set of conditions, regardless of the patients.

Although Hesselius's emphasis on specific conditions can put patients who deviate from his quantified norms at risk, his specialization enables him to act with certainty in contrast to the uncertainty that plagues Helen, Huntingdon, Jennings, and Barton. Before he begins to diagnose Jennings, Hesselius questions Lady Mary about the vicar. His approach to questioning involves stating that Jennings is unmarried, used to

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[80] Sullivan's aforementioned article in particular dismisses Hesselius's attempts to defend himself as humorously self-centered.

write about theology, and used to drink "a good deal" of green tea, and that his father once saw a ghost, and listening to Lady Mary's affirmations (11-12). Many characters in Gothic fiction, including the haunted characters in *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly*, hesitate to describe their experiences because they fear that their senses failed them, that their language cannot convey their perceptions, or that their audiences will not believe them. In contrast, Hesselius is so confident in his ability to describe extraordinary experiences in empirical language that he supplies both the questions and the answers in conversation with Lady Mary and cites himself exhaustively in both his notes and conversations.[81]

Yet, since *In a Glass Darkly* never portrays any of Hesselius's successful treatments, his certainty and his callous self-obsession blur together in ways that suggest the physician's epistemology and methodology may require a problematic abandonment of human sympathy. In addition to his defensive response to Jennings's suicide, Hesselius demonstrates a lack of human sympathy in his approach to discussing the cases that constitute the stories in Le Fanu's collection. In contrast to Helen's descriptions of Huntingdon's final days, Hesselius's notes on the cases never express any concern for the suffering of the victims. Instead, he only remarks upon how the cases contribute to his understanding of metaphysical medicine and the interior sense and what kind of authority the narrators of the stories possess. With regard to the authority of the narrators, Hesselius favors professionally trained individuals,[82] contemporary written accounts,[83]

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[81] Hesselius exhibits similar arrogance when he notes, "Had I seen Mr Barton, and examined him upon the points in his case, which need elucidation, I should have without difficulty referred those phenomena to their proper disease" (42). Here again, the physician is confident that he not only knows the right questions to ask but also what information the answers will provide.

[82] Hesselius bemoans the Irish Clergyman's lack of medical training in the prologue to "The Familiar."

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and people with whom he has corresponded directly.[84] In contrast, he does not suggest

that receiving information directly from patients is important for understanding their

conditions. Even when he studies Jennings, he does not discriminate between the

information provided by Lady Mary and Jennings's direct testimony. Hence, the framing

of *In a Glass Darkly* suggests that the unmediated statements of the suffering characters

must be contextualized as stories by their narrators and re-contextualized as cases by

Hesselius before they can be correlated into medically useful information. Then, they

must be contextualized once more by the medical secretary before they can be consumed

by a general audience as medical-Gothic dramas.

v. Conclusion

Both *Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly* portray characters who are haunted into

passivity by an overwhelming sense of uncertainty. Both works suggest that the

characters' hauntings stem from corrupting, or degrading, influences that cannot be

isolated as either material or spiritual. Both works also imply that being "normal" can

help people endure or recover from these influences. Yet, being normal requires more

than just possessing a particular set of bodily measurements; it also requires conforming

to a particular set of behavioral expectations and maintaining a particular disposition.

Both texts emphasize this intersection of abstract and concrete concerns by conveying

their stories through obtuse images of documents that combine the concrete materiality of

the documents with the abstract language of their contents.

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[83] Hesselius prefers Trimmer's account of "Mr Justice Harbottle," which the secretary discovers was lost by one of the physician's colleagues, because it reproduces Doctor Hedstone's notes.

[84] Since Laura communicated with Hesselius directly about the events in "Carmilla," she is the only narrator to escape criticism beyond the secretary's disappointment that she is dead.

The joint emphasis on normalized bodies and normalized behaviors or dispositions blurs the relationships between causes and effects in ways that transmit the characters' hauntings to the readers. Whereas it may appear from *Wildfell Hall*'s didactic tone that Huntingdon's physical degradation stems from his moral transgressions, the doctor's assessment of his constitution and his final alcoholic lapse suggest that his physical weaknesses exacerbated his moral failures. Likewise, Hesselius's diagnoses may emphasize the nerves and fluids that expand a patient's senses into a terrifying spiritual dimension, but his case studies connect their subjects' ailments to the social and moral transgressions that exacerbate their nervous conditions. In cases like Jennings's, it remains unclear how much a nervous condition drives a patient's transgressive habits and how much the patient's habits contribute to his nervous condition. The perplexing push and pull between bodies and behaviors established in both works can create the impression that we can never anticipate the ramifications of our actions or fathom our impulses, leaving us to wonder if doing nothing really is the safest response to our terrifying uncertainties.

Although both works convey enough of haunting uncertainties to create sympathy for their suffering characters' passivity, neither work leaves readers with the impression that remaining inactive is a valid possibility. Instead, both texts use their frame narratives to establish the bases for escaping uncertainty in a world in which knowledge is inherently fragmented and incomplete. By establishing the terms for archiving knowledge, the frames also establish the bases for attaining certainty within particular contexts. In this regard, the differences between the frames reveal contrasting approaches to creating and sharing knowledge. In particular, the frames offer alternate perspectives

on how sympathy affects the purpose and accuracy of sharing sensory experiences through language.

Brontë's frame indicates that relationships play a vital role in how people convey and receive knowledge. When Markham gives his story, and Helen's story, to his brother-in-law and when Helen gives her diary to Markham, they are more concerned with repairing strained relationships through the action of sharing their stories than they are with conveying accurate knowledge about their lives. Even though they are not necessarily concerned with conveying their experiences accurately, the novel suggests that focusing on relationships produces the best knowledge anyway. By portraying understanding as inherently limited and communication through language as inevitably insufficient, *Wildfell Hall* implies that learning from each other requires a concerted effort to recover the knowledge that fragments as it is transmitted. In other words, sympathy precedes understanding because it is necessary for unifying fragmented knowledge. Yet, because the process of recovery can be infinitely regressive, the frame narrative represents the point at which it is arbitrarily cut off, not because the whole truth has been revealed but because the shared information should be sufficient for the relationship. In this regard, *Wildfell Hall* depicts archived knowledge like Helen's diary and Helen's and Millicent's letters as knowledge that may promote normalized bodies and normalized behaviors but only through the context of interpersonal relationships.[85] This kind of archive creates distance through indirection, not by stripping away personal details; it provides information on bodies through its discussions of spiritual crises and alters one person's behavior through its descriptions of another person's actions.

[85] The fact that Markham is sending his sister's husband a didactic tale about bad spouses and deficient men may indicate that, as with Helen's use of Millicent's letters, he is trying to use his wife's diary to encourage reform indirectly.

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Le Fanu's frame also underscores the importance of contextualizing information in order to create accurate and practical knowledge. However, unlike *Wildfell Hall*, *In a Glass Darkly* suggests in its frame that it is possible, through quantification and serious study, to develop knowledge about human beings outside of personal relationships. In this regard, the archived knowledge represented by Hesselius's case studies promotes normalized bodies and normalized behaviors but only within a comprehensive understanding of both the spiritual and material aspects of human existence. This kind of archive enables anyone who sufficiently masters its contents, as Hesselius implicitly claims he has, to unify fragmentary knowledge about another human subject. It does so by creating distance between the knower and the subject. By viewing his patients as one of many examples of how specific conditions operate, Hesselius minimizes the importance of their individual idiosyncrasies and focuses on how their symptoms relate to similar cases. His knowledge of his patients is still fragmentary, but he is certain that his fragmentary knowledge represents the whole of what it is necessary to know about their conditions.

As I demonstrate in the next chapter, narratives in the 1890s continue to accept fragmentary knowledge about their subjects, but instead of framing this knowledge within unified, expert perspectives, they stitch together fragmented narratives. Whereas a coherent frame can unify fragmented knowledge about a human subject, fragmented narratives can keep a specimen at the necessary distance to make it seem monstrous.

CHAPTER V

HYPER-REAL MONSTERS IN THE MORNING EDITION: REPORTING SCIENCE

IN "THE GREAT GOD PAN" AND *DRACULA*

As they explore the limits of perceptions and representations, Gothic texts

inevitably work through issues surrounding the fragmentation of knowledge addressed by

empiricists. Hume popularized concerns about fragmentation in empiricism when he

argued that if knowledge comes from our encounters with objects, our understanding of

causality must be culturally conditioned because humans can never perceive the

relationship between cause and effect, just objects in different states. In other words,

perceiving and representing the knowledge that comes from Locke's "ideas in things"

requires finding a way to understand how those objects relate to the larger world of which

they are only fragments. The eighteenth-century texts discussed in the second chapter rely

on codified representative schema to unite the fragments they represent with the whole in

which they participate. The first-person texts discussed in the third chapter use a singular

point of view to unite fragmentary experiences, and they use discovered manuscripts to

create tension that centers on the limits of that perspective. The mid-nineteenth-century

texts discussed in the fourth chapter employ frame narratives, rather than a singular point

of view, to unite fragmented voices, and these frames inevitably create hierarchies of

authority while serving a normalizing function. While each of these narrative strategies

implicitly responds to the fragmentary quality of empirical knowledge, they all do so by

trying to minimize the sense of fragmentation conveyed through the text.

In contrast, *fin-de-siècle* texts like Arthur Machen's "The Great God Pan" and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* actively portray knowledge as fragmentary. Both texts convey information through multiple voices and perspectives and deliver their narratives through a series of records and vignettes that lack clear transitions. Both stories portray characters striving not only to gather evidence about the horrific events occurring around them but also to organize, connect, and contextualize the information they gather. In this regard, the disjuncture between the records and vignettes that readers encounter highlights the fragmentary nature of the characters' experiences and data. By highlighting the fragmentary nature of experience and data, these stories make readers complicit in the fabrication of atavistic monsters like Helen Vaughan and Dracula. In order to understand these creatures and the extent of their malignant powers, readers must recognize their influence over scenes in which they are never actually mentioned. In particular, readers must recognize evidence of their deeds in newspaper clippings and characters' testimonials that are ostensibly about other subjects.

When readers see evidence of monsters in textual fragments that describe something else, they engage with "hyper-resemblances" (Rancière 8). Rancière explains that a "hyper-resemblance does not provide the replica of a reality but attests directly to the elsewhere whence it derives" (8). For Rancière, all artistic images in the aesthetic regime generate hyper-resemblances because they depend upon "the word or shot in place of the ones that seemed bound to follow" (7). An artistic image draws attention to the "interplay of operations" that alters resemblances when one of its elements defies the

expectations established by the rest of the operations.[86] Drawing attention to the interplay

of operations transforms a resemblance into a "hyper-resemblance" because the reality it

points audiences toward is more real than the "reality effect" fabricated by a mere

replica.[87] Although a hyper-resemblance does not recreate a whole reality, it functions as

a fragment to help audiences understand what constitutes their reality.

Hyper-resemblances can point audiences toward "the elsewhere" from whence their

reality derives because images in the aesthetic regime are not dependent on the "ordered

deployment of meanings, an adjusted relationship between what is understood or

anticipated and what comes as a surprise," that constrains representations in the previous

regime (Rancière 114). Within the aesthetic regime, there is no pre-established, logical

order of representation that dictates what an image should resemble or establishes a

hierarchy in which one image operation presents a stronger resemblance than another.

The absence of a pre-established, logical order of representation means that an interplay

of operations can draw upon diverse elements from the "boundless

Store/Library/Museum" where images from every media and historical period coexist

without any one of those elements asserting itself as the original from which the others

dissemble. Rancière contends that the relationship between Dutch paintings and realist

novels exemplifies this dynamic because writers did not just "'imitate' Dutch visibility";

instead, they conferred "a new visibility on these paintings" by "teaching people how to

read" with a "new gaze" (14). In other words, within the aesthetic regime, when an artist

combines an element from one image operation (for example, a young woman's coming-

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[86] In the Introduction, I explained the interplay of operations that constitutes an artistic image includes the relationship between "a whole and parts," "a visibility and a power of signification," and "expectations and what happens to meet them."

[87] The term "reality effect" stems from Barthes's "The Reality Effect."

of-age narrative) with an element from another image operation (for example, a legal proceeding), she does not subordinate the first operation to the second or vice versa; instead, the combination of the elements provides a new way of looking at both operations. In the process of teaching people a new way to read, this combination also gives them a better understanding of the reality from whence both operations derived.

By helping audiences develop new ways of looking at the natural sciences and journalism, the hyper-resemblances in "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* participate in the Gothic tradition of creating terror by problematizing epistemological authority. Whereas *Jane Eyre* and *Uncle Silas* use legal documents to create uncertainty out of the tension between individuals' contingent, situated knowledge and the knowledge sustained by institutions of power, and whereas *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and *In a Glass Darkly* use frame narratives to explore the uncertainty created by the gaps between individual experiences and the normatizing diagnoses perpetuated by medical archives, Machen's and Stoker's texts use juxtaposed fragments of newspaper clippings, scientific findings, and assorted vignettes to fabricate uncertainty out of the space between individuals' fragmented knowledge and the complete image of the world that is unavailable to them. In doing so, they challenge the ideals that scientists' findings and journalists' reports can provide knowledge derived purely from objects in nature or events in society. When readers can see the interplays of operations that constitute the images of Helen Vaughan or Dracula, they can also see that the knowledge the protagonists present about the creatures does not just reflect their experiences or the "thing" they have encountered. Instead, some of the knowledge presented by the protagonists is created during the interpretive work they perform in arranging the fragments that constitute each text. Yet,

the possibility that acts of interpretation could create knowledge undercuts the authority of scientific and journalistic reports, which are rooted in an empiricism that aims to translate sensory encounters directly into consumable knowledge.[88]

The inquiries into the epistemological authority of natural science and journalism launched by "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* are notable because historians and critics have identified the end of the nineteenth century as a defining period for scientific and journalistic professions as they exist today. For example, in *Dying to Know: Scientific Epistemology and Narrative in Victorian England*, George Levine frames his discussion about the intersections of science and literature in the nineteenth century with his critique of the artificial and unproductive separation between science and culture in the twenty-first century. In his joint analysis of nineteenth-century scientists' autobiographies and realist fiction, Levine contends that examining how scientists and cultural critics communicated with each other in the late-nineteenth century could help critics in the twenty-first century understand how the scientific profession adopted its current operating values, especially its emphasis on individual self-effacement, and what other options may have been, and may still be, available. The title, *Dying to Know*, refers to the dominant ideal in nineteenth-century epistemology and twentieth-century science that observers must "die" as individuals in order to acquire authoritative knowledge. In order to expose the alternatives to this concept, Levine draws upon work by Daston, Galison, Dale, and Poovey to contend that writers who were involved in both science and art like Karl Pearson and Walter Pater understood how the two fields benefited from one another.

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[88] In *Objectivity*, Daston and Galison describe the history of this aim, as it extends from Locke's philosophy to the mechanization of data recording. Although many empiricists and practitioners of empirically-oriented fields acknowledge that a direct translation is impossible, knowledge still tends to be given greater credence when the level of human involvement in its presentation is minimized.

According to Levine, Pearson's work reveals how science and epistemology rely on narrative and Pater's work reveals how suppressing personal interests can help someone develop a better understanding of art history. Levine's attention to science's reliance on narrative, alongside its emphasis on acts of self-effacement that can conceal the full extent of narrative's role, provides crucial context for understanding "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* because both stories rely on narrative to create knowledge about their subjects but fail to provide pieces of their narratives when they resist describing who arranged the textual fragments and how they did so. Thus, analyzing the gaps in each text not only reveals where the narrators use their interpretive powers to create knowledge but also where exposing the role of interpretation would threaten to undermine the cultural authority of the knowledge itself.

Mark Hampton's *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* provides an account of how nineteenth-century journalism developed the professional standards that continue today out of similar ethical and epistemological concerns. Like professional scientists, late nineteenth-century journalists acquired credibility and authority by putting more emphasis on the facts than their predecessors, who served primarily as political mouthpieces (76-8). Yet, whereas scientists focused on facts to minimize the room for human error in reporting and increase the communicability of data across borders, journalists focused on facts to diminish the presence of political biases. Correspondingly, the standards for, and significance of, facts differed between the natural sciences and journalism. In particular, journalists argued that contingent, situated information could be reported as factual because the ephemerality of the newspapers themselves would underscore the idea that records of public views are not universally true; instead, they are

presented as true for a specific time and place. Thus, W. T. Stead, one of the founders of New Journalism, described "the state of public opinion" as "the dominant fact" and argued that people must learn the facts about public opinion for the expressed purpose of altering it (324). In contrast, the standards for facts in the natural sciences preclude the idea of learning information for the sake of changing it. Because of these differences, whenever professional journalists report on scientific findings or professional natural scientists rely on information reported in a newspaper—and both interactions are referred to in "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula*—it draws attention to how culture constructs and authorizes knowledge in the natural sciences and journalism differently, even though both fields rely on similar terminology about "facts" and "objectivity."

Although many critics have analyzed how Machen and Stoker respond to developments in nineteenth century science and journalism, they have primarily focused on how the authors respond to scientific discoveries, technological innovations, and media events, rather than how they work through the issues surrounding scientific and journalistic authority. One of the most popularly cited texts about the intersections of the natural sciences and Gothic fiction, Kelly Hurley's *The Gothic Body*, discusses both "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula*. Hurley focuses on Helen and Dracula as examples of abhuman monsters and argues that the trope became popular in response to Darwin's theory of evolution. Although she associates the stories' fragmented narratives with the multidirectional branches of Darwin's tree graph illustrating evolutionary paths, Hurley does not pursue the question of how those narratives create and authorize knowledge beyond suggesting that knowledge seemed less unified in the late nineteenth century. Jennifer Wicke's "Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and Its Media" also addresses

Dracula's epistolary form. Yet unlike Hurley, Wicke connects the novel's form explicitly with issues of authority when she argues that the typewriter wields a hegemonic power that assimilates all forms of speech and print into a single, standardized form. By comparing the assimilation of "mass culture" newspapers into the text of *Dracula* with the vampire's assimilation of his victims' life-blood into himself, she argues that the novel expresses anxiety about the loss of verbal "aura" associated with the technological reproduction of human speech. While Wicke's argument implies that there is a connection between standardization and authority, she does not explicitly address how this connection relates to the novel's investment in nineteenth-century professional science, in part because her discussion is more focused on how the novel anticipates twentieth-century mass culture as it links technology with media sensationalism.

Hurley and Wicke, along with other scholars who have examined science in "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* like Adrian Eckersley and Carol Senf, focus on how the texts' fragmented forms and scientific content function metaphorically. Hurley reads the fragmented forms as extensions of metaphors about degeneration and chaos. Wicke reads vampirisim as a metaphor for mass culture. Eckersley reads "The Great God Pan" as a text that uses Helen metaphorically to portray the shift from discussions of moral degeneracy to biological degeneracy, and Senf discusses Dracula as a metaphor for a criminal type. These metaphorical readings provide considerable insight into the culture, values, and anxieties of late nineteenth-century Britain. However, they always rely, to some extent, on reading the interplays of operations that establish the metaphors as stable. In other words, in order to interpret metaphors of Darwinian evolution or mass culture, critics must posit a stable understanding of Darwinian evolution and mass culture

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for Machen and Stoker to represent and critique. Because epistemological authority is never stable in "The Great God Pan" or *Dracula*, focusing on images illuminates how the characters and readers alike must constantly negotiate different forms of authority that stem from different values and situations. In addition to complicating any attempts to read the texts' metaphors as stable, illuminating this ongoing negotiation helps readers understand the limitations of knowledge-producing systems and recognize the artificiality of the systems themselves.

i. Hyper-Resemblances in the *Fin de Siècle*

Both "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* juxtapose the importance of uncovering the stories behind various images with their portrayals of, and commentaries about, the growing prominence of professional science within nineteenth-century culture. Machen and Stoker ground their stories in the theories and actions of several professional scientists. *Dracula* features Abraham Van Helsing and his one-time student John Seward, and "The Great God Pan" begins with Dr. Raymond's terrifying experiment. Moreover, through the characters that interact with these trained and lettered men of science, including Seward's acquaintances, Jonathan Harker and Mina Murray, and Dr. Raymond's associate, the knowledgeable Londoner Mr. Clarke, the stories portray how average citizens may respond to, interact with, and rely upon scientific procedures. Although the stories differ in their depictions of the natural sciences, especially with regards to the purpose and ethics of scientific methods, both texts indicate that science can expose counterintuitive, or actively concealed, facts about the world. As they align scientific procedures with attempts to uncover something real behind veils of deceptive

stories and perceptions, the texts also include scientific writing in their fabrication of hyper-resemblances.

"The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* are particularly suited to associate scientific findings with hyper-resemblances because their fragmented narratives constantly bring elements from different operations together. In contrast to *Jane Eyre*, *Uncle Silas*, *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and *In a Glass Darkly*, which take advantage of the combinatory capacity of images within the aesthetic regime to promote new gazes but nonetheless employ points of view or framing narratives that encapsulate some operations within others,[89] "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* juxtapose image elements without raising the prominence of one operation over any others. When the earlier texts give one set of operations greater prominence, they take a substantial role in creating the expectations from which the encapsulated operations can dissemble. For example, the legal persona of Bertha as Rochester's wife presented in Mason's testimony dissembles from the monstrous "vampyr" that readers may have expected after reading Jane's story about the torn veil. In contrast, although the *fin-de-siècle* texts continue to establish and defy expectations when they juxtapose elements, they leave more room for a wider range of expectations. As a result, image operations in "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* can establish and defy expectations simultaneously depending on how readers interpret the interplay between their elements. By establishing and defying expectations simultaneously, both texts create a new layer of uncertainty. In addition to uncertainty about the accuracy of sensory perceptions, written representations, and interpretations,

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[89] I should note here that giving one set of operations, such as images related to a young woman's coming-of-age story, greater prominence than another, such as a images related to a legal proceeding, in this way is not the same as establishing a logical hierarchy of representation in which one is a more accurate representation of reality than the other.

the texts create uncertainty about the relationships between the events in the narrative and sections of each text.

Both stories respond to the uncertainty generated from the juxtaposition of equally prominent image operations by featuring characters that gather, collate, and discuss document-images of the creatures that haunt them. The anonymous headnote to *Dracula*, which asserts "[h]ow these papers have been placed in sequence will be made clear in the reading of them," and Mr. Clarke's "Memoirs to prove the Existence of the Devil" highlight how Machen's and Stoker's characters not only investigate mysteries but also consider how to present their findings to an unspecified audience.[90] Thus, understanding either story requires interpreting both the expectations and dissemblances established by the juxtaposition of elements from diverse image operations as they appear to readers and the organizing principle that underlies the story from the perspective of the characters. This dual layer of interpretation exposes the effects of the tension between the ostensible reason readers consume either story—to enjoy a work of Gothic terror—and the ostensible reason the characters compile data—to pursue a scientific inquiry for the preservation of the common good. The tension between these reasons reveals how scientific rhetoric can produce hyper-resemblances akin to those produced by art when a scientific project draws upon an unexpected image to support its conclusions. Hence, as I demonstrate in the following sections, when scientific rhetoric produces hyper-resemblances, it indicates that acts of interpretation can create knowledge and not just translate preexisting data into useful information.

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[90] This is another way in which "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* differ from the works addressed in the previous chapters. Jane and Maud are vague about both the choices that shape their presentations and their audiences, and Markham and the medical secretary are explicit about how their choices relate to their intended audiences (for Markham, his brother-in-law; for the medical secretary, a public audience that is reading for pleasure).

In particular, Machen's and Stoker's characters, most of whom are experts in an information-driven field,[91] create knowledge of the vampires they are hunting through the juxtaposition of diverse operations. When "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula*, as ostensible scientific reports, present obtuse images of newspaper clippings, they draw attention to the interplay of operations that makes it possible to accept scientific reports as resemblances of natural phenomena and newspaper reports as resemblances of contemporary events. At the same time, when the absence of a logical order of representation blurs the resemblances created by scientific and journalistic reports, accepting these resemblances becomes aligned with accepting atavistic monsters as more real than the natural phenomena or contemporary events reported.

Readers become complicit in the fabrication of these hyper-real monsters when they, like the characters in both texts, read their influence into reports about other subjects. In this regard, readers function as another element in the interplay of operations that create Helen and Dracula while pointing toward the elsewhere from whence they derive. While audiences are always part of image operations in the aesthetic regime,[92] their role is uniquely prominent in texts like "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* because they create narratives out of the same document-images that the protagonists use to create narratives. Whereas texts like *Jane Eyre* and *In a Glass Darkly* occasionally present readers with the same document-images that the characters encounter in otherwise stable

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[91] In "Solicitors Soliciting: The Dangerous Circulations of Professionalism in *Dracula* (1897)," Jasmine Yong Hall analyzes how Stoker portrays the professionalization of the economy in *Dracula* with a particular emphasis on how the circulation of blood through the vampire resembles the circulation of information through a new kind of knowledge expert in the late-nineteenth century. In "Chance Encounters: The Detective as 'Expert' in Arthur Machen's *The Great God Pan*," Sage Leslie-McCarthy contends that Machen's London *flâneurs* are experts on urban life that become detectives when they "move beyond the role of observer in their investigations" (38).

[92] I sketch the audiences' roles in image operations in the Introduction while outlining the various image elements that may contribute to an image operation.

narratives, "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* invite readers to imagine themselves collecting, collating, and interpreting fragments of information alongside the characters. By doing so, they make each reader's expertise part of the interplay of operations. As a result, the details of the reality of the elsewhere toward which the interplay gestures depends in part on the relative expertise of each reader. Media savvy readers, readers versed in Gothic fiction, and readers familiar with the natural sciences may produce different images of Helen or Dracula and, thereby, produce different elsewheres. This dynamic indicates that, to the extent that the images readers produce resemble scientific findings, it is possible for scientific reports, which rely on narratives in order to convey knowledge, to point toward multiple elsewhere as the origins of scientific knowledge. Since the natural sciences seek to establish knowledge about a shared reality, this possibility undercuts their authority. By concealing the final acts of organizing and presenting the texts, Machen and Stoker indicate that the protagonists respond to anxiety about this threat to their authority by refusing to acknowledge the roles that narratives play in their pursuits of knowledge. Ironically, this refusal is the gesture that draws readers further into the texts and enables them to recognize the interplays of operations.

ii. "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* as Scientific Texts

Despite the importance of contemporary science within the texts, critics have paid little attention to the nuances of how each text portrays the goals and methods of scientific inquiry. Instead, as a result of their propensity for metaphorical readings, scholars have focused on how the outcomes of each story—the consequences of the characters' actions—shape messages about the cultural significance of scientific (and by extension, medical) discoveries and policies. For example, in "Medical Gothic and the

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Return of the Contagious Diseases Act in Stoker and Machen," Tabitha Sparks presents a combined analysis of *Dracula* and "The Great God Pan" that examines their mutual portrayal of the medical establishment as a morally regulating and normatizing institution. In particular, she argues that Stoker and Machen participated in the backlash against the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, which punished suspected prostitutes for the spread of venereal diseases, by telling stories about male doctors who seize control over the sexual and reproductive capacities of unruly women in order to save the community. While her comparison between the stories' gender politics is compelling, Sparks's argument ignores important differences between their portrayals of the natural sciences.

The differences between Stoker's and Machen's portrayals of the natural sciences—and portrayals of science through the nineteenth century—are important because they present reminders that, at their inception in a professional context, scientific methods and values were far from monolithic. As Christine Ferguson explains in "Decadence as Scientific Fulfillment," Machen's story features extreme Positivist characters, especially Dr. Raymond, who "lust for murky, amoral truth" (476). In this regard, decadent Positivists like Dr. Raymond contrast with other empiricists, including presumably the vampire hunters in *Dracula*, who use conventions established in university settings to pursue practical "utopian knowledge" (Ferguson 476). The vampire hunters' pursuit of practical knowledge is implied before the story even begins by the novel's unattributed headnote, which declares that the purpose of the novel's documents "will be made clear" (Stoker). Far from insisting that the purpose of the knowledge they gather will be made clear, Machen's characters, even the characters who try to protect the

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community, deny that it ever could, or should, be. These contrasting views on the nature, purpose, and value of knowledge presented a barrier to the professionalization of science, and both "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* contribute to the discussions surrounding this barrier by drawing attention to how authority is constructed in the natural sciences.

By mimicking scientific language and conventions, Machen and Stoker emphasize the process of discovering and authorizing non-contingent facts, facts that can be communicated and remain consistent across time and space.[93] Whereas critics who discuss how Machen's and Stoker's responses to scientific discoveries and policies correlate with their responses to cultural anxieties focus on the metaphors within their texts, recognizing how Machen and Stoker employ scientific language and conventions requires focusing on their texts as images. In particular, reading the texts as images reveals how each story's fragmentary image elements draw upon and contribute to archives of knowledge. Recognizing the relationships between the texts and the archiving process, in turn, accentuates the characters' roles as experts who both translate data and produce knowledge through their acts of interpretation.

Furthermore, focusing on their texts as images not only reveals how Machen and Stoker go beyond simply discussing scientific theories and policies in order to explore the scientific process itself but also how the two authors present science differently. Machen's text, which begins with an experiment and recounts the consequences of that experiment, resembles a lab report. In contrast, Stoker's text, which reveals the physical traits, breeding practices, cultural customs, and peculiar habits of a newly discovered race, resembles a zoological study. Moreover, whereas Stoker's text associates scientific

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[93] In the next section, I address how the presence of newspaper clippings and their emphasis on more contingent information complicates each texts' portrayal of scientific processes.

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authority with the contemporaneity of recorded statements, the standardization of procedures, and the necessary degree of accredited education, Machen's text portrays scientific authority as a paradoxical combination of dispassionate observance and zealous pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Just as their contrasting portrayals of the value of knowledge contribute to discussions about the foundations of science, their contrasting depictions of scientific authority contribute to discussions about how the natural sciences should be pursued, who should pursue them, and how they should be certified.

Machen and Stoker create the most direct connection between their texts and scientific processes by establishing the relationships between their images and the increasingly standardized and growing archives of scientific knowledge in the nineteenth century. As discussed in Chapter Four, medical archives contributed to the standardization of diagnoses and the normalization of conditions and treatments. Likewise, as alluded to by Daston, the expansion of scientific archives contributed to the standardization of reporting, with an increased emphasis on facts and a corresponding minimization of anecdotal or narrative information. The entire text of *Dracula* is explicitly compiled by its chief protagonists, Jonathan Harker, Mina (Murray) Harker, John Seward, and Abraham Van Helsing. At multiple points during the story, Mina transcribes and organizes Harker's diary and her own, Seward's medical journal, and Van Helsing's memorandum, as well as various letters, telegrams, and newspaper clippings. At the end of the novel, the protagonists seal Mina's uniformly typed document in a vault (Stoker 378). This action indicates that they believe it is vital to preserve their knowledge for future reference—Van Helsing emphasizes its future value by noting that Mina's and Harker's son will be able to read it and learn about his parents—even though they accept

that no one outside of their group would see their "mass of type-writing" as "authentic" "proof of so wild a story" as theirs (378). Although Harker's distinction between their record and "authentic" proof may seem to undercut *Dracula*'s appearance as a scientific text, the group's analysis of their findings' limitations and their decision to store the information until it can be corroborated are consistent with the practices of university-trained scientists like Van Helsing and Seward.

Although Machen does not provide as many explicit details about the construction of the text that constitutes "The Great God Pan," there are several hints that the text is archived within Clarke's "Memoirs to prove the Existence of the Devil." Just as Mina reads and edits the documents that constitute *Dracula*, Clarke reads and edits the documents in his memoirs during the story. The crucial vignette, originally conveyed to Clarke by his friend Dr. Phillips, that exposes the details of Helen Vaughan's childhood is presented to readers when Clarke himself reviews it as part of his ritualistic obsession over his memoirs. This vignette, in turn, unites the opening scene, in which Dr. Raymond explains to Clarke that he plans to perform brain surgery on his young ward Mary so that she can see beyond the "world of matter" and into the "world of spirit," with the concluding exchange of letters, in which Clarke and Raymond discuss the evidence that Helen was the unnatural spawn of Mary and the extra-dimensional creature known as Pan (Machen 185). Framing the entire story with Clarke and Raymond's interactions suggests that Clarke may have arranged the rest of the vignettes in his memoirs, especially since Clarke's concluding letter refers to the one story that the text presents as an obtuse image from his memoirs. Clarke's reference to the letter not only draws the reader's attention to how the vignettes have been arranged but also resembles an instance of Clarke's diligent

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cross-referencing. Furthermore, the unsigned editorial notes that situate the final chapter

of the text, entitled "The Fragments," are similar in content and style to the notes that

Clarke attached to Phillips's narrative. Reading the whole story of "The Great God Pan"

as a part of Clarke's memoirs establishes that, as with the text of *Dracula*, the vignettes

and fragments that constitute the text have been deliberately filed in the London

gentleman's "old Japanese bureau" for future reference (Machen 190).

The archival properties of Machen's and Stoker's texts underscore their

characters' roles as experts.[94] In both stories, the characters are only able to track the

vampiric creatures that threaten London because they understand how to gather, organize,

and interpret information better than the general population. Before displaying their

expertise in the archived documents represented by the texts, the protagonists wield their

expertise in a variety of ways, all of which involve identifying the implications of a piece

of information that other observers have missed. Van Helsing and his companions

include trained and professional experts in the fields of medicine (Van Helsing),

psychiatry (Seward), business (Harker), and to a lesser extent journalism (Mina) and

religion (Van Helsing). By combining their expertise in these fields, they recognize

Dracula's estate purchases as storage facilities for his coffins and launching points for his

nocturnal hunts, Renfield's zoophagous cravings as signs of Dracula's influence, and

shipping schedules as the key to foiling Dracula's escape. In "The Great God Pan,"

Machen places less emphasis on professional training than Stoker in his portrayal of

expertise. Instead, he portrays his protagonists—Clarke, Villiers, and Austin, who are

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[94] Foucault's description of the origins of archives draws attention to their role in the increasing importance of experts. As the archives grew, they produced codes, classifications, and seriations, and norms. In turn, learning how to use the archive became a distinct skill, recognizably different from visiting patients or conducting research in the field.

almost indistinguishable from one another in temper and personality—as experts on

"those mysterious incidents and persons with which the streets of London teem in every

quarter and at every hour" (Machen 196-7). Specifically, Villiers describes Clarke as "not

shrewd in the mere business sense of the word, but a man who really knows something

about men and life" (209). Although Clarke, like Stoker's Harker, is "a dry fellow, in fact

a man of business," his expertise does not stem from his business acumen (208); instead,

it stems from his knowledge of the more sinister aspects of human life that he has accrued

in the accumulation of his memoirs, including his association with Dr. Raymond.

Meanwhile, Villiers and Austin share an expertise based on their experiences with both

the gentile and unsavory streets of London. While Villiers is a "practiced explorer of such

obscure mazes and byways of London" and "fond of going over empty houses," Austin is

a collector of curiosities and "famous for his intimate knowledge of London life, both in

its tenebrous and luminous phases" (197, 205, 199). Together, the gentlemen wield their

expertise over the mysteries of London to trace Helen's history from her inception in Dr.

Raymond's laboratory and her childhood in the countryside to her early days in the

seedier neighborhoods of London and her time as a high society hostess. In turn, their

knowledge of her homes, haunts, and associates enables them to recognize her influence

in the rash of suicides that plagues London's popular gentlemen.

The difference between how Machen's characters and Stoker's characters assert

their expertise is directly related to how each author portrays the standards for scientific

authority. Stoker establishes the bases for scientific authority in *Dracula* with the

unsigned note that precedes the novel. All of its stipulations reflect Daston's descriptions

of nineteenth-century scientific writing practices by implying that the elimination of

human fallibility from communication is the key to establishing universal authority. Specifically, the headnote emphasizes the importance of avoiding reliance on human memories, acquiring the necessary education to form reasonable conclusions, and mastering the forms of writing that audiences expect. In contrast, Machen establishes the bases for scientific authority when Dr. Raymond, who exists outside of the formal scientific community, successfully performs a delicate brain surgery based on his own theories. Instead of relying on the kind of international fraternity that empowers Stoker's protagonists, Raymond develops his theories in isolation by rejecting conventional biases in favor of the conclusions he has formed from his own dispassionate observation and experimentation. Although Clarke, Villers, and Austin collaborate and share information, they can only do so because they are similar enough as individuals that they can understand each other without heeding formalized standards for communication. Meanwhile, like the amoral Raymond, they have developed their expertise in isolation by pursuing both conventionally respectable and disreputable activities across the wide expanse of London's neighborhoods. Far from presenting contrasting views on the issues surrounding the emergence of professional experts, the differences between Machen's and Stoker's representations of expertise draw attention to the ways in which group-oriented resources like archives and universities produce possible trade-offs for individual experts. Whereas Van Helsing and his allies must limit the scopes of their ambitions and their claims in order to work with a larger group, Raymond creates a horror after isolating himself from his peers to pursue his own vision and the Londoners communicate quickly and clearly with one another at the cost of being able to convey their knowledge to anyone else.

Dracula's headnote establishes the precarious role of human memory when it claims that all of the documents in the novel "are exactly contemporary" with the events they describe so that there is "no statement of past events where memory may err." The possibility of the human memory faltering is one of the simpler, and simpler to remedy, impediments to authority; the next stipulation attempts to tackle the issue of authority directly by explaining that all of the statements within the text are "given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them." Despite its lack of specificity, this stipulation suggests that scientific authority is not separate from social authority. The stipulation suggests that the novel only features conclusions drawn from first-hand experiences by characters with the appropriate formal education to draw them. The novel illustrates its characters' educations, in part, by displaying the credentials of its most educated characters. The heading for Van Helsing's first letter to Dr. Seward contains a litany of his educational achievements, which are too plentiful to be recorded: "*Abraham Van Helsing, M.D., D.Ph., D.Litt., etc., etc.*" (Stoker 112). A similar list appears later when Patrick Hennessey contacts Dr Seward: "*Hennessey, M.D., M.R.C.S., L.K.Q.C.P.I., etc., etc.*" (155). Even the characters with less institutional recognition like Jonathan and Mina find ways to demonstrate their educations as they attempt to make improbable occurrences sound real. Trapped in Dracula's nightmarish castle, Jonathan sticks to the basics of the scientific method by refusing to accept any sight, such as Dracula's lizard-crawl down the castle's walls, as real until he witnesses it multiple times and refusing to accept any "proof" that may just be "evidences that [his] mind was not as usual"(34, 40). Meanwhile, in Britain, Mina actively practices her abilities to write descriptions and remember conversations (54). Her desire to practice is a reminder that

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there are established forms for delivering information, forms that differ from subject to subject or institution to institution.

Whereas *Dracula* highlights the aspects of scientific authority that are consistent with Daston's description of aperspectival objectivity as a "method," or a set of communication practices, "The Great God Pan" portrays scientific authority in a manner that blurs Daston's descriptions of objectivity as a "moral" standard of detachment and as an "ontological" approach to truth (Daston 597). Although practiced detachment from self-interest, as defined in works like Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiment*, and the pursuit of ontological truths, as defined by thinkers like Descartes, are neither causally nor philosophically linked,[95] Machen brings them together in the character of Dr. Raymond. Raymond devoted himself to "transcendental medicine" with the conviction that there is "a real world" beyond "the shadows that hide" it from human vision and remains "quite cool" when he notes that Mary's madness "could not be helped" (183-4, 189-90).[96] Most importantly, despite being mocked as a "quack, and charlatan and imposter," Raymond successfully uses experimentation to demonstrate the validity of his theory (183). Despite the dire consequences of the experiment, the rest of the story indicates that Raymond's detachment, including his willingness to experiment with unconventional beliefs, endure mockery, and sacrifice his ward and sexual consort, bolsters his ability to accrue facts.

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[95] In other words, someone could be detached about mundane theories; likewise, someone could pursue transcendental truth without practiced detachment.

[96] The irony of Raymond's claim about the inevitability of Mary's madness after he performed the surgery that caused it is part of Machen's critique of the Positivist view of the world.

By associating Raymond's scientific authority with eighteenth-century moral and aesthetic theories and fifteenth-century theories of ontology, Machen portrays science as if it were still the natural philosophy conducted by privileged hobbyists (Daston 604, 600).[97] Indeed, when Clarke visits Raymond at the beginning of the story to witness his experiment on Mary, the narrator notes that Raymond's laboratory had "once been a billiard-room" (186). The presence of Raymond's laboratory in his former billiard-room reflects the ways in which science, like billiards, can still be a hobby for individuals with the time, money, and space to pursue it. Yet, Machen's allusion to the nineteenth-century neurologist Brown-Sequard, through Raymond's reference to a newspaper article about "Browne Faber's discoveries," serves as a reminder that other scientists establish their authority within professional communities by properly communicating their ideas. Rather than ignoring professional scientists, Machen's story suggests that their formal procedures and public disputes may slow the rate of the progress, so much so that Raymond claims Browne Faber and other neurologists stand where he stood "fifteen years ago" (184). Nonetheless, the story ultimately implies that their slower rate of progress may produce fewer deadly monstrosities.

The contrast between Raymond's destructive experimentation and Van Helsing's safeguarding of London exposes the range of anxieties about, and hopes for, science at the end of the nineteenth century, and the differences between how the texts present scientific authority reflect the differences between the kinds of empiricism the texts are portraying, especially with regards to the contrasting natures and values of facts. Whereas in *Dracula* information is factual when it can be communicated and understood

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[97] The text's references to contemporary scientists and their public, professional endeavors indicate that Machen was aware of the advancements in the professionalization of science. Thus, his choice to portray Raymond as a vestige of an older school seems deliberate and in line with Mighall's idea of Gothicization.

independently of preexisting beliefs and temporary social circumstances, in "The Great God Pan," information is factual if it is ontologically true, even if it eludes understanding or communicability. *Dracula*'s headnote establishes that the documents constituting the body of the text were carefully arranged "so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of latter-day belief may stand forth as simple fact" (Stoker). This statement assigns several attributes to facts. First, facts are distinct from "beliefs." Second, facts can be "simple," which suggests that they can be readily understood. Finally, facts can "stand forth." In other words, they communicate themselves.[98] For this reason, the anonymity of the headnote's author—in a text that obsessively notes who said what, when he or she said it, and where it was recorded—is both conspicuous and necessary. Although Harker, Mina, Seward, and Van Helsing demonstrate the necessary expertise to authorize themselves as witnesses of the events within the text, the rhetorical gesture of concealing the text's authorship suggests that the facts speak for themselves and, more importantly, separates the stable authority of the facts from the socially contingent authority of Van Helsing and his companions.

In contrast, "The Great God Pan" consistently presents "the facts" in antithesis to clarity. All three non-colloquial references to "the facts" present factual information not as self-evident and easily communicable but rather as ontologically more true than other kinds of information.[99] For example, the note from Clarke's memoirs that precedes the story of Helen's childhood reads, "[Dr Phillips] assures me that all the Facts related

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[98] All of the attributes that *Dracula* aligns with facts are consistent with Locke's theory that humans acquire knowledge through sensory experiences with objects. In particular, the claim that facts "stand forth" suggests that the act of interpretation required to process facts into knowledge is passive, rather than creative.

[99] The presentation of facts in "The Great God Pan" is also consistent with Locke's theory because it clearly separates knowledge from human agency. As Raymond's early reference to the "real world" indicates, knowledge exists outside of humans, and human discover it, rather than creating it.

therein are strictly and wholly True, but refuses to give either the Surnames or the

Persons concerned, or the Place where these Extraordinary Events occurred" (Machen

191). In this case, even though Phillips declines to communicate exactly the kind of

information that is prioritized by aperspectival objectivity—externally verifiable and

easily translatable names and locations—the essence of his story remains factual in

Clarke's perspective because it presents evidence that is consistent with the rest of his

discoveries about Helen and the universe at large. Later, Villiers explains to Austin that

he is "sure that Clarke is in possession of facts about [Helen], facts of which [he knows]

nothing" (224). In this instance, Villiers's emphasis on facts stems from his desire to

uncover something consistent about the constantly changing Helen, who travels through

high and low society and even the shores of South America under a series of aliases with

no discernible origin or intentions. Villiers's insistence that Clarke possesses facts about

Helen is founded more on the basis that Clarke has been able to process everything he has

said about the mysterious woman than on anything Clarke has told him, further implying

that communicability is a secondary concern with regards to the validity of facts.

The differences between how "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* portray the bases

and utility of facts are important, not because the two stories deliver opposing messages

about science and medicine—neither story offers a simple, direct, or explicit thesis on the

rapidly evolving fields—but because they reveal the new range of epistemological issues

that Gothic stories confronted at the end of the nineteenth century. By the 1890s,

empiricism was firmly established as the dominant form of epistemology throughout

British society, with schools, hospitals, newspapers, and novelists emphasizing the

importance of concrete details that could be verified through sensory experiences. At the

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same time, scientific findings prompted by the developing empiricism of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries increasingly threatened beliefs about the age of the earth and the innate supremacy of humankind that provided foundations for many religious convictions and social conventions. As a result, institutions and professions developed different approaches to practicing empiricism depending on their underlying ideologies. Although "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* emphasize different aspects of science, they both indicate that scientific facts should be independent from human contingencies. In contrast, the rapidly flourishing newspaper industry of the nineteenth century also purported to present facts about the world, but its facts were only fully intelligible within the ephemeral social contexts that generated them. Whereas the elements of "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* that mimic scientific studies focus on information that may be relevant to researchers across the entire world for many years, or seemingly irrelevant for decades until another set of discoveries creates a new context for understanding it, the newspapers clippings incorporated into both texts focus on information that was intended to be relevant to the denizens of a single city, or even a single neighborhood, for a few a days. To the extent that "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* as scientific texts rely on these clippings to authorize information, they problematically situate ostensibly non-contingent facts within the effervescent realm of human society.

iii. Newspaper Clippings as Hyper-Resemblances

Both "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* present obtuse images of newspaper clippings that apprise readers and protagonists alike of what the monsters are doing when they are not interacting with the characters directly. In "The Great God Pan," newspaper clippings announce the suicides of Lord Argentine and Mr. Sidney Crashaw, and Villiers

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and Austin are able to use their expertise over London to connect the men with Helen when they discover that her name was kept out of the article about Lord Argentine and that Crashaw stumbled out of her house before ending his own life. In *Dracula*, newspaper clippings recount the fate of a doomed Russian cargo ship, the behavior of an escaped wolf, and the antics of several children in Hampstead. Van Helsing interprets the last two clippings as evidence that the vampire possessed a wolf and that Lucy Westerna has arisen as a vampire. Yet, because the clippings are jumbles of resemblances and dissemblances, interpreting them as signifiers of any given subject requires positing knowledge of that subject first and then contending that the clippings replicate that knowledge. Thus, with "The Great God Pan," analyzing its newspaper clippings as image operations exposes how the pursuit of a unified understanding of the world causes Clarke, Villiers, and Austin to create knowledge about Helen in fragments of information about high society suicides. Likewise, with *Dracula*, analyzing its newspaper clippings as image operations exposes how the pursuit of facts that speak for themselves causes Van Helsing, Seward, Harker, and Mina to create knowledge about Dracula in the words of Russian sailors, a Cockney zookeeper, and little children. Furthermore, analyzing the newspaper clippings in both texts as image operations exposes how the pursuit of literary entertainment may cause readers to create knowledge of monsters like Helen and Dracula and treat it as more real than historical headlines. Exposing all of these possibilities highlights how the complicated relationship between using narratives, creating knowledge, and establishing epistemological authority can reveal interplays of operations that point toward distinct realities (i.e. "elsewheres") depending on the priorities of the interpreters.

Due to the unique properties of documents as obtuse images, the newspaper clippings function as image operations at both the meta-narrative and narrative level. At the meta-narrative level, the interplay of operations that constitutes each text's newspaper clippings involves at least four image elements: the clippings as data in a scientific text, the clippings as news reports, the clippings as participants in Realist visual codes, and the clippings as Gothic short stories. Since the ostensible form of each text as a scientific inquiry resists the ostensible genre of each text as a Gothic story of terror, and thereby prevents any of the image operations from acquiring prominence in the new gazes established by the texts, each of these elements carries its own share of resemblance and dissemblance. The clippings do not merely dissemble as scientific signs by presenting Gothic images. Nor do they merely dissemble from Gothic signs by presenting scientific facts. Instead, they simultaneously resemble and dissemble all of the operations involved. By simultaneously resembling and dissembling all of the operations involved, the clippings participate in each text's resistance to presenting a stable narrative, which in turn sustains the ambiguity of the ties between narration and knowledge creation.

The newspaper clippings in both texts, which resemble scientific data when they serve as evidence in a scientific report, also dissemble as images of science by announcing themselves as images of journalism. As the natural sciences and journalism established increasingly standardized professional practices in the nineteenth century, they performed an odd exchange of methodologies that revolved around the century's growing investment in facts. As scientists stripped personality from their reports in order to make their data as accessible to an international scientific community as possible, journalists injected personality into their articles in order to attract as many readers as

they could in a fiercely competitive market. Whereas, prior to the nineteenth century, scientists relied on their social authority to validate their findings, journalists previously wielded anonymity as a guarantee of truth free from fear. While scientists attempted to remove human influence from their experiments by inventing machines to record data, journalists broadened their coverage of daily affairs to include "human interest" stories. Most importantly with regards to "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula*, scientists defended their supposedly immutable facts by devising methods to separate them from the ever-shifting worlds of culture and politics, and journalists defended their rights to report culturally contingent facts daily by addressing the ephemeral nature of their own medium.

Within their separate spheres, scientists and journalists could discuss facts intelligibly and purposefully. Scientists relayed the information necessary to perform a similar experiment, attain a similar result, and possibly develop new technologies. Journalists relayed the information necessary to stimulate social discourse, build communities, and possibly enact political change. However, in order for scientists to take advantage of information in journalistic reports, they had to strip that information of its situational contingencies, transforming information that had been presented as true for one day into data that would appear to be true universally. Likewise, in order for journalists to report scientific discoveries, they had to situate those discoveries within the contingencies of daily life, transforming data that was meant to appear universal into information that would appear conditional.

"The Great God Pan" hints at this dynamic when Raymond and Clarke discuss following other scientists' work through newspapers. Raymond notes, "But I suppose you

have read, casually, in out-of-the-way corners of your paper, that immense strides have been made recently in the physiology of the brain. I saw a paragraph the other day about Digby's theory, and Browne Faber's discoveries" (Machen 184). Raymond's dismissive reference to the presentation of scientific findings in daily newspapers, where it appears in "out-of-the-way corners" and can be consumed "casually," matches his subsequent dismissal of "Digby's theory" and "Browne Faber's discoveries." By implying that news reports are too brief and insubstantial to convey scientific facts—criticisms which are consistent with his extreme Positivism's emphasis on unified information—Raymond also indicates that newspaper articles are problematic as sources of information in scientific reports. At the same time, by safely assuming that Clarke is familiar with contemporary theories about brain physiology because of newspaper reporting and using this familiarity as a basis for explaining his own theories, Raymond demonstrates that newspaper articles can serve temporarily as sources of information in scientific inquiries. By presenting images of newspaper clippings alongside images of more authoritative sources of information like medical journals, "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* develop this kind of tension between scientific inquiries and scientific reports in ways that illuminate how the clippings function as image operations that create hyper-resemblances. In particular, this tension illuminates how the clippings can participate in multiple interplays of operations simultaneously in order to point toward the elsewhere from which the scientific operations derive and the separate elsewhere from which the journalistic operations derive. Revealing the distance between these elsewheres suggests that it is the role of narratives to bring them together when necessary.

The clippings highlight a similar role for narrative in "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* when they connect the texts to the Realist tradition despite their supernatural subjects. Even if readers cannot relate to the stories' unreal subjects, they can relate to the slices of everyday life contained in the newspaper clippings. Moreover, they can imagine themselves, like the protagonists, uncovering information through the daily press. Narrators in Realist novels often invite readers to visit the locales they are describing, consult the records that they have studied, or interview the persons they have met. Such narrators suggest that, through these visits, consultations, and interviews, their readers will uncover stories similar to, if not identical with, the ones that they are telling. This suggestion indicates that the elsewhere from which the clippings derive is actually recoverable outside of the moment of its production in the reading of the text.

In contrast, both Machen's and Stoker's protagonists explicitly outline the ways in which their stories may be unrecoverable. In "The Great God Pan," Clarke and Villiers both witness important pieces of Helen's story in isolation and subsequently describe their experiences as dream-like, rather than emphasizing concrete details. While Raymond is performing his experiment on Mary, Clarke experiences a vivid, half-conscious vision after inhaling some fumes. In the vision, Clarke walks down a familiar path until he encounters "a presence, that was neither man nor beast, neither the living nor the dead, but all things mingled, the form of all things but devoid of all form" (188). As the story progresses, it becomes clear that the omni-morphing "presence" Clarke encountered was the extra-dimensional entity known as Pan as it visited and impregnated the surgically altered Mary. In particular, Dr. Matheson's account of Helen's devolving/dissolving death repeats Clarke's attempt to describe something in which "all

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things mingled" even though it is "devoid of all form." Although the connection between Clarke's vision and Helen's death is a crucial component of the story's (and Clarke's, through his memoirs) attempt to make sense of Pan (or the Devil, in Clarke's memoirs), readers cannot return to the space of Clarke's dream the same way they could hypothetically return to the space of Raymond's lab.

Likewise, the opening chapters of Stoker's novel, in which Jonathan Harker journeys to Castle Dracula, finds himself imprisoned there, and eventually escapes, outline a sequence of obstacles that would hinder any efforts to verify his report. Harker cannot locate Castle Dracula on any maps, and the Count's circuitous carriage driving foils the Englishman's own cartographic efforts. Nor does Harker find the Carpathians' approach to history any more satisfactory than their approach to geography. Seeing only an archive of folklore and superstition, Harker cannot isolate the importance of St. George's day or the details of the Count's lineage. When the Count begins to terrorize the villagers dressed in Harker's clothing, the Englishman all but solicits readers not to interview them about the events he is describing. And in the most astounding affront to Realism, the vampire has no reflection in Harker's shaving mirror. When Dracula throws the polished surface out the window, Harker can no longer defend his tale like Eliot's narrators, by claiming to hold up a mirror to the world around him. Thus, while the interdependence of science and journalism requires the power of narrative to bridge the gap between the elsewheres from which their images derive, the knowledge about Helen and Dracula that the protagonists create relies on the power of narrative to bring together ostensibly recoverable and explicitly unrecoverable elsewheres.

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Just as Clarke's dream and Harker's diary indicate that the creatures they are confronting can confound the senses, the newspaper clippings accentuate Helen's and Dracula's elusive properties. To the extent that, within the texts, the clippings present information about Helen or Dracula, rather than the subjects they actually describe, they dissemble from the Realism they invoke. As news pieces, the clippings imply that their readers could speak to Lord Argentine's friends and learn about his last dinner party, question the members of Crashaw's club and discover his evening's agenda, journey to the Russian consul and read the *Demeter*'s logs, visit the zookeeper and hear the same things about wolves, or contact the Hampstead correspondent and listen to the same report about neighborhood children and the "bloofer lady." Yet the appearance of newspaper clippings about dinner parties, evening strolls, and distraught servants, when readers might expect Clarke to explain what he knows about Raymond's experiment or Villiers to begin tailing Helen herself—or the appearance of clippings about cargo ships, zoo animals, and children's games, when readers might expect a warning from Harker about Dracula's approaching invasion, speculation from Van Helsing about the vampire's ability to possess animals, or a woeful recounting from Holmwood of an encounter with a woman who looked like his deceased fiancée—functions like the "word[s] or shot[s] in place of the ones that seemed bound to follow" that Rancière claims can produce the alteration necessary for the artistic image.

By perpetuating fictions disguised as news reports that falsely attribute the creatures' actions to other sources, the texts fail to replicate their own Gothic realities. Instead, they attest to their artificiality, and by doing so, they momentarily generate authentic monster stories as counterpoints. In other words, reading the clippings as

Gothic stories—Soul-sucking Demon Drains Aristocrat's Will to Live, Encounter with Succubus Leaves Gentleman Unhinged, Mysterious Murders on the High Seas, Ravenous Wolves Driven to Madness by Nefarious Powers, Children Snatched by Beautiful Fiend with a Taste for Human Flesh—produces a greater resemblance to the objects of the reports themselves. Thus, by dissembling from Realism, the clippings make the Gothic images more real.

Making Gothic images (succubi, murderers, monsters, and cannibals) more real than their Realist equivalents (ennui, cabin fever, docile canines, and rodents) is just part of the payoff for Machen's and Stoker's exploitation of the combinatory capacity of signs in the aesthetic regime. The jumbled sequence of generic resemblances and dissemblances also puts the reader in a situation parallel to the position that the protagonists occupy. Just as readers must process how the resemblances and dissemblances of various genres perpetuated by textual image-elements create knowledge of the story "The Great God Pan" and the novel *Dracula*, the protagonists must process how the resemblances and dissemblances of various objects perpetuated by image-elements within the texts create knowledge of the creatures Pan/Helen and Dracula. In both cases, active interpretation creates vital knowledge that the images themselves cannot convey, implying that narrative remains a crucial component of scientific knowledge.

At the narrative level, the interplay of operations that informs Clarke, Villiers, and Austin about Helen involves Helen's alias as Mrs. Beaumont and her mysterious parties, a series of suicides among London's gentlemen, journalists' attempts to replicate the sensation of the White Chapel murders, eyewitness accounts of Lord Argentine's and

Crashaw's dining companions and servants, and Austin's knowledge that Mrs. Beaumont's name was kept out of the papers, and Villiers's encounter with Crashaw. Likewise, the interplay of operations that informs Van Helsing and the others about Dracula involves the vampire and Lucy Westerna, a Russian sailor's story about a wrecked ship, a zookeeper's story about an escaped wolf, some local children's stories about a "bloofer lady," and an interviewer's obsession with the story of Little Red Riding Hood.

Moreover, the interplays of operations in both texts involve the newspaper reports as material clippings, the "facts" according to the daily news, and finally the "facts" according to the protagonists' scientific inquiries. Just as inconsistencies in the logical order of representation at the meta-fictive level cause the clippings in each text to resemble and dissemble multiple genres, inconsistencies in the logical order of representation at the narrative level cause the clippings to resemble and dissemble different "facts." In "The Great God Pan," this includes the fact that Lord Argentine was discovered by a servant after hanging himself, the fact that Crashaw dined at his club, and the fact that Crashaw commonly takes an evening constitutional; but also the fact that Helen Vaughan is Mrs. Beaumont, the fact that Helen uses her station as Mrs. Beaumont to lure London's gentlemen into her home, and the fact that Helen hosts decadent parties that shatter men's spirits with their unspeakable entertainments that may involve sexual dalliances with other inhuman entities.[100] In *Dracula*, the clippings resemble and dissemble the fact that a dog swam ashore, the fact that lone wolves are naturally cautious, and the fact that the children have injuries that resemble small animal bites; but

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[100] "The Great God Pan" is notoriously obscure about the details of Helen's corrupting influence, but the story includes a plethora of references to unnatural sex acts, and Dr. Phillips's story about Helen and Rachel suggests that, from a young age, Helen consorted with inhuman , extra-dimensional creatures.

also the fact that the vampire can summon mists and turn into a dog, the fact that the vampire can possess wolves but not enter a home without permission, and the fact that Lucy has risen from the grave with a lust for blood.

The distance between these facts—between Crashaw's constitutional and Helen's monstrous orgies, or between a swimming dog and a shape-changing vampire that can control the weather—reflects the distance between the elsewheres that image operations can point toward simultaneously. Stoker's protagonists attempt to reduce this distance by carefully arranging and editing their documents, and Machen's protagonists attempt to reduce this distance by only communicating with like-minded individuals. However, as soon as their texts incorporate a new form of information or reach a new audience, their images point towards new, and potentially infinite, elsewheres. While this is not necessarily a problem for the texts as entertaining works of Gothic fiction, it does highlight another element in the ongoing problem with transferring empirical knowledge in a fragmented world. Specifically, it highlights the ways in which creating specialized systems of discourse like the natural sciences or journalism can temporarily make the documentation of empirical knowledge possible but only at the expense of restricting the purpose of that knowledge to a narrow range of options. Repurposing knowledge from the natural sciences or journalism into something beyond understanding specific aspects of nature or representing ephemeral incidents in society requires individuals to create additional knowledge through acts of interpretation.

iv. Conclusion

In order for the protagonists to stop the threats posed by Helen and Dracula, they have to interpret images from the daily news actively into knowledge, rather than

passively translating data from empirical descriptions. They read an image of a beloved Lord hanging himself after a dinner party as an image of Helen's corrupting orgies. They read an image of a gentleman committing suicide after an evening stroll as an image of Helen's influence spreading like an epidemic. They read an image of a dog swimming as an image of a vampire coming ashore. They read an image of an injured wolf returning docilely to its keeper as an image of a bewildered wolf recovering from vampiric possession. Finally, they read an image of a "bloofer lady" as an image of undead Lucy Westerna. They can read the images this way because in the aesthetic regime things are left to speak or be silent themselves (Rancière 13). In other words, there never was an exact image of Lord Argentine, Mr. Crashaw, a swimming dog, a docile wolf, or a "bloofer lady." From the moment these images were presented in the newspaper clippings, they dissembled from the objects that they also resembled. The journalists were free to interpret them one way, and the protagonists free to interpret them another, but neither the journalists nor the protagonists can simply translate their perceptions of the objects directly into knowledge of the world as empirical philosophers like Locke and the nineteenth-century natural scientists described by Daston sought to do. Instead, the readers ultimately must recover the suppressed narratives in order to create their own knowledge of the subjects.

In both texts, the act of creating knowledge through interpretation causes enough anxiety that the protagonists distance themselves from it. In "The Great God Pan," Raymond recants his attempt to remove the veil of physicality from human sight, Dr. Matheson declines to translate his notes about the death of Helen Vaughan out of Latin, and Clarke treats the information compiled in his memoirs like an illicit drug. In *Dracula*,

the protagonists not only seal their documents in a safe but also elide the act of arranging them into the final record by composing the headnote anonymously. All of these actions indicate that, even if it is necessary for safeguarding the nation, actively creating knowledge through interpretation is an unsavory, even perilous, procedure. Yet, the texts ultimately imply that creating knowledge is perilous for different reasons. Whereas "The Great God Pan" indicates that the pursuit of a unified theory of the universe will lead humans into creating knowledge that they can neither accept nor survive, *Dracula* suggests that locating the origins of knowledge within human beings undermines its authority.[101]

Despite indicating that creating knowledge is hazardous for different reasons, both texts also imply that, to some extent, it is inevitable. Just as Hume posited that cause-and-effect relationships could never be demonstrated empirically and must be understood as cultural constructions, Machen and Stoker imply that the non-contingent facts of nature and contingent facts of society can never be fully represented within the constraints of distinctly scientific or journalistic methodologies. The natural sciences and journalism provide mechanisms for processing information about a world that is larger and more unified than fragmented human perspectives can comprehend, but those mechanisms inevitably clash with their own limitations, especially in situations involving extraordinary circumstances. When the natural sciences and journalism wrestle with their own constraints, the scientists, students, journalists, and readers involved in each system have the option of being transparent about the constraints and the artificiality of those systems. However, being transparent in this way can threaten the authority of either

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[101] In addition to concealing its own fictional authorship, *Dracula* also presents several incidents of people insisting on the validity of pieces of knowledge that they manufactured, even when they are clearly wrong; for example, the reporter who insists that wolves are ferocious predators.

system, in part because their empirical foundations contribute to the impression among participants that natural systems are superior to artificial systems. Hence, in both texts, the protagonists remain silent about the limitations of the systems to which they contribute and upon which they rely. Instead of acknowledging these limitations, they hide their knowledge and participate in variations of the empiricist tradition of blaming the audience for problems with communication, as Raymond claims that there are things that people are not meant to know and Van Helsing claims that no one would believe them anyway.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: "NOT EVEN THE DEAD ARE SAFE"

Throughout this project, I utilize Rancière's concepts from *The Future of the Image* and *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* to illuminate how formal dimensions of Gothic images operate throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I would like to conclude by addressing in greater detail the political dimension that drives Rancière's theories. Rancière proposes his definition of "aesthetics" as "a regime for the identification of the artistic image" in response to accusations from other Marxism-inspired theorists that aesthetics is a bankrupt field because the modern proliferation of images so thoroughly mediates our perception of the world that "there is no longer any reality, but only images" (13, 1). The all-encompassing influence of images presented in this view is particularly distressing because it is associated with late stage capitalism's capacity for commodifying everything. If images mediate our perception of reality, and images are produced as commodities with prescribed meanings, then there is little room for us to find meanings outside of commodity-driven interactions that ultimately sustain the current systems of power.

In contrast to this understanding of aesthetics and images, Rancière contends that whether or not images can ever escape commodification and convey non-prescribed meanings depends on whether people see them as representations, as in the representative regime, or as interplays of operations, as in the aesthetic regime. In other words, Rancière distinguishes between the representative and aesthetic regimes in order to persuade artists and their audiences that it is still possible to make images that are meaningful and subversive. In order to resist the systems of power that threaten to commodify their

images, artists must try to harmonize "exhibition and signification" by constantly uncoupling and coupling elements from multiple image operations, rather than trying to represent signification by mastering a single operation (123). Likewise, audiences must focus on creating meaning from images, rather than finding it within them, by creating their own connections between image operations. In this regard, Rancière's theory supports the idea that individuals can maintain meaningful agency amidst seemingly overwhelming systems of power.

In line with the schema proposed by Rancière, Gothic texts not only expose the complexities and tensions involved in attempting to convey empirical knowledge by combining elements from different image operations but also take advantage of their historiographic dimensions to distinguish between good readers and bad readers. Although the qualities of a good reader differ from text to text, Gothic stories consistently feature characters who prevail because they interpret images, especially documents, in ways that enable them to develop their own authority. Conversely, many Gothic stories feature characters who suffer or die because they interpret images in ways that grant the images power over them. When Gothic texts associate the distinction between these good readers and bad readers with the distinction between the present and the past, they subtly destabilize the basis for assigning something to the past. Just as Rancière refers to "regimes" rather than "eras" because it is still possible for someone today to interpret images according to the standards of the representative regime, Gothic texts do not designate something as part of the past just because it occurred on a previous calendar date. Instead, by portraying characters breaking the cycles of history through their interactions with document-images, Gothic texts from *The Castle of Otranto* to *Dracula*

also reveal how the historiographic function of the Gothic mode can deny the additive property of history and insist on establishing conditions for labeling something "the past."

Whereas Rancière's theories help to clarify the distinction between good interpreters of images and poor interpreters of images, Walter Benjamin's "On the Concept of History" provides the necessary frame for understanding how Gothic texts can resist an additive concept of history. Like Rancière, Benjamin focuses on how people interact with images because, like the later philosopher, he recognizes the potentially dangerous relationship between a message and its medium. In particular, just as Rancière analyzes how the production and reception of images affects their meanings, and Gothic texts explore how the recording of empirical information shapes the creation of knowledge, "On the Concept of History" examines how the means of transmitting information from the past influences the meaning of the information transmitted. The essay is filled with images of containers: an automaton contains a dwarf chessmaster, a painting contains an image of catastrophe/progress, and everywhere history is held within documents. Benjamin's interest in containers stems from his understanding that history does not transmit itself. He recognizes that danger surfaces when history is viewed independently of the act of its transmission, an action performed by human actors. He claims, "There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is never free of barbarism, so barbarism taints the manner in which it was transmitted from one hand to another. The historical materialist therefore disassociates himself from the process of transmission as far as possible" (392). In order to disassociate themselves from "the process of transmission," historical

materialists must first acknowledge that it is a tangible process. They must acknowledge

that the course of history is shaped, not by its own telos, but by people and their

documents – containers of culture and barbarism. For Benjamin, accepting that history is

actively transmitted from one generation to the next by humans, through documents

passed "from one hand to another," is the first step toward the goal of combating

oppression.

The way Benjamin describes the process of resisting the transmission of the past

resembles the way that Robert Mighall describes the historiographic function of the

Gothic mode. In both cases, someone, whether it is a historical materialist, Gothic writer,

or Gothic protagonists, must identify the past in something tangible. Benjamin explains

that the "past can be seized only as an image that flashes up at the moment of its

recognizability," and Mighall argues that Gothic writers focus on "Gothic cusps,"

moments when the past erupts into the present (Benjamin 390, Mighall xviii). Both

descriptions suggest that the process cannot be entirely voluntary. Historical materialists,

Gothic writers, and Gothic protagonists cannot just hunt down and destroy the containers

of the past, since anything and everything could function as such a container; instead,

anyone who wants to disrupt the transmission of history must remain receptive to the

"constellation" of tensions that surround events in order to recognize images of the past

when they flash up (Benjamin 396).

Benjamin's contention that the past is only recognizable as an "image" makes his

ideas particularly compatible with the dynamics of Gothic fiction, which use document-

images to ground the conflict between the past and the present in a manageable discursive

space. Yet, unlike Benjamin, who sees progress and catastrophe as synonymous and

claims that the "enemy has never ceased to be victorious" (391), Gothic writers, according to Mighall, define the difference between the past and the present in terms of enlightenment: "The Gothic dwells in the historical past, or identifies 'pastness' in the present, to reinforce a distance between the enlightened now and the repressive and misguided then" (xviii). If Gothic writers are reinforcing the superiority of their own enlightenment by creating a clear division between civilization and barbarism, and it is certainly possible to read many of them as doing so, they would be undermined by Benjamin's position, since he maintains that such a civilization owes its existence to not only "the great geniuses" but also "the anonymous toil of others" and, therefore, all of the "cultural treasures" held up when such a distinction is made are tainted by the barbarism of oppression (392).

Yet, when Gothic stories outline the distinction between the past and the present, not as it is, but as it must be if the past is to be redeemed, then Gothic stories can deny the additive procedure of universal history. They can deny that just because something happened at a certain day and time, it is part of the past. Instead, by taking place in the historical past or by identifying "pastness" in the present (i.e. by perpetuating anachronisms), they can construct a new understanding of history that focuses on relationships between generations, between the living and the dead, and between oppressors and the oppressed. In order to understand history in terms of relationships instead of time, Benjamin argues that people must be attentive to "constellation[s] saturated with tensions" that serve as signs of a "messianic arrest of happening" (396). It is in response to such signs that the historical materialist, like the Gothic protagonist, has the power to act. In other words, history is not the accumulation of events through time;

instead, it is the relationships that people create when the accumulation of events makes it possible for them to recognize their significance. At the crux of these relationships is the "arrest of happening" that occurs when someone seizes an image of the past and alters its transmission. By interfering with the default transmission of images in this way, individuals can create opportunities to revive forgotten elements of the past in the present, relegate antiquated elements of the present to the past, or otherwise disrupt stagnate and oppressive cycles of history.

As I have demonstrated throughout this project, Gothic characters are marked by their ability or tragic inability to interfere with the default transmission of images in order to create new histories by establishing new relationships with the past. In particular, nineteenth-century characters in Gothic texts encounter document-images that are supposed to transmit ostensibly neutral, empirical knowledge. These characters are most successful when they actively seize these document-images, uncouple them from the empirically-oriented operations in which they were produced (e.g. the law, medicine, the natural sciences, or journalism), and use them to create new relationships with their personal, familial, and cultural pasts. Jane Eyre recognizes, in the legal image of her inheritance, an opportunity to disrupt the cycle of disinheritances and resentments that define the Reeds, Eyres, and Riverses. By seizing the image of her inheritance, Jane establishes a new relationship with her dead ancestors and living cousins that would be unavailable if she simply allowed her uncle's wealth to be transmitted to her. Maud Ruthyn must recognize the image of her father's codicil, not just as a legal statement of where her physical body will be located but also as an attempt to sustain the honor of the Ruthyn family name. By defying the codicil, fleeing Silas, and exposing the family

scandal through the telling of her story, Maud establishes a new relationship with her deceased father, one in which she is able to put her wishes ahead of his investment in family honor, and a new relationship with the unfortunate Mr. Charke, one in which his murder at Silas's hands is no longer an anonymous tragedy.

Although their conclusions are not as overtly focused on overcoming oppression, the texts discussed in the third and fourth chapters also feature characters seizing document-images to establish new relationships between the present and the past. While laying out their narrative frames, Gilbert Markham and Dr. Hesselius's medical secretary seize images from medical discourse to create new relationships for personal and financial gain. By bringing images of Huntingdon's, Jennings's, and Barton's diseased bodies into the present through their narratives, Markham and the secretary disrupt the process by which knowledge accrues with fixed certainty in archives and reintroduce the uncertainty created by overlapping spiritual and physical crises. Finally, by seizing images of news reports about social events and coupling them with images of scientific research, the protagonists in "The Great God Pan" and *Dracula* create relationships between themselves and the creatures they are hunting that cast themselves as the enlightened heroes of the present and the creatures as the terrifying vestiges of a bygone era.

In all of the novels discussed in this dissertation, Gothic images create space for exploring the difficulties and limitations of acquiring, processing, and transferring empirical knowledge. When Gothic texts incorporate images from other forms of empirically-focused discourse, they can increase and refine this space to reveal what kinds of skills observers need in order to succeed. Throughout the nineteenth century,

these skills increasingly involved forging relationships between images from different operations. As Gothic texts distinguish between the characters who have these skills, including Jane, the medical secretary, and Clarke, and those who do not, including Austin Ruthyn, Huntingdon, and Dracula, it becomes clear that the abilities to process empirical knowledge and interpret images are never separate from the ability to resist the influence of the past and forge a new relationship with history.

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