UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Dread:

The Literary History of a Political Affect, 1750-1900

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in English

by

Samantha Ellen Morse

2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dread:

The Literary History of a Political Affect, 1750-1900

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Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Los Angeles 2020

Professor Sarah Tindal Kareem, Chair

This dissertation analyzes the cultural urgency of dread—a profound feeling of fear about the future—in a range of canonical and popular British novels, poems, periodicals, and philosophical treatises. In our own time, we tend to think of dread as a negative, paralyzing affect. Yet I elucidate the many ways in which nineteenth-century authors, philosophers, political reformers, and theologians regarded this feeling as an impetus for bringing about a better future. The anticipatory qualities of dread served as a catalyst for ethical and political transformations in the Enlightenment all the way through the Victorian era. Beginning with David Hume and ending with H. G. Wells, I examine the ways in which dread entered into and shaped philosophical thought, popular culture, and political life, especially radicalism, through shifting literary forms, many of which stemmed from the Gothic mode. While numerous studies have investigated fearful affects such as terror, horror, and anxiety, my dissertation is the first

sustained examination of dread, which reconceptualizes the Gothic's literary and political significance. While it is a critical commonplace that Gothic fiction stages encounters with the past, I show how the Gothic stimulates dread in order to orient its readers toward future possibilities.

Part I presents an intellectual and aesthetic genealogy of dread, disclosing how this feeling animated philosophical discussions and literary depictions of sympathy, the moral sentiments, and conscience from Adam Smith to Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Victorian psychologist Alexander Bain. Part II explores shifting understandings of dread from early Gothic novels to Victorian penny dreadfuls, Bram Stoker's fiction and journal articles, and Wells's scientific romances and essays. These chapters show how the slow-paced and expansive nature of dread precipitated deep reflection for fictional characters and real-world thinkers alike. Because of its galvanizing properties, dread was instrumental in mobilizing thoughtful, non-violent, and progressive political reform during three pivotal historical moments. Gothic dread counteracted political alarmism during the revolutionary 1790s, united Chartists advocating for working-class enfranchisement in the 1840s, and informed critiques of settler-colonialism, including the Irish Home Rule movement, in the 1890s.

A brief coda attempts to reconcile the historical sense of dread's rousing and progressive potential with the dominant present-day belief that dread makes people passive, intolerant, or reactionary. Although this emotion is largely viewed in a negative light today, I explore several alternative artistic and political attempts to represent dread as a vital and productive aspect of the human condition.

The dissertation of Samantha Ellen Morse is approved.

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2020

In Memoriam S.J.M.—a loving mother and passionate educator. This dissertation is complete because you taught me how to persevere in the darkest of times.

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AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would not have been able to realize this enormous undertaking without the efforts of my own "Crew of Light." Sarah Kareem's vast understanding of affect theory is matched by an ample degree of personal kindness, which has bolstered me through the ups and downs of this process. Joseph Bristow's encyclopedic knowledge frequently led me to discover new aspects of the Victorians, and his tireless perusal of drafts transformed my ability to write. I am grateful to Anahid Nersessian for showing me the pleasure of difficulty and encouraging me to follow the rudder of my idiosyncrasies. I would not have arrived at this point without Sumangala Bhattacharya, my esteemed mentor since I was an undergraduate. Her attempts at dissuading me from pursuing a PhD in English only fortified my drive to do so. These committee members have been consistently generous, supportive, and enthusiastic—I deeply admire and appreciate them.

Many other faculty from UCLA and beyond have encouraged my growth as a scholar. I am especially grateful to Jonathan Grossman for teaching me the importance of structure (and the necessity of having a giant white board in my office). I have Saree Makdisi to thank for my love of London. Another joy has been working with Chris Mott, who enthusiastically supported my growth as an educator. Thanks also to the amazing community of scholars in the International Gothic Association who warmly welcomed me at the first conference I attended in Mexico and have since shared invaluable knowledge and advice. Closer to home, I have been fortunate to share this graduate school experience with a brilliant, encouraging, and very fun group of students, including Jessica Cook, Timothy Fosbury, Elizabeth Crawford, Chelsea Kern, Yangjung Lee, Becky King, Joe Miranda, Comfort Udah, Abraham Encinas, Emma Spies, Lilly Lu, Mike Vignola, Ellen Truxaw, Crescent Rainwater, Cailey Hall, Ji Eun Lee and too many more to list here.

Lastly, I would like to thank my husband, John Paul, and my close-knit family: Sandy and Carter, Sabrina, Austin, Rebecca, Katie, Buck and Barb, the Aroestys, the Johnsons, the Myers, and the Thielens. None of you doubted for a moment that I would succeed, and I constantly strived to make sure your faith was not misplaced. But regardless of the outcome, I always knew your love was unconditional, and that has made all the difference.

***

Chapter 4 is a version of "Affective Ethics and Democratic Politics in *Sweeney Todd* and the Victorian Penny Press," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 24, no. 1 (January 2019): 1-17.

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Introduction

> "And from thence arises one of the most important principles in human nature, the dread of death, the great poison to the happiness, but the great restraint upon the injustice of mankind, which, while it afflicts and mortifies the individual, guards and protects the society."
>
> —Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759)

> "Like one, that on a lonely road,
> Doth walk in fear and dread,
> And, having once turn'd round, walks on,
> And turns no more his head:
> Because he knows, a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread."
>
> —Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798)

> "… the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man is a dreadful thing."
>
> —Lord Henry in Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)

> "And so begins our great quest, but first, I shall have much to say so that you may know what is to do and to dread."
>
> —Abraham Van Helsing in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)

This dissertation explores *dread* and its adverbial derivative, *dreadful*, in literature, philosophy, popular media, and personal writing from 1750 to 1900. These four epigraphs throw light on this feeling's dramatic transhistoric and transgeneric appeal, yet each one exhibits a dramatically different tone and perspective. The Enlightenment philosopher Adam Smith would have us believe that dread is the affective crux of our ethical humanity, whereas the Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge harnesses the feeling in his harrowing portrayal of the supernatural in order to stimulate the reader's imagination. By contrast, the Victorian aesthete Oscar Wilde degrades the dreadful and renders it comical in the wry epigrams of his Decadent aristocrat. And Bram Stoker, Wilde's Irish compatriot, represents dread as the grave, motivating affect for a transcontinental adventure narrative in which the protagonists pursue a bloodsucking

villain. This feeling clearly has extraordinary versatility, which makes it unique among related affects on the spectrum of fear. Yet dread itself remains critically undertheorized

Perhaps it is because of its omnipresence and flexibility that dread has been taken for granted. We might be tempted to subsume it under the broad category of fear, a feeling that has received a great deal of recent critical attention, especially in relation to politics.[1] Literary scholarship on the Gothic, in particular, is dominated by discussions of terror and horror, a trend that has been sustained since the genre's progenitor, Ann Radcliffe, famously distinguished these two emotional states in her essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (1826). However, dread, as I will explain in greater detail at the end of this introduction, is not quite fear, terror, horror, or anxiety (the affect most in vogue today). Dread is *a feeling of fear about something that has yet to happen*. Dread merits our critical attention because it is an anticipatory feeling that is, at once, psychological, aesthetic, epistemological, and ethical.

Historical and Generic Context

Although this dissertation begins by analyzing the role of dread in Enlightenment ethics and aesthetics, this feeling was certainly not invented in the eighteenth century. Judeo-Christian texts since the Middle Ages prominently featured dread and represent it as the appropriate emotional attitude toward the divine. Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, elaborate treatises, such as Richard Rolle's fifteenth century *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, delineated hierarchies of ways to dread the divine, which fostered emotional

[1] Several touchstones in this discussion include Lauren Berlant, "The Epistemology of State Emotion," in *Dissent in Dangerous Times*, ed. Austin Sarat (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 46–78; Brian Massumi, *The Politics of Everyday Fear* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Terry Eagleton, *Holy Terror* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy, *Fear: Essays on the Meaning and Experience of Fear* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).

communities committed to "better living through dread," as Paul Megna has argued.[2] Following the Protestant Reformation, which brought the bible directly into the hands of ordinary people, dread remained a dominant feeling in the print media of religious communities, and is especially prominent in John Bunyan's popular *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666).[3] Dread remained a touchstone of Christian practices through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as the following chapters will repeatedly show.

I summon dread's early history in order to make clear dread's established role, by the turn of the eighteenth century, as a prompt for ethical behavior. However, my dissertation begins in the eighteenth century because this is when we see, for the first time, the affect and its ethics combined with aesthetics. Edmund Burke's and Henry Home, Lord Kames's respective essays on the sublime (an aesthetic that elicits dread) and sympathy (a moral sentiment cultivated by reading or witnessing dreadful spectacles) indicate that there are vital overlaps between artistic techniques, the feelings they evoke, and the moral transformations they were thought to precipitate in perceivers of a certain social class and gender.

The significance of this trifecta becomes apparent within the enormously popular Gothic romance novel of the 1790s. Although these fictions were far from "popular" in the Victorian sense—where advanced publishing technology and widespread literacy among all classes enabled mass market readership in the millions—this genre attained an unprecedented readership amongst middle and upper-class women and men at the turn of the nineteenth century. Set in

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[2] Paul Megna, "Better Living through Dread: Medieval Ascetics, Modern Philosophers, and the Long History of Existential Anxiety," *PMLA* 130*,* no. 5 (October 2015): 1285.

[3] Baird Tipson has particularly argued that "dread in scrupulous consciences" defined the English Calvinist experience in the long seventeenth century: "Again and again, the historian of late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English Protestantism encounters the testimony of terrified men and women who suspected that they themselves had sinned against the Holy Spirit and were beyond forgiveness." "A Dark Side of Seventeenth-Century English Protestantism: The Sin against the Holy Spirit," *Harvard Theological Review* 77, no. 3/4 (1984): 301–302.

medieval and exotic locations and recounting supernatural tales of terror and horror, this burgeoning genre existed in a liminal space between high and low culture—high because of the sublime aesthetics and intricate picturesque descriptions evident in Radcliffe's novels, and low because the plots became hackneyed and the graphic violence more sordid as the decade progressed and other less talented writers poorly imitated the "Great Enchantress." Examining how dread operates aesthetically and narratologically in the more renowned works of fiction, such as Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), and the extent to which this feeling impacted (or was thought to impact) actual readers, gives us insight into the vexed status of these novels and the cultural work they are doing at a time when France's Reign of Terror provoked English dread of revolutionary potential.

As industrialization, democratic reform, geologic and evolutionary science, and imperialism brought Britain into the modern age, the nineteenth century, for all its optimism, was perforated with flashpoints of dread. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to account for every such affectively charged moment. Instead, I have homed in on two decades that constitute critical linchpins in the political, generic, and affective history: the 1840s when working-class campaigns for democratic reform stoked lingering anxieties of the French Revolution, and the 1890s when accelerated imperial expansion and competition fomented fears of industrialized warfare and unstable national and biological borders. Unsurprisingly, a new species of dread-filled literature flourished in each of these intervals: "penny blood" fiction, serialized in new economical periodicals, and the fin-de-siècle invasion novel. Though different in setting and style, each of these varieties adhere to the Gothic mode: they exhibit interpolated and recursive formal structures, and are thematically concerned with permeable boundaries; inheritance, transmission, and revivification; physical and psychological entrapment; violent sexuality;

mistaken identity; doppelgängers; the uncanny; and the supernatural. Although it is a critical commonplace that "an historical dimension is central to the Gothic mode," this dissertation reveals how the future-oriented affect of dread vitally undergirds the Gothic as it evolved over the nineteenth century, signaling an urgent engagement with times yet to come, not just those long past.[4]

Omitting a discussion of the 1860s and 1870s sensation novels might seem an oversight for a dissertation that concentrates on the aesthetic and political history of emotion in the nineteenth century. To be sure, these bestsellers that aimed at "exciting in the mind some deep feeling of overwrought interest by the means of some terrible passion or crime" have rightly warranted a great deal of critical attention by modern-day Victorian affect scholars.[5] Ann Cvetkovich has cogently elucidated how this fiction "performs the cultural work of representing social problems as affective problems and hence confirming the importance of emotional expression to middle-class life."[6] Although these stories are certainly full of mystery and intrigue, their "capacity to shock, excite, and move audiences" is incompatible with the affective aesthetics of dread that I will be exploring here.[7] Dread, as it appears in the early Gothic romances, penny bloods, and invasion narratives, is a painfully slow-paced affect that catalyzes a feeling subject's sustained thought and intentional action. The aesthetic and philosophical properties of dread-laden fiction therefore stand in contrast to the sensation novel's perceived capacity to "reliev[e] overtaxed brains by *diverting our thoughts* from the absorbing occupations

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[4] Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xx.

[5] "Sensation Novelists: Miss Braddon," *North British Review* 43, no. 4 (1864): 203.

[6] Ann Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 7.

[7] Cvetkovich, 14.

of daily life."[8] I will unpack the political implications of this distinction between prolonged and distracted thinking in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 especially.

The trajectory of this dissertation ends in 1897 with an examination of two immensely popular novels that nonetheless received praise from the higher orders of contemporary literary critics: Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*. Modern scholars have claimed that these works represent the bifurcation of Gothic and science fiction, genres that supposedly have different affective registers (Gothic being erotically charged; SF being dispassionate) and temporal concerns (Gothic as backward looking; SF as future-minded). I challenge these generic distinctions by demonstrating how both novels similarly harness dread to develop characters and actuate their plots. Moreover, I argue that these works are similarly attuned to and intervene in the historical process of imperialism through affective speculation. The alternatives to competitive imperialism that *Dracula* and *The War of the Worlds* imagine are premised on stimulating and refining a sense of dread, which in turn facilitates cooperative ethical behavior. We can perceive therefore that the vernacular philosophies of Stoker and Wells in 1897 repurpose and repackage eighteenth-century conceptions of sympathy discussed in Chapter 1. The historical breadth of this dissertation thereby illuminates continuity in the evolving cultural reception of dread's affective performance, ethical implications, and aesthetic purchase.

By looking at representations of dread and the dreadful in literary and non-fiction writing from the 1750s through the 1890s, we come to see that dread was not always regarded as a feeling to be avoided. On the contrary, there existed a remarkable tradition of cultivating dread to unite and motivate ethical communities. It was in the twentieth century that attitudes toward

[8] "Sensation Novelists: Miss Braddon," 202, emphasis added.

dread underwent a critical shift, such that David Theo Goldberg might declare in 2018: "Dread is depthless, bottomless, lacking insight [...] Vulgarity and violence, bigotry and brutality against the vulnerable become the bitcoin, the stealth cryptocurrency, of the politics of dread."[9] By contrast, nineteenth-century aesthetic techniques to represent this feeling are prolonged, hesitant, and echoing in such a way that is conducive to sustained contemplation, the record of which is narrated in fiction. Moreover, in contradistinction to its kindred Gothic affect, horror, nineteenth-century writers represent dread as promoting, not hindering, action. By examining the reciprocal relationship between literary and real-world dread in periodical discourse, it becomes clear that this affect played a vital role in forming diverse "emotional communities"—from middle-class female readers, to Victorian workers, and Irish nationalists—that mediated the historical process of Britain's modernization. Indeed, this affective history will reveal why, in our own day and age, it might be beneficial to fear for our future.

Critical Approaches and Methodology

This dissertation contributes to the history of emotions, a well-established branch of affect studies, by analyzing how dread was solicited and expressed in writing in a manner distinct from similar affects such as terror, horror, and anxiety, which have eclipsed it in the present-day critical discourse. Following several scholars, I use the terms "affect," "feeling," and "emotion" more or less synonymously for the sake of style, though these words all carry slightly different connotations in both modern affect theory and eighteenth-century discourse on the passions.[10] I do, however, in line with current thought, intentionally use the word "affect," when

[9] David Theo Goldberg, "In the Grip of Dread," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, September 9, 2018, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/in-the-grip-of-dread/.

[10] I am especially thinking of Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*, as well as James Chandler, *An Archaeology of Sympathy: The Sentimental Mode in Literature and Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

referring to the embodied experience of feeling. I will also apply the term "mood" or "feeling-tone" when referring to a more diffuse emotional atmosphere, which, as Martin Heidegger and, more recently, Charles Altieri have argued, dramatically impacts how the surrounding world is perceived and understood.[11]

My textual approach to understanding this affect and its associated aesthetic and ethical properties is based on close reading scenes in popular and canonical literature and periodicals where the word *dread* or *dreadful* explicitly appears. I analyze the stylistic techniques—syntax, punctuation, diction, and figurative devices—used to convey a dreadful situation or generate a feeling-tone of dread. I look at what kinds of characters feel dread and how they perform it in juxtaposition with characters who overtly evade this feeling. I examine how these emotions impact the action of a story, thereby clarifying the generative relationship between feeling and plot, which then offers a template for understanding the ways in which contemporary periodicals described and harnessed feelings of dread to report on and instigate political action.

Although I do examine uses of *dread* in poetry by Jonathan Swift, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, George Gordon Byron, and James Thomson ("B.V."), the majority of the literature I analyze is fiction, because this form, especially in the Victorian period, had a larger and more diverse readership. Fiction's wider net of cultural influence therefore justifies the claims I am making about the relationship between diegetic and real-world dread. Moreover, the types of identification I attempt to explain between reader and character are more likely to occur while reading fiction than poetry.[12] The theater, of course, was

[11] For an excellent delineation of affect terms, see Charles Altieri, *The Particulars of Rapture: An Aesthetics of the Affects* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 47–48. On mood, and especially dread as a world-disclosing mood, see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008), 174–82.

[12] There is an abundance of neurocognitive and psychology research on reader identification with fictional characters and transportation into fictional worlds. Some of the most compelling recent studies include Kobie van

also a space of complex identification, and I examine this phenomenon in greater detail in Chapter 4 with melodramatic stage adaptations of the serialized *Sweeney Todd* (1846-47) story. However, my primary interest resides in the aesthetic practices that convey dread in fiction writing and how this feeling impacts character development and plot, squarely positioning this dissertation in scholarship on fictionality, fictional worlds, and affect theory. Nevertheless, I hope that this work will be of interest to scholars working broadly on long nineteenth-century British literature and history. Beyond elucidating what it meant to dread in this period, I aim to cast new light on canonical texts—from Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798) to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)—by demonstrating how the words *dread* and *dreadful*, when understood with all their historical nuance, operate to powerful effect within the

Krieken, Hans Hoeken, and José Sanders, "Evoking and Measuring Identification with Narrative Characters – A Linguistic Cues Framework," *Frontiers in Psychology* 8 (July 13, 2017); Roel M. Willems and Arthur M. Jacobs, "Caring About Dostoyevsky: The Untapped Potential of Studying Literature," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 20, no. 4 (April 1, 2016): 243–45; Jonathan Cohen, Nurit Tal-Or, and Maya Mazor-Tregerman, "The Tempering Effect of Transportation: Exploring the Effects of Transportation and Identification during Exposure to Controversial Two-Sided Narratives," *Journal of Communication* 65, no. 2 (April 1, 2015): 237–58; Hans Hoeken and Jop Sinkeldam, "The Role of Identification and Perception of Just Outcome in Evoking Emotions in Narrative Persuasion," *Journal of Communication* 64, no. 5 (October 1, 2014): 935–55; Anneke de Graaf, "The Effectiveness of Adaptation of the Protagonist in Narrative Impact: Similarity Influences Health Beliefs through Self-Referencing," *Human Communication Research* 40, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 73–90; Nurit Tal-Or and Jonathan Cohen, "Understanding Audience Involvement: Conceptualizing and Manipulating Identification and Transportation," *Poetics* 38, no. 4 (August 1, 2010): 402–18; Jèmeljan Hakemulder and Emy Koopman, "Readers Closing in on Immoral Characters' Consciousness. Effects of Free Indirect Discourse on Response to Literary Narratives," *Journal of Literary Theory* 4, no. 1 (August 1, 2010): 41–62; Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic, "Measuring Narrative Engagement," *Media Psychology* 12, no. 4 (November 23, 2009): 321–47; Amy Coplan, "Empathic Engagement with Narrative Fictions," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 62, no. 2 (June 2004): 141–52. Fewer studies, however, have explored the immersive qualities of poetry. Christian Obermeier et al. have conducted an experiment using EEG data to demonstrate how regular rhyme and meter in lyrical poetry increases the reader's ability to process the poem and appreciate it on an aesthetic level. "Aesthetic Appreciation of Poetry Correlates with Ease of Processing in Event-Related Potentials," *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience* 16, no. 2 (April 1, 2016): 362–73. This experiment, however, does not indicate that readers identify with the poem, but that they understand and appreciate it. Jana Lüdtke, Burkhard Meyer-Sickendieck, and Arthur M. Jacobs build on this work in their experiment on empathetic reactions to poetry. They conclude that a reader becomes emotionally involved in a poem when the work uses familiar language and situational embedding, whereas a reader experiences aesthetic appreciation from the poem's style and form. "Immersing in the Stillness of an Early Morning: Testing the Mood Empathy Hypothesis of Poetry Reception," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 8, no. 3 (2014): 363–77.

work as a self-contained unit in addition to connecting it to contemporaneous discourse about emotion, action, ethics, and futurity.

I understand fictional scenes constructed around the words *dread* and *dreadful* as providing "emotion scripts" to characters and readers; these are performative prescriptions for when and how to feel dread and how to react to dreadful phenomena.[13] Characters and readers who subscribe to these protocols constitute shifting "emotional communities," which in turn influence the historical process.[14] Understanding an affect's history discloses obscured aspects of political history. As Lauren Berlant has argued, politics are "scenes of emotional contestation"; so, we can better understand a political situation by recognizing the ways in which it is permeated and manipulated by emotional protocols.[15] Feelings of dread in nineteenth-century writing are affective portals into deeply uncertain moments in modern British history and offer insight into the ways in which different authors and readers influenced by class, gender, national, and religious affiliations speculated about the industrial, democratic, and imperial future to direct courses of political action in their own time.

While largely concentrating on the progressive potential of dread in the long nineteenth century, I am mindful to avoid the fallacy of considering emotion-driven expression as inherently subversive, an attitude that is common in revisionist scholarship and one that Cvetkovich forcefully critiques. Affects are not natural—that is, pre-discursive—nor are they necessarily radical or conservative. To the contrary, mass cultural texts actively construct affective experience, but "the political consequences of mass culture's production of affect are not certain,

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[13] Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 12.

[14] Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

[15] Berlant, "The Epistemology of State Emotion," 47.

that it can operate both for and against dominant social structures."[16] Dread is a particularly compelling case for illuminating the ways in which affect can vacillate across and even subsume distant political poles. My close readings will demonstrate how dread capacitates radical, progressive, moderate, *and* conservative politics, occasionally within the same moment. This multiplicity is especially true within *The War of the Worlds*. However, on the whole, I am committed to revealing and emphasizing the progressive potential that is frequently visible in representations of dread and the dreadful throughout the century, because this orientation has been largely ignored in the modern critical discourse and, I think, has the most political value to enlighten and improve our present-day situation, which is so thoroughly saturated with dread.

Defining Dread

In order to clarify dread's aesthetic, epistemological, and psychological implications, it is useful to juxtapose it with adjacent affects. Dread is a unique subset of fear, an all-encompassing term for the negative feeling that arises when we experience a threat. According to Samuel Johnson's expanded 1799 dictionary, *fear*, as a noun, broadly includes "1. Dread; terrour; painful apprehension of danger. 2. Awe; dejection of mind at the presence of any person or thing; terrour impressed: with *of* before that which impresseth. 3. Anxiety; solicitude. 4. That which causes fear. 5. The object of fear. 6. Something hung up to feare deer by its colour or noise."[17] In the eighteenth century, fear encompasses a range of menacing affective experiences, including dread. Nevertheless, this definition informs us that fear is always "impressed" upon the feeling

[16] Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*, 31.

[17] Samuel Johnson, "Fear," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: In Which the Words Are Deduced from Their Originals, and Illustrated in Their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers: To Which Are Prefixed a History of the Language, and an English Grammar*, 8th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols. (London, 1799). The difference between this definition and the original one provided in the 1755 dictionary is the additional clause, "terrour impressed: with *of* before that which impresseth." As my analysis suggests, this clause marks a crucial distinction between empirical fear and abstract dread.

subject. Specifically, fearful objects are characterized by physical properties, such as "colour or noise," which elicit the negative affect. In other words, to feel fear is *to mark and to be physically marked* by a sense of peril. *Dread* as a singular affect, however, is slightly different, according to Johnson: "Fear; terrour; affright; horror either felt or impressed."[18] Whereas fear is always "impressed," dread can be "either felt or impressed." To feel without being pressed upon by material provocation requires imagination. Thus, we can say that dread might (but not always) be experienced without discerning a concrete threat, whereas fear is always derived from our perception of danger.

Another way of thinking about this difference is by considering the feeling's relation to an object and its temporality. David Hume classifies fear as one of the "impressions of reflexion," which are "posterior to" and "derived from" sensations.[19] Fear, based on this conception, is necessarily punctual in response to a tangible threat. Although Hume does not enlarge upon dread in particular, his use of the word in his section on skepticism conveys the feeling's contrastively anticipatory and imaginative nature: "[T]he man of the best sense and longest experience […] must be conscious of many errors in the past, and must still dread the like for the future."[20] This example shows that dread is essentially anterior to experience, derived by contemplating events before they actually happen. Although "dread" in this case has a direct object ("errors"), the object is obscure. "The man of the best sense" cannot know exactly what his future errors might be, for they are only hypothetical ideas that are shifting and manifold.

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[18] Samuel Johnson, "Dread," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: In Which the Words Are Deduced from Their Originals, and Illustrated in Their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers: To Which Are Prefixed a History of the Language, and an English Grammar*, 8th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols. (London, 1799).

[19] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 8.

[20] Hume, 182.

Indeed, for the radical skeptic who argued that "[t]he necessary connexion betwixt causes and effects is the foundation of our inference from one to the other," the future is unforeseeable because there is no necessary relation between contiguous events, only an "accustom'd union."[21] Regardless of his experience of past errors, the "man of the best sense" can never accurately predict his future errors, and that uncertainty is the kernel from which his dread arises. From the great affect theorist of the eighteenth century, then, we can distinguish *fear* and *dread* in this way: the object of fear is perceptible and present, whereas the object of dread is obscure or nonexistent (therefore, imagined) and positioned vaguely in the future.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge arrived at a similar conclusion in his unpublished notebook: dread arises "from deficiency of bodily feeling, of tactual ideas connected with the image."[22] Acutely aware of the differences between imagined dread and sense-based fear, Coleridge thus constructed the immortal verse for "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798):

> Like one, that on a lonely road,
> Doth walk in fear and dread,
> And, having once turn'd round, walks on,
> And turns no more his head:
> Because he knows, a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread.[23]

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[21] Hume, *Treatise*, 165.

[22] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge's Notebooks: A Selection*, ed. Seamus Perry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 76.

[23] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1802*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 451-456. Line numbers refer to the version of the "Ancient Mariner" published in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. This stanza essentially remains the same in both editions, save the shift from "lonely" to "lonesome" in the 1802 publication.

This stanza appears in the final third of the poem, after the ghost crew has sailed the ship on an eerie breeze and the Mariner has "look'd far-forth, but little saw / Of what might else be seen."[24] The simile, "Like one, that on a lonely road…" modifies his thwarted act of prospection. But there is a remarkable incongruency in this comparison: why liken an uncertain *forward* survey to a haunted *backward* glance? Though different in orientation, both acts of sight share a tension, a tension between what little *is* seen and what *might* be seen. What the simile represents, then, is a conflict between presence and potential, which is at the heart of the difference between fear and dread.

Differentiating fear and dread as they relate to perception and imagination allows us to make sense of the uncanny pedestrian experience that Coleridge's simile invokes, which is strangely devoid of visual description. An emotional sense alone induces the walker to turn around, and, indeed, when he does so, the auditor and reader are not given access to what he sees. Instead, there is a tantalizing caesura provided by the comma: "And having once turn'd round, walks on / And turns no more his head." We are left to speculate what causes the man to continue moving without turning around again. The logical conclusion is that there was nothing to see. Yet the final lines tell us something rather different: "Because he *knows*, a frightful fiend / Doth close behind him tread" (emphasis added). The auditor and reader, who certainly do *not* "know" what the pedestrian saw behind him, are left to question how he is conscious of his pursuit. Did he, in fact, catch a glimpse of the fiend when he turned around the first time? Or is his knowledge derived strictly from feeling/imagining rather than empirically ascertaining the presence of the monster? Ultimately, we are left to wonder if the frightful fiend has a physical existence at all.

[24] Coleridge, "Ancient Mariner," 449-450.

Most readers do not presume that the fiend is actually there. As J. C. C. Mays contends: "The feeling that comes to haunt the Mariner, his auditor, and his readers—and therefore presumably the author—is visceral: wholly intangible and below the level of consciousness. It cannot be grasped so as to be repelled"[25] The compound of "fear and dread," I maintain, enables this powerful shift from the palpable to the immaterial. At first, we share the walker's fear at the supposed presence of the fiend, but when we cannot actually perceive its existence, our fear turns to dread at the potentiality in its absence. In this way, the "Ancient Mariner" plays in the gap between the sensible world (of material) and the intelligible world (of ideas), eventually, like Kant's *De Mundi* (1770), prioritizing the latter.

Coleridge pointedly expressed his preference for deriving meaning from the imagination rather than empirical data in a letter to his friend and benefactor, Thomas Poole, on October 16, 1797: "I never regarded *my senses* in any way as the criteria of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions not by my *sight*."[26] Analogously, poetic conventions in the "Ancient Mariner" accentuate imaginative dread over sense-induced fear. *Dread* appears significantly as the second noun in the affective compound, thereby assuming a commanding position at the conclusion of the second line. As a result, *dread* rhymes heavily with *head* and *tread* at the ends of the fourth and sixth lines. This sexain, moreover, is a notable deviation from the proceeding and subsequent ballad quatrains. The thrice, rather than twice, rhymed "ead" suffix consequently resounds memorably, generating a compelling homology between aural and affective intensification. By predominating the sound quality of the poem, *dread* lingers in the reader's imagination, just like it does for the haunted pedestrian.

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[25] J. C. C. Mays, *Coleridge's Ancient Mariner* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 36.

[26] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 210.

The enduring quality of the "fear and dread" stanza is its capacity to convey an uncanny experience, one that is likely familiar: walking by oneself and feeling watched, looking around to find nobody there, yet still feeling unsettled. Consumed in our private, imaginative anticipations, we stew in a state of dread that is likely more agonizing than any actual confrontation. Mary Shelley cogently represents such a situation in *Frankenstein* (1818) after Victor has abandoned his creation in the laboratory and roams the streets all night for fear of it following him. Convinced that he is pursued, but not perceiving the supposed stalker, the beleaguered scientist recites Coleridge's "fear and dread" stanza. But Victor is not, in fact, hunted by the creature at that time. He is absolutely alone. Like the walker in the poem, he expects fear from an encounter with the frightful fiend, but what he actually experiences is far more disturbing: dread of the manifold possibilities for future danger inherent in his creation's absence.

The immense power of dread resides in its capaciousness, as Coleridge was keenly aware. He frequently pontificated on the nature of this feeling in his private journal, and one entry is especially revealing. He admits, in a tone that is entirely serious, to possessing a "Mahometan Superstition": "dread as to the destruction of Paper."[27] The poet describes how he is "ashamed to confess" his unwillingness "to light a candle or kindle a fire with a Hospital or Harbour Report / and what cumulus lie upon my Table."[28] Rationalizing this reluctance, he declares: "I not able to conjecture what use they can ever be, and yet trembling lest what I thus destroyed might be of some use, in the way of knowle[d]ge."[29] This dread is nebulously beyond "conjecture," yet it is physically poignant—causing "trembling" in a way that anticipates Søren

[27] Coleridge, *Coleridge's Notebooks*, 81.

[28] Coleridge, 81.

[29] Coleridge, 81.

Kierkegaard's writings on existential dread in the 1840s—in its earnest attention to future possibilities. This is not a case of fear, which arises from a concrete threat; for instance, if he were afraid that burning paper might accidentally start a fire that would threaten his property and safety. Rather, Coleridge is troubled by the potential of future regret. This example, moreover, reveals an important and somewhat counterintuitive aspect of dread: although the feeling itself is unpleasant, it can result in a positive outcome. In this case, refraining from burning paper (the action motivated by dread) "might" preserve material that can yield "knowledge" in the future. Perhaps we have dread to thank for safeguarding some of Coleridge's poetry from the kindling.

Just as Coleridge's journal entry suggests that dread is a way of thwarting future problems, both the "Ancient Mariner" and *Frankenstein* show how dread might be linked with positive outcomes. Although dread, for both the Mariner and Victor, creates an expectation of impending tribulation, these apprehensions are almost immediately negated in the plot of each story. Following the "fear and dread" stanza, the Mariner's ship catches a breeze that, far from threatening, is actually "Like a meadow-gale of spring" and brings him near the shore of his country where he is ultimately rescued.[30] Similarly, directly after Victor recites the lines, he perceives his dear friend Henry Clerval alight from a public stagecoach. Clerval proceeds to care for Victor through his stress-induced illness. Such rapid reversals suggest that dread is not necessarily linked with adverse outcomes. Dread is not predictive. Rather, it is a feeling—albeit an unpleasant one—that responds to the future's latent and unpredictable possibilities. To dread is to not know when the frightful fiend will appear, or even if it will. Most importantly, dread entails a dialectical movement between future and present. Both the nameless walker invoked in the "Ancient Mariner" and Victor in Shelley's novel are characterized in these moments by their

[30] Coleridge, "Ancient Mariner," 462.

active motion: the pedestrian "walks on" and the scientist "felt impelled to hurry on" and "continued walking in this manner for some time."[31] In other words, dread of the future stimulates action in the present.

Horror and Terror

Due to its motivating energy, dread stands in stark contrast to horror, as it was first theorized by the eminent Gothic author, Ann Radcliffe: "[horror] contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates."[32] As modern scholars have since elaborated, horror paralyzes the subject in response to a "direct encounter with physical mortality."[33] A quintessential example may be taken from Matthew Gregory Lewis's infamous Gothic novel *The Monk* (1796). Raymond, a Spanish gallant travelling in Germany, absconds with a young woman who is held prisoner in her aunt's castle, and, when they are alone, he pledges himself to his supposed beloved. Upon receiving this vow, the woman slowly lifts her veil, and Raymond exclaims:

> What a sight presented itself to my startled eyes! I beheld before me an animated Corse. Her countenance was long and haggard; Her cheeks and lips were bloodless; The paleness of death was spread over her features, and her eyeballs fixed stedfastly upon me were lustreless and hollow.
>
> I gazed upon the Spectre with horror too great to be described. My blood was frozen in my veins. I would have called for aid, but the sound expired ere it could pass

[31] Coleridge, "Ancient Mariner," 453. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. J. Paul Hunter, 2nd ed., Norton Critical Editions (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 37.

[32] Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry," *New Monthly Magazine* 16, no. 1 (1826): 149.

[33] Fred Botting, *Gothic*, 2nd ed., The New Critical Idiom (New York: Routledge, 2014), 69.

my lips. My nerves were bound up in impotence, and I remained in the same attitude inanimate as a Statue.[34]

The graphic, morbid features of the cadaver elicit horror par excellence, and Raymond is thus rendered silent and motionless. Nevertheless, once this grisly, spectral presence withdraws from his bedroom, Raymond's horror transforms into dread. In the morning, Raymond mulls over his midnight misadventure and declares: "the impression left upon my mind by my nocturnal Visitor grew stronger with every succeeding moment. The night drew near; I dreaded its arrival. Yet I strove to persuade myself that the Ghost would appear no more, and at all events I desired that a Servant might sit up in my chamber."[35] Raymond makes explicit how fear impresses itself onto the grooves of his mind, which his imagination then takes over in anticipating another encounter with the specter. Whereas horror "bound [him] up in impotence," dread motivates him to solicit the protective presence of a domestic.

Imaginative, actuating dread is thus clearly distinct from vivid, paralyzing horror. Dread's affinities with terror, to which Radcliffe famously contrasts horror, are more profound. Terror, like dread, is a highly imaginative affect: "They must be men of very cold imaginations," says Radcliffe's eidolon in "On the Supernatural in Poetry," "with whom certainty is more terrible than surmise. Terror […] expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life."[36] Unequivocally, Radcliffe champions the stimulating cognitive effects of terror and its contribution to the aesthetic of the sublime over the paralyzing effects of horror. In this way, "On the Supernatural in Poetry" established terror and horror as the defining affects of the Gothic

[34] Matthew Gregory Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Howard Anderson, rev. Nick Groom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 124.

[35] Lewis, 126.

[36] Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry," 149.

mode. Critics from the early nineteenth century to the present day have devoted considerable attention to both horror and terror, but neglected other affects driving the Gothic.[37] One of my overarching aims in this dissertation is to broaden this affective conversation by illuminating the significant role of dread in the literature of this mode. Dread shares the rousing, imaginative qualities of terror, yet it is fundamentally distinct in its temporal orientation. Dread is a feeling of fear about a future or potential occurrence, while terror may be experienced in the present in response to an obscure phenomenon. In other words, dread is *entirely* dependent on the imagination, whereas terror is partially derived from the senses.

Horace Walpole's founding Gothic novella, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), exhibits this temporal difference between terror and dread. The former affect explicitly dominates the scene when the young princess Isabella flees the aged tyrant, Lord Manfred, after he has made aggressive sexual advances toward her. She hastens to the "lower part of the castle [that] was hollowed into several intricate cloisters […]. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness."[38] This quintessential Gothic setting of ominous obscurity heightens the princess's imagination such that, "Every murmur struck her with new terror."[39] Imagination and real sense perception work in tandem to generate Isabella's terror. Her fancy is heightened by the dark, winding passageways, but she also really does hear "murmurs" that combine with her

[37] For instance, the International Gothic Association's biennial conference for 2019 was organized around the theme "Terror and Horror."

[38] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, ed. Nick Groom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 26.

[39] Walpole, 26.

overwrought imagination. As a result, she is wholly absorbed by terror in the present act of escape.

It is not present terror, however, but future-oriented dread that initiates the novella. The narrator's opening remarks relay the gossip of the inhabitants of Otranto, who attribute Manfred's hastiness to marry off his son Conrad to "the Prince's dread of seeing accomplished an ancient prophecy, which was said to have pronounced, *That the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it*."[40] Remarkably, the story does not begin by representing a concrete threat, but by conveying Manfred's fearful anticipation of dethronement. *Dread* is repeatedly attributed to Manfred as a result of this prophecy and the spectral manifestations of its impending fulfillment. For instance, in the opening scene Manfred searches for his missing son and enters the court "dreading he knew not what."[41] Although Manfred is not specifically afraid of anything in that moment, he is intensely worried about an ominous future portended by the disappearance of his precious heir. Within sentences, the quick-paced narrative reveals that Conrad has been crushed by an enormous helmet, whose size indicates its connection to the prophecy. This premonitory exposition establishes an atmosphere of dread that pervades the story until the prophecy's conclusion.

Manfred's pronounced fear of being unseated, the narrator informs us, is what transforms him into a despot: "Manfred was not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was

[40] Walpole, *Otranto*, 17.

[41] Walpole, 19.

naturally humane."[42] It is dread, then, that is the engine of Manfred's cruelty, and his acts of despotism comprise the bulk of the plot. Dread therefore not only suffuses the story's atmosphere, but also characterizes its villain and motivates its narrative.

Attending to Manfred's dread reminds us that *The Castle of Otranto* is essentially a story about prophecy—about a Prince's resistance to a future that has been dictated as inevitable. This fact compels us to reconsider a critical commonplace: that the Gothic is primarily concerned with the relation between past and present. As Robert Mighall has influentially argued: "The Gothic dwells in the historical past, or identifies 'pastness' in the present, to reinforce a distance between the enlightened now and the repressive or misguided then."[43] While I concur that "[s]avage and primitive energies" in the Gothic "link different historical and individual ages," as the eminent Gothic scholar Fred Botting articulates, I maintain that critical studies have neglected the Gothic's orientation to the future.[44] This omission has occurred in part because some scholars insist that the Gothic, by definition, does not engage with the future. Mighall, for example, asserts that "a novel like Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two* Cities (1859), which is obsessed with unwelcome legacies, vestiges, and curses, has a more legitimate claim to be considered 'Gothic' than Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818)."[45] With a more inclusive perspective, I propose that a text's engagement with the past does not preclude its preoccupation with the future. While certainly *Otranto* is concerned with the past through the trope of inherited

[42] Walpole, *Otranto*, 33.

[43] Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*, xviii.

[44] Botting, *Gothic*, 3.

[45] Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*, xx. Chris Baldick similarly defines the Gothic as necessarily preoccupied with the threatening past. He describes the Gothic project as representing "an age-old regime of oppression and persecution which threatens still to fix its dead hand upon us." Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), xxi.

guilt, its prophetic nature necessarily foregrounds futurity. The chapters in Part II therefore demonstrate how fiction in the Gothic mode over the long nineteenth century imaginatively intervenes in moments yet to come, not just those long past, through the speculative affect of dread.

Anxiety

While terror and horror have long dominated affect studies in the Gothic, the feeling of anxiety has recently acquired a certain cultural cachet in Western thought "as the distinctive 'feeling-tone' of intellectual inquiry itself."[46] At present, *anxiety* largely eclipses *dread* in both vernacular English and scholarship. Nonetheless, *dread* appeared far more frequently in written material from the early modern period through the beginning of the nineteenth century. In fact, *anxiety* only surpassed *dread* in 1815, but the two words remained in comparable usage through the end of the century.[47] It was not until 1941 that *anxiety* went on the sharp ascendant, though this phenomenon is beyond the scope of my dissertation.[48] The question that concerns us here is how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century dread differs from anxiety. Although *dread* and *anxiety* were often (and continue to be) used interchangeably or to define each other—as in the *OED* definition of *dread*: "apprehension or anxiety as to future events"—investigating the terms etymologically reveals two critical points of distinction.[49] *Anxiety* is Latinate in addition to being related to the body, while *dread* is of Anglo-Saxon origin and associated with the numinous.

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[46] Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 215.

[47] "Google Ngram Viewer: dread, anxiety (1550-1900)" accessed April 1, 2020, https://tinyurl.com/vaub822

[48] "Google Ngram Viewer: Dread, Anxiety (1900-2018)," accessed April 1, 2020, https://tinyurl.com/vmbtanx

[49] "dread, n.," *OED Online*. March 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/57581?rskey=HYDmub&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed April 07, 2020).

Johnson's 1755 dictionary offers the following definitions for *anxiety*: "1. Trouble of the mind about some future event; suspense with uneasiness; perplexity; solicitude. 2. In the medical language, lowness of spirits, with uneasiness of the stomach."[50] The second entry draws on early modern denotations of *anxiety* as a feeling of bodily soreness often combined with preoccupation about the future. Medical practitioners have defined *anxiety* since 1559 (or perhaps earlier, says the *OED*) as: "A physical feeling of discomfort or tightness in the chest or epigastric region."[51] For example, Richard Gower's English translation of François de Le Boë Sylvius's *A New Idea of the Practice of Physic* (1675) describes some of the symptoms chiefly afflicting "Hysterical" women: "These I have oft observ'd to begin with distention of the Abdomen, and Anxiety of the Midrif, the Pulse being Little, Weak, and Swift, Cold and Pain also troubling the Region of the Loins."[52] Remarkably, the relationship between worry and abdominal discomfort was discerned centuries ago, well before the present-day hype surrounding the "gut-brain connection," which neuroscientists and microbiome researchers have explained "link anxiety to stomach problems and vice versa."[53] Moreover, Sylvius's work affirmed what modern scientists have now proven: inflammatory bowel disease is far more prevalent in females than males.[54] Unlike today,

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[50] Samuel Johnson, "Anxiety," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: In Which the Words Are Deduced from Their Originals, and Illustrated in Their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers, to Which Are Prefixed, a History of the Language, and an English Grammar,* 1st ed., vol. 1, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1799).

[51] "anxiety, n.". *OED Online*. March 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/8968?redirectedFrom=anxiety (accessed April 07, 2020).

[52] François de le Boë Sylvius, *A New Idea of the Practice of Physic Written by That Famous Franciscus De Le Boe ... the First Book, of the Diseases Either Constituting, Producing, or Following the Natural Functions of Man Not in Health : Wherein Is Containd ... a Vindication of the Spleen and Mother from Fits Attributed to Them: As Also a New Discovery of Intermitting Fevers, the Yellow Jaundice, and Other Diseases Never before Discovered, All Cleard by Anatomical Experiments, and Chymical Demonstrations, as Also by Their Cures: Whereto Is Prefixed a Preface Written by Dr. Mar. Nedham / Translated Faithfully by Richard Gower*, vol. 1 (London, 1675), 246.

[53] Harvard Medical School, "The Gut-Brain Connection," *Harvard Health Publishing*, accessed April 1, 2019, https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/the-gut-brain-connection.

[54] Carmen Haro et al., "Intestinal Microbiota Is Influenced by Gender and Body Mass Index," *PLoS ONE* 11, no. 5 (May 26, 2016): 2.

however, early modern medicine did not pathologize anxiety as a predominantly female disorder.[55] Men too might experience "Anxiety of the Abdomen" for several conditions including asthmatic fevers, intestinal blockages, fevers, and cardiac induced swooning or death (or, as we would say today, heart attack).[56] Regardless of the difference in gender connotation, historic and present-day conceptions of anxiety are consistent in recognizing that this psychological state manifests itself with physical symptoms in the abdomen and chest. By contrast, dread is never correlated to such corporeal expression.

Besides this embodied component, *anxiety* differs from *dread* etymologically. The linguistic origin of *anxiety*, as Johnson rightly discerns, is Latinate from *anxietas*. Thus, we see the relation between English *anxiety* and "Old Occitan *anxietat* (c1350), Catalan *ansietat* (15th century), Spanish *ansiedad* (1398), Portuguese *ansiedade* (1789), Italian *ansietà* (a1306)."[57] The *OED* also alerts us to the word's proximity to late-twelfth-century French, *anxiété*.[58] Accordingly, Johnson's textual examples for *anxiety* subtly imply the term's foreign roots. The first allusion is to John Tillotson, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury from 1691 to 1694 who was tolerant toward Roman Catholics: "To be happy, is not only to be freed from the pains and diseases of the body, but from *anxiety* and vexation of spirit."[59] The second example comes from John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), a Scottish physician: "In *anxieties* which attend fevers, when

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[55] Carmen P. McLean et al., "Gender Differences in Anxiety Disorders: Prevalence, Course of Illness, Comorbidity and Burden of Illness," *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 45, no. 8 (August 2011): 1027–35.

[56] Sylvius, *Practice of Physic*, 242, 262, 276, 305, 319.

[57] "anxiety, n." *OED Online*. March 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/8968?redirectedFrom=anxiety (accessed April 07, 2020).

[58] "anxiety, n."

[59] Johnson, "Anxiety.

the cold fit is over, a warmer regimen may be allowed; and because *anxieties* often happen by spasms from wind, spices are useful."[60] Considering how amply Johnson makes use of eminent English authors such as Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Swift in his examples, it is significant that his two references for *anxiety* are to more obscure figures. Tillotson's liberality to Catholics aligned him with the Continent, whereas Arbuthnot, though a respected medical man, was a Scotsman and therefore at the margins of Englishness (especially following the Jacobite rebellion, which took place only a few years before Johnson first published his dictionary).

The Continental etymology and somatic connotation of *anxiety* are very different from *dread*, a feeling that Johnson flags as English in origin and divine in orientation. *Dread* is derived from Middle English, or "Saxon" as he calls it.[61] Unlike *anxiety*, then, *dread* etymologically develops in an English tradition. The Englishness of this affect is further emphasized by the examples Johnson provides. Under the first denotation of *dread*—"Terrible; frightful"—Johnson includes three references to Shakespeare and one to Milton, thereby associating *dread* with the two most renowned authors in English literary history.[62] For the second denotation, "Awful; venerable to the highest degree," he includes two more Milton quotes. One of these is from Book III of *Paradise Lost* when God tells Jesus of the Second Coming: "When thou attended gloriously from Heav'n / Shalt in the Sky appeer, and from thee send / The summoning Arch-Angels to proclaime / Thy dread Tribunal […]"[63] To Johnson's point, this tribunal of ultimate reckoning for salvation or damnation is "venerable to the highest

[60] Johnson, "Anxiety."

[61] Johnson, "Dread."

[62] Johnson, "Dread."

[63] Johnson, "Dread." See also John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Stephen. Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), bk 3, lines 323-26.

degree." Also implicit in this verse is a sense of futurity. Although Johnson does not specify that dread means terror about the future in the same way that anxiety does, the connection between dread and Judgement Day suggests the affect's futurity in relation to the numinous.

Johnson compounds *dread*'s English and divine connotations in the third denotation: "3. This seems to be the meaning of that controverted phrase, *dread majesty*. Some of the old acts of Parliament are said in the preface to be metuendissimi regis, our *dread* sovereign's."[64] I was unable to discover any historical material exhibiting a controversy over the phrase "dread majesty," however, proceedings from the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society in 1860 assert that the phrase "metuendissimi regis" was particularly applied to King Henry VIII.[65] This monarch famously split the Church of England from papal authority, and his radical alterations to the Constitution introduced the theory of the divine right of kings to England. It is significant, then, that Johnson affiliates *dread* with this significant shift in English culture, suggesting the feeling's longstanding purchase in the nation's interrelated religious and monarchical traditions. I will have much more to say about the Englishness of dread in Chapter 3, where I argue that this feeling was positioned against alarm as a safeguarding affect for English readers in response to the French Revolution and fear of invasion. For now, however, suffice is to say that English, numinous dread is very different from Continental, corporeal anxiety, although the two are fundamentally similar in their preoccupation with future events.

Suspense

Given dread's prospective orientation, it is worth stating the obvious way in which this feeling differs from another anticipatory affect: suspense. As Caroline Levine's title, *The Serious*

[64] Johnson, "Dread."

[65] Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society: Proceedings During the Year 1860, vol. 10 (London: Bell & Daldy, Fleet-Street, 1861), 61.

Pleasures of Suspense (2003), clearly states, suspense is an enjoyable sensation. In her study of Victorian realism and narrative doubt, Levine accentuates the pleasure of the pause where we feel "excitement about the fact that the world may defy convention, resist authority, elude familiar representations."[66] To clarify, these delights in Levine's account are not conveyed as Gothically perverse or transgressive. To the contrary, they are serious and scientific. Levine likens the Victorian reading experience to contemporaneous scientific experimentation in order to argue that suspenseful narrative structures "foster energetic skepticism and uncertainty rather than closure and complacency."[67] Both reading and the scientific method require a hypothesis followed by anticipation during the trial where there is "pleasure in ignorance" and "the joy of self-suspension."[68] The distinguishing factor between suspense and dread is this element of pleasure. Although I will demonstrate in the subsequent chapters how feelings of dread may lead to positive and ethical outcomes (as Levine similarly asserts regarding suspense), the affective position of dread is an unpleasant one of fear—not enjoyable curiosity—about the unknown future.

Dread Is…

Now that we have a sense of what dread is not, it is high time I provide a positive definition. The type of dread I analyze in this dissertation is a feeling of fear about the future that is aroused by contemplating the unknown, the vast, the ambiguous, or the obscure. This feeling is actuating because it is closely tied to concerns about judgement (by God or society). Upon fearfully considering the future and recognizing how her actions, or lack thereof, may be praised

[66] Caroline Levine, *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 10.

[67] Levine, 2.

[68] Levine, 9.

and rewarded or condemned and punished, a dreading subject is motivated to act in order to bring about a desired outcome. But, to clarify, I do not mean to suggest that dread *always* signifies and operates in this way. In fact, I will occasionally mention cases where dread is used synonymously with the affects previously described in order to convey with integrity the full spectrum of the affect's capacious utilization. Nonetheless, the type of dread that is of primary interest to this study is the anticipatory and stimulating kind, a kind, I will demonstrate, that held substantial sway in the historical British consciousness.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is divided into two parts. Part I consists of two chapters, which present an intellectual genealogy of dread from the Enlightenment to the Victorian fin de siècle. Chapter 1 begins by analyzing Adam Smith's influential proclamation in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* that "dread of death" is "one of the most important principles in human nature," because it "guards and protects the society."[69] I trace the implications of this dread-based ethics to Lord Kames's essay on aesthetics "Our Attachment to Objects of Distress" (1751) and Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Taken together, these sources reveal the ways in which evolving conceptions of sympathy and sociability were predicated on collective feelings of dread and bearing witness to dreadful phenomena in fiction, poetry, and drama. I then explore how the affective aesthetics of dread and its moral-ethical resonances became integrated into various frameworks across the political spectrum in relation to revolutionary upheaval in France. In Thomas Paine's radical *Common Sense* (1776), dread appears as a rationale for insurrection, while in Burke's conservative *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) and Jane Austen's satirical *Northanger Abbey*

[69] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley (New York: Penguin Classics, 2010), 18.

(written 1803, published 1817) dread and the dreadful respectively operate to condemn or nullify the possibility of revolution in England. These diverse applications, which nonetheless retain Enlightenment conceptions of dread's aesthetic and ethical properties, demonstrate the vital ways in which this feeling was thought to govern partisan behavior. The literary works I then analyze, including poetry by William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, further illustrate the galvanizing capacities of this anticipatory fear to confront the Reign of Terror.

The second chapter theorizes the ways in which these tenors of dread embedded themselves in the Victorian period, with particular reference to the ethical system of empirical psychologist Alexander Bain and the rise of radical penny periodicals. These cheaply available publications were vehicles for working-class solidarity and, at times, promoted the Chartist cause of democratic enfranchisement. One of the ways in which they did so was through so-called penny dreadful serial fiction, which frequently featured Robin Hood-esque figures that committed crimes against the rich for the benefit of the poor. These inexpensive periodicals explicitly identify dread as an instigator of collective working-class action. At the same time, however, dread remained prominent in more conservative, middle-class outlets. Fiction, poetry, and sermons printed in popular religious newspapers frequently commended the ethical value of dreading the Day of Judgment. From these publications, we can see how dread remained an important, unifying affect for Christian communities. In addition to these disparate popular forums, highbrow literature summoned dread in a very different register, one that was associated with the mighty sublime. James Thomson's epic poem, *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874, revised 1880) and Oscar Wilde's aesthetic novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890, revised 1891) represent a kind of elite dreadful that was taken very seriously by critics. Yet the properties of dread in these works are familiar. In Thomson's poem, dread functions to cohere a

secular community that brazenly resists the future of industrial slavery prescribed by Victorian notions of Progress. Wilde's novel, by contrast, portrays the fatal repercussion of Dorian's failure to dread the consequences of his wicked pursuits.

Within these varied registers, Part I shows how writers across the long-nineteenth century invoked dread to muster collective feelings in a variety of ideological contexts. Part II comprises a series of case studies in three chapters, which reveal more precisely how writers in different discursive and historical contexts instrumentalized dread to aesthetic and political ends.

Chapter 3 explores how anticipatory fear in Gothic novels operates upon national lines in the wake of the Reign of Terror, when the British dreaded a French invasion. Both Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Lewis's *The Monk* (1797) present dread as a salutary emotion that should be honed by seeking encounters with the dreadful in order to curtail intemperate desire and violence. To varying degrees, these novels demonstrate the thought processes of characters who fear for their personal and spiritual futures. As a result of this dread-laden cognition, they make decisions that bring about moral resolutions. Affect-based ethics in these popular Gothic novels thus strikingly align with the Enlightenment philosophy of David Hume and Adam Smith, discussed in the first chapter. Beyond its moral effect, dread also has powerful political implications in these stories. Both Radcliffe and Lewis portray dread as an inherently English feeling, one that distinguishes the nation from Continental excess. More to the point, dread is presented as an emotional safeguard against foreign invasion, thereby competing with political rhetoric that advocated alarm as the appropriate response to the French threat. "Alarmism" became a powerful tactic in the 1790s as reactionary politicians, including Edmund Burke and Tory Prime Minister William Pitt, intentionally stimulated public vigilance around the prospect of an invasion. "Alarm," as Lily Gurton-Wachter astutely articulates, "is

both a feeling and an imperative: it combines the passivity of an overwhelming emotion that stunts action with a call to action, or rather a call to prepare for action, a call to arms."[70] Where "alarm" denotes a rapid and reflexive response, Gothic dread is prolonged and induces contemplation. Both *Udolpho* and *The Monk* portray the value of slow-paced and thoughtful dread in ensuring moral and political protection. *Udolpho* rewards its heroine for her commitment to dread, while *The Monk* illuminates the damning consequences of its villain's failure to dread. These antipodal narratives nevertheless reveal a consistent sense of dread's aesthetic expression and ethical implications, which inform a burgeoning sense of English national identity and sociability in a time of revolutionary terror.

Chapter 4 turns to "penny blood" fiction in the 1840s—a predecessor to "penny dreadfuls"—in order to show how dread provides a critical vocabulary for class conflict and democratic reform in the early-Victorian metropolis. First, this chapter explores the ways in which feelings of dread motivate the plot of James Malcolm Rymer's immensely popular *Sweeney Todd* (1844-46) and develop the gendered identities of the beloved protagonists, Johanna Oakley and Mark Ingestrie. Johanna's confrontation with the villain, "that dreadful and dreaded man, Sweeney Todd," proves her loyalty to Mark and enables her to solve the mystery of the demon barber.[71] Similarly, Mark develops a sense of dread while trapped in the villain's bakery, which propels him to exert manly agency in contriving a brilliant escape. I examine how both Johanna and Mark become enmeshed in a diverse community of dread-laden characters who are likewise dedicated to finding truth and justice, which Rymer intended as a model for

[70] Lily Gurton-Wachter, *Watchwords: Romanticism and the Poetics of Attention* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2016), 63.

[71] James Malcolm Rymer, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, ed. Robert L. Mack (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 258.

real-world reform. Dread has a twofold moderating effect in the narrative: taming the generic excesses of melodrama as well as the economic excesses of capitalist consumption. I maintain that Rymer's project, sanctioned by his publisher Edward Lloyd, is to represent the benefits of dreading well in order to precipitate a politics of enfranchisement and mindful appetite. The political implications of dread then come into sharper focus by analyzing George W. M. Reynolds's prodigious series *The Mysteries of London* (1844-48), which closely aligns with Chartist politics. Like *Sweeney Todd*, this urban mystery story presents dread as a beneficial emotion that enables characters to escape brutal situations and lend aid to others. *The Mysteries of London* is particularly concerned with the ways in which manipulative individuals frequently turn others into "tools" through "machinations." In this way, Reynolds's narrative amplifies the dread of instrumentalization that Rymer's story ultimately resolves in order to galvanize working-class resistance to exploitative labor practices.

Chapter 5 addresses how speciesistic and ontological confusion elicits dread in both H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1897) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) at a time when imperial expansion threatened English subjects' sense of biological and national identity. This chapter counters conventional readings of *War of the Worlds* and *Dracula* that understand them as belonging to distinct genres: science fiction and the Gothic. Scholars have always characterized SF as future-oriented, while the Gothic is said to be backward looking. Although *Dracula*, unlike Wells's novel, is not set in the future, attending to dread reveals how preoccupied Stoker's novel is with times-yet-to-come. Both *Dracula* and *War of the Worlds* harness dread of an uncertain but ominous imperial future to generate narrative. Beyond exploiting dread's known effect of attracting readers, both Wells and Stoker create affective scripts that undermine the logics of British settler colonialism. In *War of the Worlds* the

Martians' use of dread-evoking Black Smoke to conquer the English countryside indicts technologically driven British expansionism. In *Dracula*, dread provides an alternative orientation toward the future than the Progress narrative championed by critics of Irish Home Rule. Stoker's vampiric count is the monstrous incarnation of Britain's desire to consume its own history, exhibit singularity, and project its hegemony into a guaranteed future. For this reason, Dracula never experiences dread. By contrast, the vampire hunters frequently experience this feeling, but rather than stultifying them, dread unifies the group in their fight against the fixed future envisioned by the count.

The Coda briefly attempts to account for why our conception of dread changed so radically in the twentieth century, such that leading intellectuals today strongly associate dread with negative consequences. Still, this conclusion explores several notable exceptions. The first is Dutch artist Juha van 't Zelfde's 2013 exhibition "Dread: Fear in the Age of Technological Acceleration" and the accompanying monograph *Dread: The Dizziness of Freedom* (2013), both of which present dread as an essential and potentially beneficial component of the human condition.[72] The second is China Miéville's address on "Marxism and Halloween" at the 2013 Socialism Conference, in which he champions the idea of "Socialists for dread."[73] Both van 't Zelfde and Miéville elucidate the recent ways in which dread has been harnessed in retrograde or oppressive ways by the political right. Nevertheless, they also present current and potential forms of dread that are progressive and radical. Their optimistic visions of dread-laden cognition

[72] The exhibition was held at De Hallen Haarlem in Amsterdam, Netherland from September 7 through November 24, 2013.

[73] China Miéville, *Marxism and Halloween - Socialism 2013* (Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel and Conference Center, 2013), uploaded on October 30, 2013, 23:50, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paCqiY1jwqc..

empower individuals to perceive and act outside the bounds of convention, thereby creating innovative solutions to global problems and re-envisioning political systems.

Although van ’t Zelfde’s and Miéville’s claims appear unconventional today, this dissertation reveals how they are the inheritors of a long intellectual tradition that has only recently been obscured in mainstream thought. Dread historically operated across a wide range of genres, philosophical conversations, and political events and played a critical role in structuring reading, religious, and partisan communities. As the following chapters will demonstrate, dread cohered diverse groups throughout the long nineteenth century—from urban workers, to Dandies, preachers, intellectuals, radical atheists, and Irish nationalists—and enabled them to plan for and act upon the frightfully uncertain future.

Chapter 1
Cultivating and Defusing Dread, 1710-1830

In the history of Western thought, it is remarkable to discover that a philosophical elaboration of what it means to dread did not exist until Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in 1759. Smith's very first chapter, "Of Sympathy," features the following declaration: "And from thence arises one of the most important principles in human nature, the dread of death, the great poison to the happiness, but the great restraint upon the injustice of mankind, which, while it afflicts and mortifies the individual, guards and protects the society."[74] Smith's formulation reveals a sophisticated double-sidedness to dread that warrants closer attention: dread is both a "poison" and an antidote. More specifically, dread contaminates individual happiness while conserving society at large. Smith thus suggests that dread operates homeopathically: the toxin is palliative when applied at the appropriate scale. Dread therefore modulates between individual and collective emotions for the purpose of mass justice. As a consequence, the ethics of dread are inseparable from a political investment in democracy, a politics that this chapter and the next will trace from its infancy in the late eighteenth century through its substantial development in Victorian Britain.

The significance of Smith's assertions becomes clear when we look back on early modern theories of the passions, some of which delineate upwards of thirty different emotional states. Dread is absent from René Descartes's *Passions of the Soul* (1649), Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* (1651) and his earlier work *The Elements of Law* (ms. 1640), as well as John Locke's *Essay*

[74] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley (New York: Penguin Classics, 2010), 18.

Concerning Human Understanding (1690).[75] Dread, however, appears in Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics* (ms. 1675) in relation to wonder and consternation.[76] Wonder is "*imagination of a singular thing, insofar as it is alone in the mind*," but "*if it is aroused by an object we fear*, it is called *consternation* […] Otherwise, *if what we wonder at is a man's anger, envy, or the like*, the wonder is called *dread*."[77] Spinoza's distinction suggests an interpersonal quality to dread, which is lacking in wonder and consternation. Whereas objects alone elicit wonder or consternation, it is the consequences of another individual's affective state (their anger or envy) that provokes dread. Although Spinoza does not extensively enlarge on these particular affects in his taxonomy, nor does he dwell on the significance of dread in a larger ethical context, he is the first philosopher to perceive the social aspect of dread.

Spinoza's early conception expands substantially in eighteenth-century discussions of sympathy and ethics, in which *Moral Sentiments* acts as a lynchpin. In order to elucidate Smith's vital role in synthesizing and developing a tradition of dread-based thought, this chapter begins by contextualizing his 1759 study with pertinent contemporary theories of morals and aesthetics. The first is that of David Hume, Smith's friend and fellow Scotsman. Hume's *Treatise of Human*

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[75] Descartes originally wrote in French, and no historic or modern English translation of *Les passions de l'âme* includes *dread*. Given the etymology I expound in the introduction, it makes sense that Anglo-Saxon *dread* is absent from this French treatise. It does, however, include *anxiety* (*la crainte*), a word that is French in origin.

[76] Spinoza originally wrote his *Ethics* in Latin, but he planned for it to be translated into Dutch so as to reach a wider audience. The standard edition of Spinoza's works was edited and translated by German philologist and philosopher Carl Gebhardt in 1925, and this edition has been translated into English by Edwin Curley. Spinoza's philosophy, however, received extensive treatment in England well before the twentieth century. The first substantial effort to introduce English readers to Spinoza's teachings was made by G. H. Lewes in his *Biographical History of Philosophy* (1845-46), which was frequently reprinted and expanded over the century. The first full-length study of Spinoza's work in England appeared three years after the two-hundredth-anniversary commemoration of the philosopher's death, Frederick Pollock's *Spinoza his Life and Philosophy* (1880). Spinoza's *Ethics* was especially influential in the thinking of George Eliot, Walter Pater, and Matthew Arnold. See Sophie Alexandra Frazer, "George Eliot and Spinoza: Toward a Theory of the Affects," *George Eliot - George Henry Lewes Studies* 70, no. 2 (2018): 128–42. See also John Coates, "Aspects of the Intellectual Context of Pater's Imaginary Portraits," *Yearbook of English Studies* 15 (1985): 93–108.

[77] Benedictus de Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. Stuart Hampshire, trans. Edwin M. Curley (London: Penguin, 1996), 97.

Nature (1739-40) significantly established a definition of sympathy that would lend itself to a dread-based ethics in Smith's deft thinking. Both Hume and Smith were deeply influenced by their mentor, the esteemed Scottish philosopher Henry Home, Lord Kames. In his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1751, revised 1779) Kames examines the extent to which people of different social classes are attracted to objects in distress, a concept that informs Smith's stance on the ethics of bearing witness to dreadful phenomena. Unlike Hume and Smith, Kames's discussion relies upon a theory of the theatre and the vicarious experience of dread on behalf of fictional characters. Kames's essay thus provides a critical transition to analyze the role of dread in Edmund Burke's aesthetic treatise, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757, 1759). A year before encountering Smith's volume, Burke had already begun to think about "how greatly night adds to our dread" in sublime representations.[78] It is therefore unsurprising that Burke would go on to praise *Moral Sentiments* so extensively in his *Annual Register* and reproduce verbatim the lines where Smith expounds on the dread of death.[79] In the *Enquiry*, we can see how dread is akin but distinguishable from terror in forming an essential component of the subline

This chapter therefore moves from discussing the significance of dread in individual and shared feeling, to the impact of this affect on ethical behavior, and, finally, its artistic expression. Analyzing the discourse around Smith's *Moral Sentiments* illuminates the ways in which dread crystallized as a tripartite affective-ethical-aesthetic category in the mid-eighteenth century. By bringing together these different conversations, we come to see that dread is not just a feeling,

[78] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. Paul Guyer, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 48.

[79] Edmund Burke, "The Theory of Moral Sentiments, by Adam Smith, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow," *Annual Register* 8 (1759): 484–89.

but a set of principles underlying and guiding works of art and literature, which enabled artists, authors, viewers, and readers to think through some of the most pressing issues of their times. In the final sections, this chapter will explore how dread becomes embedded in specific genres and modes of political discourse, which not only passively conflict but energetically compete with each other. Once we examine this historical genealogy, we can better understand how and why dread is politicized for progressive purposes in the Victorian Era, and ultimately, how it becomes a genre of its own at the end of the nineteenth century in the form of "penny dreadful" fiction.

Sympathy and Dread

When Hume defined the "remarkable" phenomenon of sympathy in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, he initiated a vigorous discourse around the conditions and consequences of shared feeling, "that propensity […] to receive by communication [another person's] inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own."[80] Hume's treatment of sympathy, as he first presents it in the second book, is secondary to his exploration of specific passions (among which dread does not appear). All of these discrete examples portray sympathy as a process of emotional replication between individuals: "the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each others [*sic*] emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated, and may decay away by insensible degrees."[81]

This infectious quality of Hume's sympathy has led many modern philosophers to emphasize the ways in which such shared feeling "underpins herd behavior, mob psychology,

[80] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 316.

[81] Hume, 365.

and informational cascades."[82] Elias L. Khalil therefore concludes: "So, for Hume, the emotions are contagious and, hence, diffuse in the population essentially without critical or cognitive processing."[83] By emphasizing the potential for sympathy to inspire rabble-rousing, Khalil maintains that Hume's version of sympathy cannot be the foundation of moral order. This assertion, however, does not fully take into account the third book of the treatise, in which Hume embeds his theory of affect within an ethical system. In this account, he famously argues against the supremacy of reason in moral decision making: "Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason."[84] Put simply, Hume seems to suggest that an individual's moral behavior is determined by desire, not cognition. But if our actions are only guided by personal inclinations, how can we form lasting social or national bonds? The solution for Hume rests in emotions themselves. For the passions, as he conceives of them, are not only derived from individual experience but are also received from other people. Accordingly, Hume posits sympathy—or "imparted feeling," as John Rawls has aptly called it—as the mechanism by which we come to have "such extensive concern for society."[85] To be sure, sympathy has the potential to spread disruptive emotions through a group, but it is also "able to preserve the character of a nation the same for a century together."[86] As Davide Panagia has argued, Hume's "politics of discontinuity" is premised on a conception of sympathy "that compels one's having

[82] Elias L. Khalil, "The Fellow-Feeling Paradox: Hume, Smith and the Moral Order," *Philosophy* 90, no. 4 (October 2015): 654.

[83] Khalil, 654.

[84] Hume, *Treatise*, 457.

[85] John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Barbara Herman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 86. Hume, 579.

[86] Hume, *Treatise*, 317.

to wrest oneself from one's interests and one's immediate relations in order to impart oneself to others AND in order to enable a space for the appearance of others."[87]

Adam Smith made the prosocial effects of sympathy more explicit in *Moral Sentiments* and, in doing so, deviated from his friend's theory in vital ways. Significantly, Hume views emotional transmission as a type of contagion, or in Rawls's words, an "infection, that we catch from others as a resonance of our nature with theirs."[88] Smith, by contrast, proposes a more active and creative process for passing sentiment between individuals. This difference comes into focus when we look more closely at the reasons why Smith proclaims that "dread of death" is "one of the most important principles in human nature."[89] Even though, he says, this feeling is a "great poison to […] happiness," it critically places "great restraint upon the injustice of mankind."[90] Imagining what it is like to be dead—"to be laid in the cold grave, a prey to corruption and the reptiles of the earth; to be no more thought of in this world"—he maintains, "afflicts and mortifies the individual," while it "guards and protects the society."[91] But why should this be the case? Remarkably, Smith does not attribute the ethical, modulating function of the "dread of death" to an anticipatory fear of God's Judgement, "that awful futurity which awaits."[92] He claims that rather than fear punishment for our sins, we fear what it is like to be dead from the point of view of a living person. In Smith's words, we impose "our own living

[87] Davide Panagia, *Impressions of Hume: Cinematic Thinking and the Politics of Discontinuity*, Modernity and Political Thought (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), 107.

[88] Rawls, *Lectures*, 86.

[89] Adam Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 18.

[90] Smith, 18.

[91] Smith, 17-18.

[92] Smith, 17.

souls in their inanimate bodies, and thence conceiving what would be our emotions in this case."[93] This imaginative projection of feeling is certainly painful, but, in Smith's estimation, it is nonetheless edifying to imagine how it might feel to suffer in someone else's position. In actuality, our impression is totally wrong, as he stresses: "[t]he happiness of the dead, however, most assuredly, is affected by none of these things."[94] Nevertheless, Smith maintains that the act of imagining to be the deceased person, regardless of inaccuracy, remains a productive exercise for cultivating sympathy, which in turn makes us compassionately cooperative with our fellow human beings. This logic reflects Hume's foundational insight into the role of sympathy in social justice:

> The whole scheme, however, of law and justice is advantageous to the society; and 'twas with a view to this advantage, that men, by their voluntary conventions, establish'd it. After it is once establish'd by these conventions, it is naturally attended with a strong sentiment of morals; which can proceed from nothing but our sympathy with the interests of society. We need no other explication of that esteem, which attends such of the natural virtues, as have a tendency to the public good.[95]

While Hume focuses on the positive ways in which sympathy promotes collective interests, Smith highlights the manner in which the shared negative affect of dread creates coherence among moral communities.

Although "dread of death" functions as the most intense form of this emotionally uniting exercise for Smith, mundane encounters with the dreadful also allow us to develop our

[93] Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 18.

[94] Smith, 18.

[95] Hume, *Treatise*, 579-80.

sympathizing capacities. According to Smith, when we experience misfortune of a "dreadful kind" we "may generally depend upon the sincerest sympathy of all [our] friends" because "sympathy, in its most proper and primitive signification, denotes our fellow-feeling with the sufferings, not that with the enjoyments, of others."[96] This sympathy, however, comes with a caveat: it is contingent upon the ways in which the person who experiences "the most dreadful calamities" comports himself.[97] First of all, "[i]t is always miserable to complain," no matter how oppressive the circumstances may be.[98] But quiet endurance is not enough. More to the point, he who can "maintain his cheerfulness […] appears to be more than mortal."[99] Consequently, those who witness the sufferer "feel what an immense effort is requisite to silence those violent emotions which naturally agitate and distract those in his situation. We are amazed to find that he can command himself so entirely."[100] As a result of this admiration for the self-possessed individual, the witnesses are moved from a state of "insensibility" to one in which they are "extremely affected": "We are more apt to weep and shed tears for such as, in this manner, seem to feel nothing for themselves, than for those who give way to all the weakness of sorrow: and in this particular case, the sympathetic grief of the spectator appears to go beyond the original passion in the person principally concerned."[101] It is worth emphasizing that this experience of sympathy is not characterized by a mirroring of feeling, as theorized by Hume, but

[96] Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 54, 55.

[97] Smith, 58. Following Smith, I am using the masculine pronoun here. Smith does not specifically say that men and women experience, or should experience, the dreadful differently. He does, however, use a male subject in all his examples and seems to assume (understandably so, given the historical context) a male reader.

[98] Smith, 58.

[99] Smith, 59-60.

[100] Smith, 60.

[101] Smith, 60.

by a movement and heightening of emotion. One's stoicism in the face of the dreadful invites and inspires others to feel (and express those feelings) above and beyond the afflicted subject. As we can tell, sympathy with the dreadful is therefore kinetic, not reiterative, and it supports affirmative, social emotional experiences.

Reciprocally, the dynamic quality of this felt experience extends to the sensate subject as well as the engaged spectators:

> He fixes his thoughts, therefore, upon those only which are agreeable, the applause and admiration which he is about to deserve by the heroic magnanimity of his behaviour. To feel that he is capable of so noble and generous an effort, to feel that in this dreadful situation he can still act as he would desire to act, animates and transports him with joy, and enables him to support that triumphant gaiety which seems to exult in the victory he thus gains over his misfortunes.[102]

Performing a function similar to that of an omniscient narrator, Smith recounts an imagined person's processing of emotional investments in a manner that reveals their self-serving nature. In this proto-psychological account, Smith regards the sympathy of others as a mechanism that intensifies the extent of the suffering individual's self-control.[103] We might interpret the forbearance that this subject experiences toward the dreadful as a masochistic pleasure, a "triumphant gaiety" for conquering the natural emotional response to calamity. On Smith's account, experiencing the dreadful has positive results, because it allows the subject to cultivate command over his emotions and thereby earn the esteem of others, which ultimately enhances

[102] Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 61.

[103] For more on self-control, self-interestedness, and rational choice theory in *Moral Sentiments*, see Elias L. Khalil, "Adam Smith's Concept of Self-Command as a Solution to Dynamic Inconsistency and the Commitment Problem," *Economic Inquiry* 48, no. 1 (2010): 177–91.

his affective condition. The dreadful therefore provides a prized opportunity to exert one's will. Nevertheless, this felt experience also subtly opens up the individual to an affective transformation that transcends his agency, for agency becomes absorbed in a collective dialogue. More to the point, agency becomes inextricably linked with sociability.

The benefits surrounding this dreadful occurrence are not only limited to the sufferer but also include the sympathetic witnesses. For by performing their sympathy with the afflicted, the viewers are able to develop and exhibit "the amiable and respectable virtues" of "indulgent humanity" and "self-denial."[104] By Smith's estimation: "to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature; and can alone produce among mankind that harmony of sentiments and passions in which consists their whole grace and propriety."[105] The greatest social ideal for Smith is achieved by an all-embracing affective posture of sympathy with the dreadful misfortunes of others.

But such calamities do not happen all the time, nor do they happen to everyone equally. Both Smith and Hume are attentive to the ways in which external circumstances impact the affective condition of people across class lines, to varying degrees.[106] Yet it was Smith's patron in the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, Lord Kames, who understood these social differences

[104] Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 30.

[105] Smith, 31.

[106] Mike Hill attends to this overlap of sympathy and class relations, and has illuminated the ways in which book two, chapter three of Smith's *Wealth of Nations* "echoes [Smith's] blueprint of 'moral sentiment' in the earlier treatise of 1759." Hill deftly discerns how "the inherent inequalities of wealth were for Smith already resolved socially, in the area of civil society," which is governed by sympathetic observation. See "Of Multitudes and Moral Sympathy," in *Masses, Classes, and the Public Sphere*, ed. Mike Hill and Warren Montag (London; New York: Verso, 2000), 208. Likewise, Steven Wallech highlights the importance of sympathy in Hume's conception of respect for the wealthy and contempt for the poor in "The Elements of Social Status in Hume's *Treatise*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45, no. 2 (1984): 211.

in terms of dread, or, rather, a relationship with the dreadful. For Kames, perceptions of the dreadful become especially useful for crystallizing class distinctions in his essay, "Our Attachment to Objects of Distress" (1751), which builds on the work of his other protégé, Hume, while anticipating Smith's *Moral Sentiments*. Like Hume, Kames extols sympathy as "the great cement of human society," and piously adds that this desire and ability to "partake the afflictions of our fellows" is "wisely ordered by providence" to enable social cohesion. [107] As Smith elaborated more substantially, Kames perceives sympathy as a "moral affection" that can be cultivated by exposure to the dreadful.[108]

Kames, nonetheless, is more attuned than Smith to the fact that hardships do not occur with the same magnitude or frequency across class lines. As a result, he recognizes a moral quandary for the upper echelons of society: "Persons in prosperity, unacquainted with distress and misery, are apt to grow hard-hearted." His solution for these privileged people is to attend the theatre, especially for the purpose of viewing tragic plays. Kames deems tragedy the most "admirable resource" for exposing oneself to affliction, for the "feigned objects of pity […] have nearly the same effect to exercise the passion that real objects have."[109] This is principally the case in "a work of genius" where "incidents will be chosen to make the deepest impressions; and will be so conducted as to keep the mind in continual suspense and agitation, beyond what commonly happens in real life."[110] In other words, simulation in the playhouse allows for

[107] Henry Home Kames, Lord, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion, Corrected and Improved, in a Third Edition. Several Essays Added Concerning the Proof of a Deity*, ed. Mary Catherine Moran (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 7, 16.

[108] Kames, 20.

[109] Kames, 21.

[110] Kames, 17.

psychological development equal to or perhaps better than actual experience.[111] Kames thus extends Hume's conception of sympathy by suggesting that emotions can be felt vicariously on behalf of fictional people. Moreover, Kames suggests that the success of this hyper-affective simulation depends on the palpable results of aesthetic techniques: the "deepest impressions" result from deftly chosen incidents (that is, plot) that are structured and narrated in a way that garners suspense. Such artful pacing can cause the affective intensity of simulation to exceed that of ordinary lived experience. Consequently, the "agitation" in the mind of the viewer entails greater cerebral participation than he or she engages on a daily basis. On the whole, the artificial experience of sympathy for Kames's wealthy playgoer is a highly intellectual activity, which reveals the constructed nature of emotional experience, as Smith would later suggest. Merely linking the cultivation of sympathy to attending the theatre, in fact, accentuates the performative nature of emotional refinement and expression.

Although Kames does not go into greater detail on what a dreadful aesthetics might look like (as Burke does several years later in his *Enquiry*), he nevertheless elaborates on the ways in which such "[p]ictures of danger, or of distress" make viewers feel: "[they] have a secret charm which attracts men."[112] Although there is an element of pain in witnessing even these "feigned" hardships, Kames maintains that objects in distress "draw us to them, and inspire us with a desire to afford relief."[113] Even if the viewer cannot provide respite because the scene is artificial, the desire to do so is sufficient for self-congratulation: "We are pleased with ourselves for being so

[111] The psychological benefits of simulation have recently received a great deal of attention as a result of compelling experiments in social science and neuroscience departments. See Patrick Colm Hogan, "Affect Studies and Literary Criticism," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, August 31, 2016, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.105.

[113] Kames, *Essays*, 15.

constituted: we are conscious of inward merit."[114] Thus, the wealthy are able to find moralized pleasure in experiencing the aestheticized dreadful.

Kames draws a stark distinction between the implicitly well-to-do "persons of reflection" who attend the tragic play and the "vulgar" viewers of a public execution.[115] Although both the playgoer and the peasant are intentionally seeking dreadful "entertainment," Kames disparages the latter as vapid and amoral.[116] To make this point, he quotes an example from Jean-Baptiste Dubos's aesthetic treatise, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (1719): the attendance of "a spectacle the most horrid that man can behold, to see a poor wretch broken upon the wheel, burnt alive, or his intrails torn out."[117] In Kames's estimation, the people who choose to attend this execution are "blindly to be led by curiosity with little attention whether it will contribute to their good or not."[118] It is important to note that Kames's critique is not, like Dubos's, an aesthetic one. In other words, Kames does not condemn the public execution as grotesque or elevate the tragic play as sublime. Instead, he locates his moral criticism within the viewing subjects themselves. Lower-class observers, Kames assumes, do not actively reflect upon the dreadful display in order to transform the experience into one of higher moral sympathy. Consequently, they supposedly feel no sense of "self-approbation" upon satisfying their "appetite" for the dreadful.[119] This perception of the debasing plebian "appetite" is juxtaposed to the positive ways in which "sensible people" of the upper orders "indulg[e] the

[114] Kames, *Essays*, 17.

[115] Kames, 18, 21.

[116] Kames, 21.

[117] Kames, 12.

[118] Kames, 21.

[119] Kames, 21.

passion" of "compassion" by being active agents who choose to attend and reflect on tragic plays. Kames's noticeable choice of words—"appetite" versus "passions"—establishes a powerful dichotomy between lower- and upper-class vocabularies of emotion, a dichotomy that bifurcates even more forcefully and controversially in the mid-nineteenth century, as Chapter 2 explains.

But it is impossible to understand that division without exploring the ways in which eighteenth-century theories of affect and ethics, with their underlying class dynamics, become fused with a theory of aesthetics in Edmund Burke's *Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Burke was a fledgling writer who had recently moved to London from Dublin when he wrote the *Enquiry*, his first and only purely philosophical work. The first edition was, in his own words, not "ill received."[120] To be sure, favorable reviews appeared in Johnson's *Literary Magazine*, the *Critical Review*, and the *Monthly Review*.[121] When Hume became aware of the treatise after its second edition, he promptly distributed a copy of *Moral Sentiments* to the young philosopher and mentioned his *Enquiry* to Smith in a letter on April 12, 1759.[122] Burke eventually wrote to Smith himself on September 10 to express his gratitude and praise for the

[120] Edmund Burke, "Mr. Edmund Burke, to Richard Shackleton," in *The Works and Correspondences of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, ed. Charles William, Earl Fitzwilliam, and Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Bourke (London: Francis & John Rivington, 1844), I:17.

[121] Arthur Murphy, "Rev. of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*," *Literary Magazine* 2 (1757): 182–89. "Rev. of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*," *Critical Review* 3 (April 1757): 361–74. *Oliver Goldsmith, "Rev. of A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*," *Monthly Review* 16 (May 1757): 473–80.

[122] David Hume to Adam Smith, April 12, 1759, in *Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. Ernest Campbell Mossner and Ian Simpson Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 33.

"very agreeable and instructive work."[123] Thus began a lifelong intellectual and personal friendship.[124]

Hume clearly saw the overlapping principles between Smith's and Burke's respective treatments of the affects, although the former concentrated on ethics while the latter focused on aesthetics. Burke himself was building on the work of Kames; his sections on sympathy, including "The Effects of Sympathy in the Distresses of Others," resonate strongly with Kames's arguments about the "charms" of the dreadful. In Burke's formulation: "as our Creator has designed that we should be united by the bond of sympathy, he has strengthened that bond by a proportionable delight; and there most where our sympathy is most wanted,—in the distresses of others."[125] Yet Burke diverges from Kames, who emphasizes the viewing subject's agency, by postulating the aesthetic properties of "uncommon and grievous calamity" that instill feelings of sympathy "antecedent to any reason" in the viewer.[126] On Burke's account, our exposure to such "scenes of misery" triggers "an instinct that works us to its own purposes without our concurrence."[127] It is the dreadful phenomenon itself, not its witness, that has the power to exude sympathy: "poetry, painting, and other affecting arts, transfuse their passions from one breast to another, and are often capable of grafting a delight on wretchedness, misery, and death itself."[128]

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[123] Edmund Burke to Adam Smith, September 10, 1759, in *Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. Ernest Campbell Mossner and Ian Simpson Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 46.

[124] For more on Smith's intellectual influence on Burke, see Michael L. Frazer, "Seduced by System: Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Embrace of Adam Smith's Philosophy," *Intellectual History Review* 25, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 357–72.

[125] Burke, *Enquiry*, 39.

[126] Burke, 40.

[127] Burke, 40.

[128] Burke, 38.

The sublime—"Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the idea of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects"—is the pinnacle of this overwhelming affective experience.[129] Although terror appears preeminently in this definition, and the vast majority of modern scholarship focuses on this affect in Burke's aesthetics, dread is distinguished as the feeling associated with the property of obscurity: "When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of apprehension vanishes. Everyone will be sensible of this, who considers how greatly night adds to our dread, in all cases of danger."[130] Dread is, therefore, a key component of the sublime. It is no coincidence that Burke exemplifies this element with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, just like Johnson's *Dictionary*, which we examined in the Introduction. Burke, however, trains our attention on a different scene, the "description of Death in the second book":

> The other shape,
> If shape it might be called that shape had none
> Distinguishable, in member, joint, or limb;
> Or substance might be called that shadow seemed;
> For each seemed either; black he stood as night;
> Fierce as ten furies; terrible as hell;
> And shook a deadly dart. What seemed his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on.[131]

[129] Burke, *Enquiry,* 33.

[130] Burke, 48.

[131] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Stephen. Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), bk. 2, lines 667-73.

Milton himself does not use the word *dread* in this affecting portrayal, yet Burke affirms that this feeling is elicited by the shapelessness and nebulous darkness surrounding the figure of Satan's offspring. What makes these verses "sublime to the last degree" is the way in which obscurity is harnessed to ominous, anticipatory effect.[132] Such uncertain, expectant, and extraordinary fear is traceable right through the "frightful fiend" in Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner."

Nevertheless, Burke proceeds to argue that this feeling inspired by Death is inferior to the dread sublimity that ensues from considering the power of God in one's own imagination: "To be struck with his power, it is only necessary that we should open our eyes. But whilst we contemplate so vast an object, under the arm, as it were, of almighty power, and invested upon every side with omnipresence, we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner annihilated before him."[133] It is striking how many physical metaphors Burke uses here, given that the phenomenon he is describing (God's power) is immaterial. These somatic metaphors indicate Burke's attempt to convey the deeply embodied nature of dread's affectivity, an experience where the sensate subject will "rejoice with trembling."[134] This intense mingling of emotion and physicality is for Burke proof that dread's original cause is divine. He flatly negates "the common maxim, *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*" (Fear first made gods in the world) by asserting that "the notion of some great power must be always precedent to our dread of it."[135] In other words, one cannot simply summon feelings of dread in an atheistical vacuum. Rather, dread is a physiological and psychological reaction contingent upon perceiving divinity in the world.

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[132] Burke, *Enquiry*, 49.

[133] Burke, 56.

[134] Burke, 56.

[135] Burke, 57.

Burke thus illustrates how this affect is associated with a sense of the numinous, thereby linking dread to Christian morality as well as an aesthetics of power and obscurity. Both Kames and Smith similarly perceive the providential nature of dread-based sympathy, though their treatises elaborate a more secular kind of ethics, which, as the following chapters reveal, gain traction over the nineteenth century.[136] Still, it is imperative to recall the religious origin of dread that I trace in the Introduction from the Middle English Wycliffe Bible, through Richard Rolle and John Bunyan, all the way to Edmund Burke. Numerous Christian authors contemplated the vastness and mystery of divine power and consequently experienced dread, a feeling that activated some kind of moral behavior oriented toward future judgment. We can therefore apprehend how dread in Burke's sublime aesthetic develops out of a very long Christian tradition, one that remains deeply influential in the Romantic period.

We can better grasp the implications of dread in Burke's aesthetic treatise by looking at the arresting conclusion to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan: Or, A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment" (1816). Here the dual force of sympathetic and numinous dread is dramatically realized in poetic form, a literary inheritor of the philosophical lines of thoughts this chapter has traced. In the late 1790s when he first wrote these lines, the teenage Coleridge was studying at Cambridge and subversively steeping himself in Joseph Priestley's Unitarianism writings. This theological influence alarmed his older brother, George, for it was a radical deviation from their Anglican upbringing in the home of a distinguished Devonshire vicar. In lieu of the Holy Trinity, Unitarianism preaches the immanence of God in everything, amounting to a unity in all of creation. Such omnipresent divinity is revealed in the setting of Coleridge's visionary poem:

[136] As Khalil aptly explains, the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers were preoccupied with the questions: "What is the cement of human society if God is an absent landlord? That is, if we remove the church and the state from engineering the social order, and trust such order to the passions, would it be possible for economic prosperity and moral order to arise spontaneously?" Khalil, "The Fellow-Feeling Paradox," 661.

Xanadu is the "holy and enchanted" place where the emperor Kubla Khan summons "[a] stately pleasure-dome" into being in a manner that Paul Magnuson has aptly described as "a type of divine creation."[137] The poem consists of two parts. The first three stanzas recount the Khan's manifestation of the pleasure dome and its eventual destruction from a third-person point of view. By contrast, the final stanza assumes a first-person perspective in which the speaker expresses his desire to recapture the inspiration that would allow him to build that elusive pleasure-dome himself. Essentially, this lyrical poem is a meditation on the processes, possibilities, and limitations of artistic creation as a quasi-divine activity. It is also, I argue, a poem about sympathy, that is, the kind of sympathy that exists between an artist, his art object, and its viewers.

The significance of shared feeling in artistic construction and reception comes to bear in the final dizzying stanza where the speaker imagines a group of people witnessing him build the "sunny dome" and "caves of ice":

> And all who heard should see them there,
>
> And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
>
> His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
>
> Weave a circle round him thrice,
>
> And close your eyes with holy dread
>
> For he on honey-dew hath fed,
>
> And drunk the milk of Paradise."[138]

[137] Paul Magnuson, *Coleridge's Nightmare Poetry* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), 41.

[138] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Kubla Khan: Or, A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment," in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Complete Poems*, ed. William Keach (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1997), lines 49-54.

Notably, the onlookers' shared sense of dread aligns with both religious emotion scripts and Enlightenment theories of the dreadful: the affecting art object and its maker are at once attractive (the viewers flock to encircle them), ominous ("Beware! Beware!"), and humbling ("close your eyes").[139] Above all, this communal experience of "holy dread" affectively and physically unites the people who weave a circle around the poet-prophet.

Significantly, this feeling is not inspired by the art object per se, but by its creator who "on honey-dew hath fed." Louis Markos thus argues that the speaker is "at best, a border figure" and, at worst, "cease[s] to be human. He might possess the wisdom to instruct and embody in himself a higher ethic that transcends the mundane, but he cannot share that wisdom or that ethic. He cannot get close enough to his fellow man to do so."[140] Accordingly, I contend that "Kubla Khan" reveals the very humanness of dread. This feeling is elicited in the terrestrial witnesses when the inspired individual rises to the higher world of imagination and recovers, in Michael O'Neill's words, "a sacred tradition."[141] By becoming the source of dread (rather than a participant in the feeling), the poet sacrifices his attachment to the human community.

What we can discern in this genealogy from Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" back to Smith's *Moral Sentiments* is the integral role of dread in social experience. The writers I have discussed here cogently articulate why this feeling should be cultivated for the sympathetic cohesion of society. Moreover, they posit several channels by which such emotional development might

[139] There is ambiguity as to who is speaking these lines. The imagined spectators might be speaking for the entirety of the final six lines, or they may only say, "Beware! Beware! / His flashing eyes, his floating hair!," thus leaving the speaker of the poem to imagine them saying or thinking the rest. But regardless of who is speaking, the feeling of dread is still attributed to the spectators.

[140] Louis Markos, "Honeydew Ethics: The Dark Side of Romantic Inspiration," in *Literature and Ethics: From the Green Knight to the Dark Knight*, ed. Steve Brie and William T. Rossiter (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 141.

[141] Michael O'Neill, "Coleridge's Genres," in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 387.

transpire: inner dialogue, engagement in one's social circle, and simulation at the theater. All in all, these sources cast light on the transhistoric allure of the dreadful, despite the painful nature of its content. Dreadful art, by these accounts, has a sympathetic power of its own that invites viewership and offers an opportunity to refine one's sympathizing capacities. Given their ethical reverberations, these sublime artistic representations are very serious indeed, and become still more sober and urgent in the forthcoming age of political turbulence.

Defusing Dread in Satire

Despite its significant role in philosophical conceptions of sympathy, morality, and the sublime, the feeling of dread was not always taken so seriously. To the contrary, dread frequently appeared in contemporary satire to hilarious effect. It is important to explore this counterpointing tradition as it develops alongside philosophical considerations of the dreadful in order to make sense of a cultural phenomenon that happens in the late-nineteenth century: the emergence of penny dreadful fiction, which is discussed in chapters 2 and 5. Quite the opposite of Enlightenment treatises, this genre was written for the masses and extols tales of crime, lewdness, and vice. *Dreadful* thus became a byword for literary trash and migrated into slang with amusing connotations. In order to appreciate these later nuances of *dreadful*, we must first discern how memorable satires by the witty Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Jonathan Swift, and the infamous Romantic peer poet, George Gordon, sixth Baron Byron, entertainingly deflate this affect, rendering it ridiculous and grotesque or ribald and bathetic. These far cries from the sublime and the reverent are funny *because* they parody and invert the dominant philosophical and religious attitudes toward dread in the long eighteenth century.

For instance, Swift's mock-eclogue "A Description of a City Shower," which appeared in the *Tatler* magazine in 1710, begins with an ironic foretelling:

Careful Observers may fortel the Hour
(By sure Prognosticks) when to dread a Show'r.
While Rain depends, the pensive Cat gives o'er
Her Frolicks, and pursues her Tail no more.
Returning home at Night you find the Sink
Strike your offended Sense with double Stink.[142]

The feeling of dread about the rainstorm is defused in several ways over the course of these six lines. First, the anticipated event is not particularly grave; an urban shower is much lower a concern than death or salvation. To be sure, the rest of the poem shows how rain is a nuisance for a variety of mundane activities—"The tuck'd-up Sempstress walks with hasty Strides, / While Streams run down her oil'd Umbrella's Sides"—but it is far from catastrophic.[143] Secondly, the intense, weighty uncertainty associated with philosophic and religious dread is undercut by "sure Prognosticks": a cat desisting from chasing its tail. Assuredly, this method of forecasting is ridiculous, a sense that is heightened by the speaker's ironic conviction. Finally, the storm itself is not represented by an elevated aesthetics, as one finds in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) or in the Gothic romance novels later in the century. Instead, the impending shower is revoltingly conveyed by the "double Stink" of the "Sink," that is, the lavatory receptacle or sewer. This grotesque sense perception reaches a climax—a mock sublime—in the final alexandrine triplet: "Sweepings from Butchers Stalls, Dung, Guts, and Blood, / Drowned Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drench'd in Mud, / Dead Cats, and Turnip-Tops come tumbling

[142] Jonathan Swift, "A Description of a City Shower," in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Claude Rawson and Ian Higgins, Norton Critical Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), lines 1-6.

[143] Swift, 37-38.

down the Flood."[144] The specific list of disgusting objects stands in stark contrast to the greatness and obscurity of the dreadful sublime. That which is dreaded here is material, visceral, and grossly mundane. Obviously, the dreaded shower is not an experience one seeks, nor does it provide social or spiritual insight.

This tradition of defusing dread to humorous effect can be traced over a hundred-year-long period from Swift to Byron, whose "epic satire" *Don Juan* replaces Swiftean eschatological comedy with a libertine's bawdiness.[145] The sixteen cantos, published spontaneously by Byron from 1819 to 1824, are loosely connected by the adventures of its eponymous hero. Easily seduced and fumbling into amusingly strange situations, Juan is a comic inversion of the legendary playboy of Spanish and Italian literature. In canto 6, for instance, Juan, by misadventure, is dressed as a woman and taken to a seraglio, where he shares a couch with the "sweet creature" Dudú.[146] This "child of Nature carelessly array'd" unmakes her toilet under the disguised male gaze, and offers to help undress her bedmate, "Juanna."[147] Juan declines in order to conceal his identity and retain the privilege of Dudú's "chaste kiss," for she "was fond of kissing."[148] As a result, Juan must remove the pins from his garb himself and pricks his fingers numerous times. The libertine speaker of the poem consequently expostulates on the perils of sharp fasteners in female attire:

> Making a woman like a porcupine,

[144] Swift, "City Shower," 61-63.

[145] George Gordon Byron, Lord, "*Don Juan*," in *Byron Poetical Works*, ed. Frederick Page and John Jump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), canto 14, line 790.

[146] Byron, 6.409.

[147] Byron, 6.475, 483.

[148] Byron, 6.465-66.

Not to be rashly touch'd. But still more dread,

Oh, ye! whose fate it is, as once 'twas mine,

In early youth, to turn a lady's maid;—

I did my very boyish best to shine

In tricking her out for a masquerade:

The pins were placed sufficiently, but not

Struck all exactly in the proper spot.[149]

As in Swift's poem, *Don Juan* defuses the expected solemnity of dread in a variety of amusing ways. Yet Byron's satire is unique because of its additional edge of sexual humor, which we will later see extrapolated in the racy scenes of nineteenth-century penny dreadfuls. *Don Juan* informs us that a woman's costume is, supposedly, something to be dreaded, due to its fasteners. However, the speaker uses the imperiling pins as a means of initiating a sexual encounter, as well as a clever way of articulating the affair. Dread in this case is not associated with morality, but titillation. Moreover, the gravity traditionally ascribed to this affect is aurally undermined by its proximity to the discordant word "porcupine." It is amusing to encounter this term in a poem at all, and then likening a woman to this prickly rodent further elevates the humor. The speaker's description of her as "still more dread" than this quill-covered beast takes the joke to its highest pitch.

In their irreverent spirit, Byron's and Swift's respective uses of dread in these poems do not negate the seriousness of this feeling in eighteenth-century and Romantic philosophical and religious thought. To the contrary, the humor of their verse hinges on the expectation that the reader will be surprised and amused by the deflation of the dreaded event. Byron's pin punctures

[149] Byron, *Don Juan*, 6.489-96.

the gravitas of a dressed-up woman, while Swift savagely lampoons what happens when "in contiguous Drops the Flood comes down / Threat'ning with Deluge this *devoted* Town."[150] Swift's and Byron's manipulations of dread therefore demonstrate the affect's immense versatility, a versatility that makes competing traditions of cultivation and defusion possible. As we will continue to see, dread is expressed with equal intensity by earnest preachers, fictional ruffians, fiery radicals, and staunch conservatives alike.

Cultivating Dread in the Age of Revolution

While these eighteenth-century examples of dread exhibit the feeling's generic adaptability, a range of politically invested works during the years of the French Revolution and its aftermath reveal the affect's ready availability across the political spectrum. That is to say, the traditions of cultivating and defusing dread in the age of revolution gain competitive fuel as they by turns embrace and repel radical political energies. Thomas Paine, for example, invokes dread in his "most powerful" argument for American secession from Great Britain in his pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776):

> But the most powerful of all arguments, is, that nothing but independence, i.e. a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable, that it will be followed by a revolt somewhere or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.[151]

[150] Swift, "City Shower," 31-32. "*Devoted*" is italicized in the original, calling attention to the pun. The word actually means "overflowing" here, but it cheekily implies the lack of religious devotion in the corrupt city.

[151] Thomas Paine, "*Common Sense*," in *Rights of Man, Common Sense, and Other Political Writings*, ed. Mark Philp, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30-31.

For Paine, dread necessarily accompanies his imagination of a future if Britain and America were to reconcile. Assuredly, his anticipatory fears of "the consequences" are not specific, but, as is the case with dread, they linger in ominous ambiguity. This ability to feel acutely (but not conceive of concretely) a future that is "far more fatal" than the present motivates Paine's call for independence. We might say, then, that for him dread serves as an affective engine of revolution, a phenomenon that is visible not only in Paine's pamphlets, but also in politicized Romantic poetry by William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

It is no surprise that the mystical poet William Blake vigorously deployed dread throughout his corpus, combining the feeling's longstanding sense of numinousness with a powerful spirit of rebellion. For example, "Earth's Answer," the second poem in all copies of *Songs of Experience* (1794), begins with a resounding repetition of dread that accentuates the magnitude of Earth's subjugation: "Earth rais'd up her head, / From the darkness dread & drear. / Her light fled: / Stony dread! / And her locks cover'd with grey despair."[152] Although "dread" does not conclude the second line to form a couplet with the first, it remains aurally emphasized by the rhyme with "head" and the trochaic meter to create a sublime feeling-tone for the place where Earth is "Chain'd in night."[153] The sublimity of this prison suggests the greatness of its occupant, who is, in fact, also characterized by "Stony dread!" While "stony" connotes a sense of stoical endurance, the exclamation point adds to the mightiness of this affective stance. Earth's light may have "fled" and her locks be "cover'd with grey despair" but there is an underlying, dreadful energy here that vitalizes Earth's answer to the Bard of the introductory poem, "Who

[152] William Blake, "Earth's Answer," in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, new rev. ed. (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1988), lines 1-5.

[153] Blake, 14.

Present, Past, & Future sees / Whose ears have heard, / The Holy Word."[154] Ultimately, dread is not a stifling feeling, but a rousing one that triumphs over compliant "grey despair." For the poem concludes with the realization of Earth's potency in a rebellious appeal: "Break this heavy chain, / That does freeze my bones around / Selfish! vain! / Eternal bane! / That free Love with bondage bound."[155] Earth's subsumption of an epically cosmic dread thus precedes a radical call for liberty, a liberty that is at once physical and emotional. What Earth desires is a world of perfect sympathy, of "free Love" rather than the present proprietary nature of a society premised on "Cruel jealous selfish fear."[156]

Similarly, in *Jerusalem* (1804) Los, the eternal prophet of Blake's mythopoeia, anticipates the moment "when Albion [the primeval man whose name derives from the ancient term for Britain] arises from his dread repose" and as a result "Sexes must vanish & cease" and "all their Crimes, their Punishments their Accusations of Sin: / All their Jealousies Revenges. Murders. hidings of Cruelty in Deceit / Appear only in the Outward Spheres of Visionary Space and Time."[157] Albion's slumber is not only "dread" because Albion himself is a powerful psychic force; beyond connoting divinity, solemnity, and might, dread here is also ripe with potentiality. That is, this "dread repose" contains the prophetic kernel of a coming time when gendered bodies and strict notions of morality will collapse. Dread is the affective energy of this moment prior to the revelation: a vigorously felt state of stasis that is not meant to hold.

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[154] William Blake, "Introduction [Songs of Experience]," in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, new rev. ed. (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1988), lines 2-4.

[155] Blake, "Earth's Answer," 21-25.

[156] Blake, 12.

[157] William Blake, "Jerusalem," in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, new rev. ed. (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1988), plate 92, lines 14-17.

Dread and *dreadful* permeate, to similar effect, Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) with its cast of demigods, gods, and spirits. In Shelley's lyrical drama, both of these terms connote a sense of the mighty and terrible, as is fitting for a work about strife between divine forces. The Furies speak with a "dreadful voice" and threaten the chained Prometheus: "We will be a dread thought beneath thy brain."[158] Ione pities the "dreadful groan" of Prometheus suffering from Mercury and the Furies.[159] Asia meets "A Spirit with a dreadful countenance" who introduces itself as "the shadow of a destiny / More dread than is my aspect."[160] Demogorgon's is a "dreadful might."[161] And in the end, we are told, that Love has been waiting with "dread endurance" to fold "over the world its healing wings."[162] Though each of these instances carries varying connotations—threatening, terrifying, pathetic, heroic—what they share is a sense of godly potency, a Burkean sublimity.

In addition to modifying situations of divine strength, fear, and suffering in Prometheus's extremity, *dreadful* is, most significantly, associated with the hero's tirade against Jupiter. In the first act, Earth meditates "In secret joy and hope those dreadful words" spoken by Prometheus to the "almighty Tyrant."[163] These "dreadful words" express an emancipatory provocation: "Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind, / All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do; / Foul Tyrant both

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[158] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "*Prometheus Unbound A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts*," in *Percy Bysshe Shelley The Major Works*, ed. Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), act 1, line 443. References are to act and line, or act, scene, and line when applicable. Shelley, 1.488.

[159] Shelley, 1.578.

[160] Shelley, 2.4.142; 2.4.146-47.

[161] Shelley, 3.1.22.

[162] Shelley, 4.557-61.

[163] Shelley, 1.185; 1.161.

of Gods and Human-kind, / One only being shalt thou not subdue."[164] Assuredly, these "dreadful words" mark the heroic center of the lyrical drama, the reason for its driving conflict and the epitome of its insurrectionary message.

A further positive use of *dread* appears toward the end of the first act when the Chorus likens Prometheus's declaration to a fire of "faith" for the oppressed people of earth.[165] Following the rebel's enchainment, the Chorus exclaims to him: "The survivors round the embers / Gather in dread. / Joy, joy, joy! / Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers, / And the future is dark, and the present is spread / Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head."[166] Remarkably, the survivors' feeling of dread is not a negative one. To the contrary, this mood is linked with thrice repeated and exclamatorily punctuated "joy!" Rather than expressing undesirable fear, *dread* here denotes deep solemnity, a gathering that takes very seriously Prometheus's message in the bleak days of his imprisonment. Moreover, like Blake's use of *dread* in *Jerusalem*, this feeling is connected to a radically imagined temporality. History physically inserts itself onto the present as "past ages crowd" on Prometheus, and, anthropomorphized, "each one remembers" his curse to the tyrant. The future too is present in this scene, but it is "dark" and unperceivable, an important condition for the anticipatory feeling of dread. Sensorily subsuming the obscure future, "the present is spread" painfully before Prometheus. Yet the end rhyme of "spread" with "dread" suggests that the future *is* immanent in this tormented present and it thus has the potential for explosive "joy!"

[164] Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, 1.262-65.

[165] Shelley, 1.555.

[166] Shelley, 1.559-63.

As a consequence, we can see how both Shelley and Blake associate dread with a sweeping sense of temporality since the feeling subject anticipates the future in a state of enchainment or uneasy repose. Dread is a feeling of endurance in the face of mighty oppression, whether psychic, environmental, or embodied by a supreme deity. It is important to recognize, however, that dread is not the cause but the effect of the subject's immobility. That is to say, the enforced pause of slumber or incarceration allows for feelings of dread to become possible. This affect is slow-paced but increases to a point of explosive energy that must express itself in radical resistance: the "dreadful words" of Prometheus against Jupiter or the vision in *Jerusalem*: "When with a dreadful groan the Emanation mild of Albion. / Burst from his bosom in the Tomb like a pale snowy cloud, / Female and lovely, struggling to put off the Human form / Writhing in pain."[167] From Blake and Shelley, then, we might say that dread of the subjugated future engenders a magnificent detonation of the dreadful in order to shatter the status quo.

Defusing Dread in the Age of Revolution

Dread, however, is not an inherently radical affect. Like all feelings, it can be harnessed to progressive or reactionary ends. Still, in the present day, dread is frequently attributed to conservative politics, as I discuss in the coda. We might discern the roots of this phenomenon in the age of revolution, particularly in the sentimental writings of Edmund Burke and Jane Austen. In Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) dread becomes freighted with connotations of revolutionary violence, thereby inspiring anticipatory fear of such bloodshed erupting in England. By 1803, when Austen completed *Northanger Abbey* (published 1817), dread of insurrection had gained a kind of currency that could be alluded to and made fun of, as it is in her Gothic parody. Though dissimilar in style and tone, *Reflections* and *Northanger Abbey*

[167] Blake, "Jerusalem," plate 48, lines 47-50.

both attempt to defuse the radical energy of dread in order to condemn or deny revolutionary influence in England.

In opposition to Paine, who upheld dread as the enlivening cause of American independence, Burke vehemently articulates a great number of "dreadful things" resulting from the French Revolution.[168] He lists these consequences in a syntactically complex yet cogent sentence that manifests a sublime energy in and of itself:

> Laws overturned; tribunals subverted; industry without vigor; commerce expiring; the revenue unpaid, yet the people impoverished; a church pillaged, and a state not relieved; civil and military anarchy made the constitution of the kingdom; everything human and divine sacrificed to the idol of public credit, and national bankruptcy the consequence; and, to crown all, the paper securities of new, precarious, tottering power, the discredited paper securities of impoverished fraud and beggared rapine, held out as a currency for the support of an empire, in lieu of the two great recognized species that represent the lasting, conventional credit of mankind, which disappeared and hid themselves in the earth from whence they came, when the principle of property, whose creatures and representatives they are, was systematically subverted.[169]

The sheer length of this sentence conveys the magnitude of the political upheavals, while the wide range of ideas packed into it amount to a degree of obscurity. Although each of the individual clauses is immaculately articulated, the effect of the whole is discombobulating. The political quandaries amass on top of one other, "tottering" like the new paper securities of France, in a sublime representation of the "dreadful" economic, religious, and social

[168] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. L. G. Mitchell, reissue ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 39.

[169] Burke, 39.

consequences of revolution. Burke thus coopts the rhetoric and feeling-tone of dread-based revolution in order to vigorously condemn this "unnatural" political subversion of "a mild and lawful monarch."[170]

Whereas Burke describes the situation in France as "dreadful" in order to generate sympathy with the overthrown monarchs, Austen defuses revolutionary feelings of dread altogether through humor, thereby rendering it (and the associated concern about an uprising in England) impotent. This deflation of the dreadful occurs most amusingly near the beginning of *Northanger Abbey* where the naïve protagonist, Catherine Morland, tells the more cultured, higher-class siblings Henry and Eleanor Tilney of something "uncommonly dreadful," which she anticipates issuing from London: "I shall expect murder and everything of the kind," she states most solemnly.[171] Eleanor assumes her friend is referring to a popular insurrection, and earnestly expresses hope for government intervention. Henry, who apprehends Catherine's Gothic novel monomania, stokes the misunderstanding by cryptically replying: "There must be murder; and government cares not how much."[172] Eleanor and Catherine are equally confused by this comment, and Henry chortles in a self-congratulating monologue. In frustration, Eleanor asks Catherine to "have the goodness to satisfy me as to this dreadful riot."[173] And Catherine, who is utterly confounded, is rescued by Henry's explanation: "Miss Morland has been talking of nothing more dreadful than a new publication which is shortly to come out, in three duodecimo volumes, two hundred and seventy-six pages in each, with a frontispiece to the first, of two

[170] Burke, *Reflections*, 38.

[171] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, ed. Claire Grogan (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), 126.

[172] Austen, 126.

[173] Austen, 126.

tombstones and a lantern."[174] It is striking how many times *dreadful* is repeated in so short a span of sentences. No other word is restated, let alone reiterated, three times. The redundancy is part of the humor, as is the variation in meaning and recognition in each case. In the first instance, that which is "dreadful" to Catherine, a new Gothic novel, represents the attractive "object in distress" theorized by Burke and Kames. Eleanor, however, considers the seemingly impending "dreadful riot" to be very bad, an event that she hopes will not transpire. Henry, picking up on the mistake, wittily deploys the word used by both women—"dreadful"—to clarify the actual object this adjective is meant to modify. He diminishes the gravity of Catherine's usage by declaring it is "nothing more dreadful than a new publication." The reader, who identifies with Henry in this scene, is invited to laugh all-knowingly with him at this eviscerating of the dreadful.

The brunt of the joke is not Eleanor, who misunderstands her friend, but Catherine, who has an aberrant relationship with the dreadful. The problem is not that she delights in objects of distress too much, but that she takes the fictional dreadful too seriously, such that when she speaks of a forthcoming novel her words could be misconstrued for news about a real-life mob. Although Austen deploys *dreadful* to comic effect in *Northanger Abbey*, the humor of the joke is dependent on grasping the solemnity that the word is supposed to connote. The ultimate lesson of the novel—to distinguish between fiction and reality—functions, then, to restore this seriousness. Catherine, who takes some form of pleasure in "the dreadful black veil," "dreadful situations and horrid scenes," "dread from midnight assassins or drunken gallants," and the "dreadful" nature of storms abroad the abbey, is finally castigated for harboring unfounded suspicions of a "dreadful

[174] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 127.

nature" against a respectable, albeit oppressive, man.[175] *Dreadful* should not be invoked in vain, the heroine learns.

Northanger Abbey thus solicits our attention to the gravity warranted in certain kinds of dreadful scenarios—mob violence and heinous criminal deeds—only to clarify that such occurrences are impossible in "the central part of England."[176] Catherine's climactic epiphany is one of resolute security in the modern Midlands counties where "[m]urder was not tolerated, servants were not slaves, and neither poison nor sleeping potions to be procured, like rhubarb, from every druggist."[177] Nevertheless, the dreadful does not simply vanish after this realization. Rather, the affective phenomenon migrates into the realm of the everyday. For instance, after Catherine's expulsion from the abbey, her broken-hearted dejection is described as a "dreadful […] malady."[178] When Henry later declares his intention to marry her, he and his father have a "dreadful disagreement."[179] Subsequently, the general occasions "dreadful delays" to their matrimonial day.[180] These examples manifest the dreadful in the most quotidian of scenarios: heartbreak, a paternal conflict, and postponement of an eagerly anticipated ceremony. The dreadful in *Northanger Abbey* is ultimately domesticated, a process that thoroughly severs this emotional occurrence from the supernatural and from radical politics.

By juxtaposing these works of Austen, Burke, Shelley, Blake, and Paine we can not only appreciate the vast relevance of dread to a variety of genres, styles, and arguments, but also

[175] Austen, *Northanger Abbey* 63, 169, 169, 172, 195.

[176] Austen, 197.

[177] Austen, 197.

[178] Austen, 231.

[179] Austen, 237.

[180] Austen, 240.

observe how the traditions of defusing and cultivating this feeling became more combative at the turn of the nineteenth century when dread became explicitly infused with political stakes. Given the anticipatory nature of this feeling, it is no wonder that it punctuated critical discourse about the future of Britain in the face of immense political, economic, and demographic ruptures brought about by the French Terror. Dread, however, was not just a symptom of these times, but actually a way of thinking about them, as Chapter 3 will explore more extensively. This was the case because Enlightenment discourse had established the epistemological capacity of dread and linked this feeling with conceptions of sympathy and sublime aesthetics. Smith, Kames, and Burke all discerned the attractive quality of the dreadful, while Hume, Smith, and Kames affirmed the ways in which feelings of dread and perceiving the dreadful misfortunes of others brought people together. These theories solidified the purchase of dread in British culture and made it possible for politically minded individuals in the 1790s to summon dread in speeches, essays, and literature in order to gain traction for their ideology.

Chapter 2
Cultivating and Defusing Dread, 1830-1900

"[D]read of the future may prevail over the present."
—Alexander Bain, *The Emotions and the Will* (1859)

The previous chapter traced the genealogy of dread from Enlightenment discourse on moral sentiments and sublime aesthetics to Romantic literature, especially concentrating on works in poetry and prose that harnessed or diminished the radical energies of the French Revolution. The present chapter continues to examine the parallel traditions of cultivating and defusing dread that developed out of these turbulent times by illuminating the affect's migration through the Victorian period. Theoretically, dread became integral to the pioneering empirical psychological work of Alexander Bain, an autodidactic Scotsman whose intellectual inspiration derived from David Hume's skepticism, David Hartley's and Joseph Priestly's associationism, Auguste Comte's positivism, and Johannes Müller's studies in physiology. Like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, he was deeply invested in associationism, and, also akin to the Romantic poet, he meditated a great deal on the nature of dread. It seems that Bain may have had Coleridge's celebrated "fear and dread" stanza in mind when he wrote: "A single object occurring to cause dread—as a sinister face in a lonely lane—will make a strong impression upon the faint-hearted passenger."[181] As an empiricist and, specifically, a physiologist, Bain meticulously attended to the physical origins and effects (the "strong impression[s]") of psychological states. Concomitantly, as a professor of moral philosophy and moral science Bain also considered the

[181] Alexander Bain, *The Emotions and the Will* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859), 79.

ways in which emotions impact ethical decision making. Echoing Adam Smith, Bain declares that "the nature of dread […] is the essential form and defining quality of the conscience."[182]

At the same time that Bain was outlining his psychological-ethical theories of dread in prestigious volumes and popular periodicals (he regularly contributed to Chambers's various publications from the 1840s through the 1860s), dread was also packaged as a literary phenomenon that would explode in the 1870s with the "penny dreadfuls." Not only was the mass market flooded with these adolescent adventure stories, but also the burgeoning religious press continued to represent what was often referred to as the "dread power of God." Moreover, Christian organizations, such as the Religious Tract Society, attempted to compete with the supposedly immoral penny dreadfuls by publishing equivalent stories that represented dread in its longstanding religious context. The existence of this counterpointing fiction indicates the grave concern that many members of the establishment expressed regarding the social influence of the dreadfuls. Vehement condemnations of this popular fiction appeared in mainstream periodicals alongside fewer, but equally adamant, assertions of the dreadfuls' innocuousness. These debates about the nature of fiction and simulated emotions to impact moral behavior alternately call into question and champion Bain's assertions about the ethical function of dread.

By the end of Queen Victoria's reign, the status of dread as a moral sentiment was vigorously disputed, as we will see through close examination of Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890, revised 1891) and James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* (1874, revised 1880). But one point was certain: the dreadful had become ineluctably popular. By analyzing the widespread interest in this affect, we can see how dread functioned sympathetically to organize

[182] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 528.

and motivate diverse populations—from laboring youth to respected clergymen and radical atheists—through the end of the nineteenth century.

Cultivating Dread in Alexander Bain's Empirical Psychology

Given the prominence of dread in the moral, aesthetic, and political theory of the eighteenth century and Romantic period, it is surprising to find that the affect is largely absent from major Victorian critical works, such as John Stuart Mill's *System on Logic* (1843), *On Liberty* (1859), and *The Subjection of Women* (1869). Although the word *dread* does appear at times across the five volumes of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1843–60), once in Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1867-68), and twice in Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), the feeling is not subject to theorization. Instead, dread migrates into the realm of empirical psychology, a new and controversial discipline promulgated through the indefatigable efforts of Alexander Bain.

Bain was the second child of a poor Calvinist weaver in Aberdeen, and although his family's economic needs required him to leave school at the age of eleven, he diligently attended evening classes at the mechanics' institute and maintained a rigorous course of independent study, thereby gaining entrance to Marischal College, Aberdeen in 1836. His courses included classics, mathematics, science, and philosophy and he graduated joint top in 1840. Bain's atheistical views made it difficult for him to acquire a professorship, however, so he moved to London in 1846 to become the assistant secretary at the metropolitan sanitary commission of the Board of Health. Upon arriving in the capital, Bain connected with a radical intellectual circle including George Henry Lewes, George Eliot, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Carlyle, George and John Grote, and Harriet Martineau. Above all, Bain developed a close personal and working relationship with Mill, whose utilitarian theory Bain bolstered on physiological and

psychological grounds in his first major book, *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855). In this extremely influential work, Bain proposes a relational theory of the mind and body mitigated through the nervous system in order to argue against the longstanding idea that sensations, appetites, and instincts are separate and inferior to higher-order reasoning faculties. As Rick Rylance aptly summarizes the revolutionary argument: "[Bain] insists that one cannot understand the 'higher' capacities of human beings without understanding their 'lower' antecedents. This principle is basic to nineteenth-century associationism."[183]

Bain's second book, *The Emotions and the Will* (1859), builds on these premises and includes an elegant classification system of affects that mingle supposedly lower emotional states originating in sensations with higher ones based on moral and aesthetic responses. Different varieties of dread relating to psychological, physical, social, and ethical conditions are elaborated throughout the volume in a manner that clearly reflects the influence of Enlightenment thinkers. Like Adam Smith, Bain perceived that "[t]he dread of anticipated evil operating to restrain before the fact, and the pain realized after the act has been performed, are perfectly intelligible products of the education of the mind under a system of authority, and of an experience had of the good and evil consequences of actions."[184] In other words, fear of a negative future outcome enables you to forego short-term gratification for the sake of long-term benefits. Putting this ethical theory into distinctly psychological terms, Bain asserts that "a certain dread and awful impression, as connected with forbidden actions […] is the conscience in its earliest germ."[185] Moreover, for Bain as with Smith, this feeling has prosocial consequences, because the dreading

[183] Rick Rylance, "Alexander Bain and the New Psychology of the Higher Faculties," in *Victorian Psychology and British Culture 1850-1880* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 172.

[184] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 316.

[185] Bain, 315.

subject "then joins with the other members of the community in imposing and enforcing the prohibitions that have been stamped and branded in the course of his own education."[186]

As these quotations reveal, Bain continually emphasizes the role of "education" in his theory of emotions and ethics, thereby stressing the learned nature of our feelings and actions. As Roger Smith argues, "[Bain's] contribution was to describe humans as active centres of learning and behaviour in a manner compatible with scientific and non-mentalist physiology."[187] Bain's thinking about the connections between mind/body and individual/environment are fundamentally relational and he refuses to preserve old hierarchies that view sensation and emotion as inferior to so-called higher faculties. For example, *The Emotions and the Will* includes a particularly compelling account of the ways in which feelings of dread accompanied by certain sensations of pain influence a child's early development and ethical instruction:

> The feeling of encountering certain pain, made up of both physical and moral elements,—that is to say, of bodily suffering and displeasure—is the first motive power of an Ethical kind that can be traced in the mental system of childhood […] As the child advances in the experience of authority, the habit of acting and the dread of offending acquire increased confirmation, in other words, the sense of duty grows stronger and stronger […] A sentiment of love or respect, towards the person of the superior, infuses a different species of dread from what we have just supposed, the dread of giving pain to a beloved object. Sometimes this is a more powerful deterring impulse than the other. We call it a higher order of conscience to act from love than to act from fear.[188]

[186] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 528.

[187] Roger Smith, "The Background of Physiological Psychology in Natural Philosophy," *History of Science* 11, no. 2 (June 1, 1973): 95.

[188] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 315.

Like Edmund Burke, Bain articulates how dread can be mingled with other positive affects, such as love, which transform its implications for the feeling subject. Whereas unalloyed dread renders the individual submissive to a frightful higher power, compound dread inspires active conscientiousness in order to earn the esteem of a beloved authority figure. While Burke views this complex affective experience as operating in a pious disposition toward God, the "militantly anti-religious" Bain understands these feelings in terms of social relations.[189] For the latter, dread is inextricably linked to "the sense of duty" that we feel toward our intimate circle and society at large.

The psychologist meditates a great deal on sociability throughout the volume and concludes that "one's need of the good opinion and favourable sentiments of others [are] more near and direct than the need of one's own good opinion."[190] As a consequence, "the human mind [is] so habituated to the dread of possible, probable, and actual suffering from other beings" (he means here suffering caused by the censure of other people) that we "feel a cheering glow whenever anything is conveyed that gives assurance of the contrary."[191] In short, just like Smith, Bain maintains that we dread our community's negative judgement and strive for its approval.

This affective social conception is evident in his articulation of the ideal "citizen conscience," which is when "[w]e adopt, as it were, into self the interests, more or less, of a greater or smaller number of other beings that awaken our tender regards, or our sympathies. The decisions we come to are influenced by these adopted interests, which sometimes entirely

[189] Rylance, "Alexander Bain," 164.

[190] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 138.

[191] Bain, 139.

submerge the interests of the isolated self."[192] He maintains that a citizen conscience is motivated by more than the "dread of punishment": "The conscience of a Russian serf, as a subject of Xerxes or Tiberius, is a sentiment of pure dread; the conscience of an Englishman, or an Anglo-American, must contain a certain approval of the laws he is called on to obey."[193] Bain thus condemns "pure dread" as a reflexive feeling that renders the sensate subject compliant under systemic exploitation. By contrast, he champions the socio-national benefits of complex dread, whereby citizens agree with the strictures of the law and feel fear of infringing upon them because they do not want to disappoint esteemed members of their community and thus fail in their duty to the collective. For Bain, as for Mill, liberty is absolutely essential to this process. As Rylance maintains, "Their psychological programme, in its political aspect, was aimed at the release of the individual from ideological incorporation."[194] Personal feeling and thinking were inseparable and necessary in this philosophy.

Specifically, Bain views the process of dread-based moral decision-making as a distinctly intellectual activity, much like Henry Home, Lord Kames:

> The mediation of the intellect renders an approaching evil as effective a stimulant as one present. The horse obeys the rider's whip because of the actual smart; the boy at school learns his lessons in the evening to avert the master's cane in the morning. The more completely our intelligence serves us in realizing future good or bad consequences, the more do we approximate to the state of things wherein a real pleasure or a real suffering prompts the will for continuance or cessation.[195]

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[192] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 531.

[193] Bain, 531-32.

[194] Rylance, "Alexander Bain," 159.

[195] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 427.

The juxtaposition of the horse and boy in these examples accentuates the very humanness of dread, not simply because it is a feeling, but because it is an intellectual emotion. Yet the intellect, as Bain characterizes it, is a creative one. That is, the more "completely" an individual can imagine the positive or negative outcomes that her actions will have in the future, the more likely she is to assert her will in order to attain the desired result. Emotional simulation is therefore integral to ethical decision-making and subsequent assertions of willpower (hence the title of the book *The Emotions and the Will*).

Bain recognized that such emotional simulation occurred poignantly through art, especially by attending the tragic theatre. He does not elaborate on this idea extensively, but he reiterates the Burkean idea that "[i]n proportion as the reality of evil is removed far from ourselves, we are at liberty to join in the excitement produced by the expression of fear."[196] Furthermore, Bain recapitulates the Kamesean concept of self-approbation that we feel upon sympathizing with the dreadful occurrences that befall characters in a play: "But it is in the sympathetic terrors that the sting of pain is extracted, and only the pleasurable stimulus left behind."[197] Although *The Emotions and the Will* does not offer new aesthetic insights into dread, Bain's volume represents a crucial development in the affect's theorization in relation to somatic cognition and simultaneously illuminates how this feeling became central to conversations surrounding the prized Victorian ideals of duty and the will, "that mysterious conscious 'I,'" his contemporary J. C. Shairp declared, which is "the centre, the core of man's being."[198]

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[196] Bain, 92.

[197] Bain, 92.

[198] [J. C. Shairp], "Moral Theories and Christian Ethics," *North British Review* 93, no. 6 (September 1867): 7.

At the same time that Bain was theorizing the extent to which dread enables or compels us to behave in ethically oriented ways, popular fiction was whipping up dread on a mass scale, as the following section explains. This vast body of literature explicitly aimed to represent the dreadful and cultivate dread in its readers, a mission that was subject to intense scrutiny in the periodical press. Although Bain never commented on this new variety of dreadful fiction and poetry, he does warn against excessive feelings of dread associated with unmitigated terror, which cause "[g]hosts and hobgoblins [to] fill the imagination of the superstitious."[199] This emotional state, he maintains, is

> likely to vitiate the truth of any narrative of matter of fact given out under the influence of the moment. Hence the accounts that a terror-stricken and routed army relate as to the numbers and power of the enemy on its heels; hence the exaggerations that prevail in the public mind on occasions of popular panic. We see the power of an emotion not merely to give its own character to the conceptions formed on all subjects, but to induce belief in the full and exact reality of such conceptions.[200]

Bain thus calls our attention to an alternative consequence of dread. While, on the one hand, the affect could promote ethical restraint, on the other hand, it might foster exaggeration that leads to widespread panic and wrongful belief in imagined terrors.

Bain's articulation of these two very different outcomes allows us to see why dread was simultaneously cultivated and defused by various individuals and organizations for the rest of the nineteenth century. During this time, heated discussions that positioned moral dread against dangerous dread were no longer contained within the purview of philosophical discourse.

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[199] Alexander Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1855), 602.

[200] Bain, 602.

Instead, mass-market periodicals, the organ of the people, became the site for representation and criticism of the dreadful. Two concurrent debates developed in the 1870s and reached a climax in the 1890s. The first pertains to the consequences of penny dreadful consumption by an unprecedented body of readers. The second deals with the status of dread in relation to moral piety. These conversations were interrelated insomuch as the religious discipline historically associated with dread was pitted against the undisciplined sensational dread of the mass market. These debates implicitly centered on a Bainsean question: Does dread create conscience that binds an ethical society together or does the affect generate panic that leads to anarchy?

Cultivating and Defusing Dread in the Mass Market

The literary works that concern me in this chapter spoke to a very different audience from those discussed previously. The writings analyzed in Chapter 1, while canonical now, were far from popular in their own time due to a variety of constraints. First, the duty on paper, a longstanding tax initially imposed by Queen Anne in 1688, made publications expensive, and thus beyond the purchasing power of the majority of the population. Moreover, literacy and reading comprehension remained relatively low among the working classes until the end of the nineteenth century.[201] Accordingly, even if workers could have obtained a copy of *Prometheus Unbound*, it would be unlikely that he or she would readily apprehend its challenging syntax and verbose diction. Additionally, printing technologies were still in their early development, so it was not yet possible to produce texts on a massive scale; this would change in 1856 with the introduction of Hoe's rotary steam press into Britain. Finally, if technology itself was not the limiting factor, authorial intent created a barrier: Blake's illuminated printing method ensured that only a small number of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* could be made, and exclusively

[201] Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, 2nd ed. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 170-71.

by his own hand. In short, these eighteenth-century and Romantic representations of dread and dilations on the dreadful remained in the purview of wealthy (or, at least, middle-class) and educated audiences.

All that began to change with the rise of the economical newspaper and periodical press in the 1830s, which was pioneered by two different publishers, Edward Lloyd and George W. M. Reynolds. We will delve into these impressive figures in great detail in Chapter 4 while considering the significance of dread in the infamous "penny blood" fiction they published and wrote. The most popular and enduring of these important precedents to the penny dreadful genre include *Sweeney Todd* (1846-47) and *Varney the Vampire* (1845-47) published by Lloyd and *The Mysteries of London* (1844-45) and *Wagner the Wehr-Wolf* (1846-47) written by Reynolds. For now, it is sufficient to say that both Lloyd and Reynolds applied business acumen to a democratic publishing ethos: they provided the common man with affordable, edifying, and entertaining reading material that capitalized on the pleasures of dread. Their numerous publications proved that there was high demand by the working classes for such content. At the same time, a variety of organizations, primarily constituted of laborers, campaigned for a reduction in the "taxes on knowledge," including the paper and advertising duty as well as the newspaper stamp. When the last of these excises was abolished in 1861, circulation numbers of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* more than quintupled.[202] A mass market for periodicals and newspapers had emerged, and with it came a largescale buy-in for the dreadful.

Penny Dreadfuls

[202] In 1853, for instance, *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* was selling 90,000 copies to a lower-class readership. Following the repeal of the paper duty in 1861, circulation rose to 500,000. See Robert J. Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller: A Bibliographical History of the British Boys' Periodical, 1762-1950* (London: British Library, 2013), 71.

By 1868 it became clear that a certain type of cheap fiction enthralled the populace: the penny dreadful. We owe the origin of this memorable epithet, which has remained in vogue to the present day, to an anonymous writer for the *Bookseller* who plainly looked down upon any "proprietor of 'penny dreadfuls.'" [203] The article defines this body of fiction as "raw-head-and-bloody-bones serials" comprised of "murders, burglaries, street-robberies, atrocities, and hairbreadth escapes!"[204] The exclamation point is one of indignation, rather than enthusiasm, for the outraged critic sardonically proceeds: "The writers of this literary garbage are commonly independent of the trammels of grammar, and are often far above orthography."[205] The elitism manifest in this comment signals the *Bookseller*'s own status as a monthly magazine of high repute, targeting middle- and upper-class readers. A single issue was priced at 6*d.* (or 7*d.* to receive it by post), thus costing six times more than the penny periodicals containing dreadfuls. The *Bookseller*'s commentary thus links scorn for the lower classes with an aesthetic and moral appraisal: what is popular is grotesque, shoddy in style, and indulgent in the criminal. In the reviewer's estimation, there is certainly nothing sublime or numinous about such fiction. By becoming popular, *dreadful* decisively meant "very bad." Indeed, the *New English Dictionary* in 1897 would note that the modern sense of *dreadful* was a "weakened" one that "applied to objects exciting fear or aversion."[206]

Though the upper echelons of society were certainly averse to penny dreadfuls, a vast population, consisting primarily of adolescent boys, was infatuated with this body of fiction.

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[203] "A Reader's Experience," *Bookseller* 130 (November 2, 1868): 810.

[204] "A Reader's Experience," 810.

[205] "A Reader's Experience," 810.

[206] James A. H. Murray, ed., "Dreadful," in *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles: Founded Mainly on the Materials Collected by the Philological Society*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1897), 654.

Circulation numbers are not entirely accurate because they were reported by publishers who had the ulterior motive of exaggerating their success in order to undermine the confidence of their rivals. It is nonetheless worth mentioning some of these staggering statistics. In his rigorous history of penny dreadfuls, Robert J. Kirkpatrick includes the following data:

> Edwin J. Brett claimed that sales of *Boys of England* were 150,000 a week in its first year, reaching 170,000 within 18 months, a figure matched by its companion paper *Young Men of Great Britain*. In the early 1870s the circulation of *Boys of England* increased to 250,000 thanks to the popularity of Bracebridge Hemyng's *Jack Harkaway* stories. It is likely that the Emmetts' most successful papers had circulations around 100,000. Later, the *Boy's Own Paper* claimed to be selling 200,000 a week soon after its launch, rising to 650,000 in the 1890s.[207]

The scale of this new reading body corroborates the thriving existence of dread-oriented imaginary communities in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, communities that extended far beyond the population of working-class boys. As the nameless "Factory Worker" asserts in his "Defence of the Penny Dreadfuls": "It would be hard for the most overdone Penny Dreadful to contain anything more impossible or blood-curdling than the feats of men and women described by well-known writers, whose books come under that charitable designation of 'standard.'"[208] The anonymous writer of "Illustrated Horrors" makes the point even more forcefully:

> [T]he difference in taste between one class and another relates rather to the manner than to the matter of the illustrated paper. It seems, after all, that the 'Penny Dreadful' may in some cases cost sixpence, and that, in fact, the *Police News* and the *Graphic* appeal to the

[207] Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller*, 12.

[208] "A Factory Worker," "Defence of the Penny Dreadful," *Review of Reviews* (August 1896): 148.

> same audience, though at a different price. The readers of the latter must have their horrors decently engraved and neatly printed on delicately toned paper, while the *Police News* is distributed among a section of the community that cannot afford these luxuries of horror.[209]

While ostensibly justifying the reading of penny dreadfuls, these articles do not attempt to defend their content. Instead, writers validated this popular fiction by juxtaposing it with the "decent," "delicate," and "standard" literature of the day, thereby affirming a widespread appetite for dreadful tales. As G. K. Chesterton most generously contended: "This trivial romantic literature is not especially plebian: it is simply human."[210]

Chesterton's incisive remark gets to the heart of my argument about the essential role of dread in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophy and culture. As Adam Smith asserted over a century and a half before Chesterton and Bain reiterated more proximately, dread of death is the affective crux of our humanity, a feeling "common to the whole human family."[211] Fictional characters and real readers are united by their propensity to dread, and this affective condition elicits "the additional charm of keen sympathy with the varying welfare of Real Heroes," according to T. Mackay in *Time*.[212] Moreover, the ability to imagine the dreadful situation of another person is pleasurable in its own way, because one's consciousness of sympathy is always agreeable, according to Smith, and simulation is always pleasurable,

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[209] "Illustrated Horrors," *Examiner*, no. 3494 (January 16, 1875): 72.

[210] G. K. Chesterton, "A Defence of Penny Dreadfuls," *Speaker* 3, no. 76 (March 16, 1901): 649.

[211] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 86. See also Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley (New York: Penguin Classics, 2010), 18.

[212] T. MacKay, "Penny Dreadfuls," *Time* 19, no. 44 (August 1888): 218–25, p. 221. MacKay is actually quoting from the title page of an unnamed penny dreadful, with whose sentiment he agrees.

according to Kames.[213] Chesterton certainly understood the necessary attraction of make-believe in the case of penny dreadfuls, in which "wild life is contemplated with pleasure by the young, not because it is like their own, but because it is different from it."[214] Rather than condemning the literary and didactic shortcomings of this popular fiction, he subversively declares that this "drivelling literature will always be a 'blood and thunder' literature, as simple as the thunder of heaven and the blood of men."[215] Chesterton thus calls upon the dreadful's longstanding association with the sublime power of the divine and its function as the emotional glue of humankind.

This eloquent champion of the popular press, however, was vastly outnumbered by a horde of respected critics who sought to defuse and deny the power of the dreadful. After the *Bookseller* usefully provided an epithet to rally against, other quarterlies and magazines in the early 1870s quickly took up the assault on this "deleterious fiction," "gutter literature," "vile literature," "blood and nastiness," "horrible garbage," "garbage market," and "trashy compositions."[216] Critics censured this popular fiction on a wide variety of grounds. The first was linguistic: "a vicious hotch-potch of the vilest slang," bemoaned the *Saint Paul's Magazine* reviewer James Greenwood.[217] Similarly, the "London Hermit," writing for the *Dublin*

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[213] For more on Smith's sense of the pleasures of sympathy, see Samuel Fleischacker, "Sympathy in Hume and Smith: A Contrast, Critique, and Reconstruction," in *Intersubjectivity and Objectivity in Adam Smith and Edmund Husserl*, ed. Christel Fricke and Dagfinn Føllesdal (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2012), 300. Kendall L. Walton would go on to make this case most cogently in "Fearing Fictions," *Journal of Philosophy* 75, no. 1 (1978): 5–27.

[214] Chesterton, "A Defence of Penny Dreadfuls," 649.

[215] Chesterton, 649.

[216] "The London Hermit," "The Physiology of the 'Penny Awfuls,'" *Dublin University Magazine* 86, no. 513 (September 1875): 376; "The London Hermit," 372; A. Strahan, "Bad Literature for the Young," *Contemporary Review* 26 (June 1875): 983; Anthony Trollope, "An Editor's Tales. The Spotted Dog," *Saint Paul's Magazine* 5 (March 1870): 670; Strahan, 986; James Greenwood, "'Penny Awfuls,'" *Saint Paul's Magazine* 12 (February 1873): 163; "The London Hermit," 376.

[217] Greenwood, "'Penny Awfuls,'" 164.

University Magazine, added: "At all times, they partake strongly of that highly adorned, conventional, and theatrical character suggestive of old east-end melodramas."[218] The "London Hermit" was additionally dismayed by the unrealistic and inaccurate nature of the content, which he perceived as "altogether wild and outrageous, representing things as they are not, and never could be."[219] Another issue was the unscrupulous imitativeness of the genre, where "plagiarism counts for nothing."[220] Greenwood thus disdains the ineptitude of the authors: "What could be easier than to take the common-place Newgate raw material, and re-dip it in the most vivid scarlet, and weave into it the rainbow hues of fiction?"[221]

Above any aesthetic judgment or publishing ethos, critics were most distressed by the ways in which penny dreadfuls elevated their criminal characters. In Greenwood's accurate characterization of the genre: "the thing to do was to make it clear that stealing was an honorable business, and that all thieves were persons to be respected."[222] Such messages were particularly outrageous to Greenwood, who was intimately familiar with the actual situation of impoverished Londoners. He pioneered the practice of investigative journalism by entering a workhouse incognito and writing an explicit and stirring account of the experience in an article for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1866. Rising above his working-class childhood to become a respected writer, Greenwood was unsurprisingly hostile to fiction that romanticized laboring life and flouted propriety. He maintains that such illicit stories are "a mockery of all that is decent and virtuous,

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[218] "The London Hermit," "Physiology of the 'Penny Awfuls,'" 370.

[219] "The London Hermit," 374.

[220] "The London Hermit," 368.

[221] Greenwood, "'Penny Awfuls,'" 162.

[222] Greenwood, 162.

an incentive to all that is mean, base, and immoral, and a certain guide to a prison or a reformatory if sedulously followed."[223]

Class struggle was the basis of the majority of these fictions, where Robin Hood figures and other "ideal felons" were, according to the "London Hermit," by far "the most popular."[224] *Night-Riders* (ca. 1874), for instance, describes a highwayman as "a species of knight-errant, *whose chief business was to redress such social wrongs* as he encountered during his adventures."[225] In other words, the penny dreadfuls did not simply represent crime. More to the point, they glorified offenses against the upper classes and extolled the potential power, independence, and financial and romantic fulfillment of the laboring adolescent or young man. Such resolutions were dreadful indeed to the respectable critic. As the "London Hermit" concludes: "by instilling in the youthful mind an antagonism to law and order, and the duties of everyday life; by exciting vain expectations, and false notions of life, and giving highly-coloured pictures with neither the value of truth nor the refining power of poetic romance, their effect cannot but be baneful."[226] Alexander Strahan, writing for the liberal-minded, Christian *Contemporary Review*, would translate this class dynamic of the "detestable pennyworths" into moral-religious terms: "this great power of the press [is] falling into the devil's service."[227] The penny dreadful debate, then, was deeply invested in moralizing the status quo, a conservative system that was undermined by sympathetic representations of poor and rebellious characters.

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[223] Greenwood, "'Penny Awfuls,'" 164.

[224] "The London Hermit," "Physiology of the 'Penny Awfuls,'" 372.

[225] As cited in "The London Hermit," 372-73.

[226] "The London Hermit," 375.

[227] Strahan, "Bad Literature for the Young," 986, 991.

Beyond egregious class conflict, critics perceived and feared the migration of a taste for the dreadful to the upper classes. The "pernicious influence" of "these base corruptors of the morals of little boys and girls" was also believed to threaten the morality of wealthy children, who had always been seen as superior to their laboring counterparts.[228] Strahan, for instance, was willing to ignore the prominence of penny dreadfuls in working-class communities; he expresses, however, "alarm" and "dispirit" at "the gradual spread, upwards in what is called the social scale, of this sort of trash."[229] Consequently, every critic proposed a solution for this "evil of considerable magnitude."[230] Greenwood resorts to juridical measures, hoping that "their nefarious trade were put a stop to with the utmost rigour of any law that might be brought to bear against them."[231] Strahan, alternatively, finds "a thousand thorny matters" in such legislation, and ultimately puts the onus on publishers: "I think the flood of bad literature could be very materially checked by any competent publisher taking a common-sense view of the subject, and working it out with the help of strong faith in human nature and in the general progress of society."[232] The "London Hermit" was less naïve; he recognized that publishers and writers were simply following the lucrative demand for this fiction. But he did not necessarily stigmatize "the readers for their depraved taste."[233] Instead, he posits that "[t]he only effectual remedy lies in the spread of education" and hopes to see an alternative genre "which should combine the

[228] Greenwood, "'Penny Awfuls,'" 165, 167.

[229] Strahan, "Bad Literature for the Young," 986.

[230] "The London Hermit," "Physiology of the 'Penny Awfuls,'" 376.

[231] Greenwood, "'Penny Awfuls,'" 167.

[232] Strahan, "Bad Literature for the Young," 981, 991.

[233] "The London Hermit," "Physiology of the 'Penny Awfuls,'" 376.

fascinations of the 'Penny Awful' with adherence to truth and nature, and evince both a healthy imagination and a sound moral purpose."[234] This option, as it turns out, was the one most forcefully pursued by another category of popular media: the religious press.

The Religious Press

Even as *dreadful* became a byword for trash in mainstream periodicals, popular religious literature continued to summon dread's associations with morality and the numinous. This period saw the emergence of a religious popular press, though it did so at a slower rate and to a lesser extent than the secular press. Nevertheless, faith-based newspapers, such as the nonconformist *Christian World* (1857-present), the Roman Catholic *Universe* (1860- present), and the High Anglican *Church Times* (1863- present) attained circulation rates over 100,000.[235] Moreover, religious magazines featuring wholesome serial fiction also surfaced to counteract the penny dreadful craze. The most successful of these were Norman Macleod's *Good Words* (1860-1911) for adult readers and the Religious Tract Society's *Boy's Own Paper* (1879-1967) and *Girl's Own Paper* (1880-1956) for adolescents. Although these Christian newspapers and periodicals were not dreadful in the macabre sense, they relied upon dread as the primary affect with which they mediated their audience's relationship to the divine.

In surveying a diverse array of newspapers and periodicals targeting various denominations, ages, classes, and genders, it is remarkable to observe the consistencies in their representations of dread. Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Nonconformists, Methodists, High Church and Low Church, all portray this feeling as a constructive one with benefits in this life and the next. For instance, a laudatory obituary in the *Wesleyan-Methodist* commends the

[234] "The London Hermit," 376.

[235] Josef Lewis Altholz, *The Religious Press in Britain, 1760-1900*, Contributions to the Study of Religion 22 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 13.

deceased Mr. William Stanton, who "had such views of the justice and holiness of God as made him dread sin and its consequences."[236] As a result of this affective orientation toward divine judgment, Mr. Stanton lived a long, fulfilling, pious life, died relatively peacefully, and was then reported to be "calmly […] asleep in Jesus."[237]

While the *Wesleyan-Methodist* celebrates Mr. Stanton's sin-dreading upbringing and lifestyle, the Roman Catholic *Dublin Review* alternatively shows how a particularly dread-inspiring experience can convert a worldly "Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Medicine" into "the saintly Oration Bishop of Saluzzo."[238] The acclaimed medical man was utterly changed, according to the report, upon hearing the "'sonorous double-rhymed triplets'" of the "Dies Iræ":

> His soul was illumined with horror and dread of the fearful day [of judgement], with a keen sense of the reality and guilt of sin, and with a due appreciation of the vanity of human things […] He was impressed with a distaste for the profane studies in which he had secured so much worldly honour, he was led to make a supreme effort of self-surrender, and he resolved to consecrate his future life, in the more perfect way, to God.[239]

Feelings of dread, in this case, are vividly connected to a sublime aesthetic experience, one that is made possible by the accentual stress of trochaic meter and rhyming lines (the same techniques used by William Blake in his verse, as I have pointed out in Chapter 1). Notably, it is this immaculately crafted Latin sequence, not the doctor's will, that precipitates his religious

[236] "R. L.," "Recent Deaths," *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 18 (November 1872): 1056.

[237] "R. L.," 1056.

[238] "Fifty Versions of the 'Dies Iræ,'" *Dublin Review* 9, no. 2 (April 1883): 369-70.

[239] "Fifty Versions of the 'Dies Iræ,'" 369-70.

conversion. Dread and the sublime thus operate within a Burkean framework here, as it is the verse that has the sympathetic power to infuse and transform the feeling subject.

Such exalted experiences of dread, however, were no longer restricted to the wealthy and the intelligentsia. The Anglican *Penny Sunday Reader*, whose price point clearly spoke to a working-class audience, likewise expresses the might of God, though in vernacular verse:

> At thy dread summons—trembling all to know
> Their final doom—or happiness or woe,
> Then may the flock of Albion be found
> Within thy folds, with joys immortal crown'd—
> Joys, that the strength of faith can scarce believe,
> No tongue can utter, and no heart conceive—
> Where thou art love, where blissful rivers pour
> Pleasures at thy right hand for evermore![240]

Although iambic pentameter, which most closely matches everyday speech patterns, and neatly rhyming couplets are not exactly sublime in style like the "Dies Iræ," the content of the verse refers to the ineffable—"No tongue can utter, and no heart conceive"—in an attempt to convey the magnitude of the impending Day of Judgment. And even though this affecting divine call results in "trembling," the feeling of dread ultimately gives way to "joy" as the faithful subjects realize that they have been saved. Just as we saw in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* in the previous chapter, dread and joy are not mutually exclusive, nor are they necessarily in opposition to each other, because dread is often a conduit to other positive affects and has the capacity to initiate beneficial consequences.

[240] W. S. Oke, "The Atonement," *The Penny Sunday Reader* 4, no. 104 (December 25, 1836): 407.

Such constructive effects are apparent in the anonymously written "Second Morning Lesson. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican" printed in a later volume of the *Penny Sunday Reader*: "And whenever any sinner, with the dread of Divine wrath upon his conscience, draws near to God in prayer, he must have something which allays his apprehensions, and revives his hope;—something which encourages him to believe that God will forgive him and accept him, although he is a sinner."[241] Here, dread is the activating affect that prompts the sinner to "draw[…] near to God in prayer," yet this feeling is neither all-consuming nor impregnable. On the contrary, dread and hope go hand in hand, for it is only by fearing the future that the sinner is motivated to take action to prevent the undesirable outcome of damnation from occurring. That is to say, *because* the sinner dreads "Divine wrath" he takes the initiative to perform "[t]hose good works, those religious exercises, those ceremonial observances, which he viewed with satisfaction, as favourably distinguishing him from many of his fellow sinners."[242] The writer thus concludes that "if [the sinner's] hope had been built upon the true foundation [of doing good deeds], *it could not have been too confident*. The true worshippers of God—the disciples of Christ—'have boldness to enter into the holiest,' (Heb. X. 19), and they are called to 'come boldly to the throne of Grace' (Heb. iv. 16)."[243] Dread, in this account, is empowering, a feeling that motivates the fearing subject to take action in order to pursue confidently the moral future he or she desires. This popular religious sense of dread thus significantly differs from Burkean sublime dread in its ability to activate, rather than nullify, agency. What remains the

[241] "Second Morning Lesson. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican," *The Penny Sunday Reader* 13, no. 323 (March 7, 1841): 149.

[242] "Second Morning Lesson," 149.

[243] "Second Morning Lesson," 149-150.

same, however, between the *Penny Sunday Paper*'s and the *Dublin Review*'s respective representations of dread's agency, is the positive religious transformation of the feeling subject.

We have so far observed how dread was favorably represented in a middle-class Methodist magazine, an upper-class Roman Catholic quarterly, and a working-class Anglican newspaper. I will add two final cases to illustrate the sustained significance of dread for other religious audiences: women and adolescent boys. Young, middle-class women (that is, to say, respectable mothers) were the primary readers of the High Church's *Monthly Packet*, created by Charlotte M. Yonge, "the novelist par excellence of the country parish."[244] As Yonge was a friend and disciple of the Revd. John Keble, one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement, Keble's verse peppers the pages of the monthly magazine.[245] One such poem relates the creation of the world:

> Earth takes her place, henceforward to and fro
> To move, by signs and seasons, days and years.
> Such His decree, adjusting for all time,
> By silent wheels of His dread enginery,
> The day, hour, moment, when His Word sublime
> A Work 'mid His own works would deign to be.[246]

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[244] Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, vol. 2 (London: A. & C. Black, 1970), 214.

[245] Keble's verse was extraordinarily popular throughout the Victorian period. His poetic reputation was secured by publishing *The Christian Year* (1827), which "was probably the widest selling book of poetry in the nineteenth century." He was then elected professor of poetry at Oxford in 1831, a position that he held for the next ten years. Keble ardently believed in the healing power of poetry, which he viewed as a gift from the divine. Perry Butler, "Keble, John (1792–1866), Church of England clergyman and poet." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 23, 2004). Accessed July 2, 2019. https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15231.

[246] John Keble, "Three Poems by the Rev. J. Keble," *Monthly Packet*, no. 56 (August 1, 1870): 106. It is unclear from where Yonge retrieved this verse; it is not from Keble's acclaimed book, *The Christian Year*. Keble died in 1866, four years before the publication of Yonge's article. Yonge likely copied these lines from another periodical,

Keble's portrayal of dread and the sublime here are conventionally Burkean, a point I will not belabor. What is remarkable, however, is that this magazine primarily targeted young women, thereby demonstrating how dread was repackaged for a very different audience from Burke's *Enquiry*. Keble's verse suggests that a pious, middle-class woman, just as much as a man, could marvel at the vast intricacies of creation and the trans-temporal mightiness of God's plan. Keble's poem suggests that discerning God's "dread enginery" should not paralyze the reading subject in abjection, but rather inspire her to ask for divine support in order to make her a more worthy person: "O Lord of sacrifice, O God of grace, — / Since the world was preparing thus always / Thine awful Feast in all created space, / For me unclean—prepare me, Lord, to-day."[247]

A similarly wholesome application of dread is visible in a boys' adventure story, *From Powder Monkey to Admiral; Or, the Stirring Days of the British Navy* by William Henry Giles Kingston, serialized in the *Boy's Own Paper* from the first issue in January 1879 through September of that year. Of the three boy protagonists, Bill Rayner is singled out as the hero, for though he "had certainly not been born with a silver spoon in his mouth" his mother had "impressed right principles on his mind," which lead him to act nobly throughout his seafaring escapades.[248] On her deathbed she says: "Be honest, Bill, in the sight of God. Never forget that He sees you, and do your best to please Him. No fear about the rest. I am not much of a scholar, but I know that's right. If others try to persuade you to do what's wrong, don't listen to them.

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though they may have been given to her directly by Keble, who served as her minister while she prepared for confirmation.

[247] Keble, "Three Poems," 106.

[248] William Henry Giles Kingston, "From Powder Monkey to Admiral; Or, the Stirring Days of the British Navy," *Boy's Own Paper*, no. 1 (January 18, 1879): 9.

Promise me, Bill, that you will do as I tell you."[249] Bill duly promises, a vow that comes to have a significant effect on how he experiences and directs dread to ethical ends in his adventures.

At one point, Bill finds himself in a cave with another boy from the ship, Jack, who turns out to be rather less scrupulous than our hero. Upon exploring, they find that "the whole cavern looked like the interior of a Gothic building in ruins" and consequently "a strange dread had seized [Jack]."[250] Bill, for his part, sallies valiantly forward and laughs at his companion's uncomfortable feelings. While each and every stalactite strikes dread in the less principled boy, Bill complies with his mother's dying command and has "[n]o fear" because he is "in the sight of God." The underlying moral of this scene, then, is that dread is only appropriately felt in relation to the divine, not the supernatural (as the penny dreadfuls and resurgent Gothic tales, by contrast, would have their less pious readers believe).

This scene illustrates for a popular, younger audience a distinction that had been made in more elite circles since the eighteenth century. Kames, for instance, in his essays "Dread of Supernatural Powers in the Dark" and "Knowledge of the Deity" (1779) identifies a deleterious type of dread that eclipses reason and pushes the feeling subject away from God. This superstitious dread, he argues, happens most often to "the feeble and delicate," "the vulgar," and "young persons in the dark."[251] The scrappy lad Jack in the Gothic cave fits two of these three categories. As it happens, Kames's phenomenological description of dark-induced dread seamlessly corresponds to Jack's experience in the story. In Kames's words:

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[249] Kingston, "From Powder Monkey to Admiral," 9.

[250] William Henry Giles Kingston, "From Powder Monkey to Admiral; Or, the Stirring Days of the British Navy," *Boy's Own Paper*, no. 10 (March 22, 1879): 146.

[251] Henry Home Kames, Lord, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion, Corrected and Improved, in a Third Edition. Several Essays Added Concerning the Proof of a Deity*, ed. Mary Catherine Moran (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 198-99. https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1352.

> An object seen in the dark but obscurely, leaves the heated imagination at liberty to bestow upon it the most dreadful appearance. This phantom of the imagination, conceived as a reality, unhinges the mind, and throws it into a fit of distraction. The imagination, now heated to the highest degree, multiplies the dreadful appearances to the utmost bounds of its conception. The object becomes a spectre, a devil, a hobgoblin, something more terrible than ever was seen or described.[252]

Thus Jack, who is struck with "a strange dread" by the torch-lit "enchanted caverns," "had an idea that the place must be the abode of ghosts or spirits of some sort."[253] The reasonable, moral Bill good-naturedly laughs at Jack's belief in the supernatural and playfully answers his friend's fears: "Never mind. We shall catch it up if it's a ghost, and we'll make it carry a torch and go ahead to light us."[254] In a far less conciliatory manner, Kames is deeply troubled by the ways in which darkness and dread overwhelm the reasoning faculties in vulnerable subjects and cause the feeler to "attribut[e] every extraordinary event to some invisible malevolent power."[255] "I am persuaded," Kames gravely asserts, "that nothing has been more hurtful to religion, than an irregular propensity in our nature to dread such powers."[256]

Kingston's story moves beyond the philosopher's condemnation by attempting to correct superstitious dread over the course of the episode. The boys' different experiences of this feeling are presently overlaid with their varying ethical attitudes when they discover several chests filled with gold. Assuming the loot was left by smugglers who had perished at sea, Jack stuffs his

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[252] Kames, *Essays*, 199.

[253] Kingston, "From Powder Monkey to Admiral," 146.

[254] Kingston, 146-47.

[255] Kames, *Essays*, 214.

[256] Kames, 213-14.

pockets with coins, but "Bill could not make up his mind to do this. The gold was not theirs, of that he felt sure, and Jack could not persuade him to overcome the principle he had always stuck to, of not taking, under any circumstances, what was not lawfully his own. If the owners were dead, it belonged to their heirs."[257] Here, Jack's superstitious dread corresponds to his avarice, whereas Bill's lack of worldly fear (for he is in dread of God's judgment alone) is associated with a virtuous stance. The narrator makes it very clear which one of these we should admire: "Bill was a hero, though he did not know it, notwithstanding that he had been originally only a London street boy."[258]

To drive the point even further, when Bill leaves the cave to inform some kindly locals about the whereabouts of the gold (he thinks they have more of a right to it than himself), Jack slips off to procure more of the booty. However, Jack's dread of ghosts is so intense that he falls into a swoon and would have died on the cavern floor had not the honorable Bill come in search of him. Bill righteously tells his companion: "That comes of wanting to take what isn't your own."[259] But Jack is not deterred. He intends to acquire still more gold and is only held back by Bill's dread-inspiring remark: "Perhaps the ghost will come back if you do."[260] The appropriately God-fearing boy thus wields superstitious dread against his unscrupulous companion, thereby compelling him to go along with his ethical course of action. This affective manipulation is certainly a subversion of medieval dread, which intended to cultivate reverent love of God rather than instill fear of punishment. Yet despite this difference in the means, the end remains the

[257] Kingston, "From Powder Monkey to Admiral," 147.

[258] William Henry Giles Kingston, "From Powder Monkey to Admiral; Or, the Stirring Days of the British Navy," *Boy's Own Paper*, no. 12 (April 5, 1879): 179.

[259] William Henry Giles Kingston, "From Powder Monkey to Admiral; Or, the Stirring Days of the British Navy," *Boy's Own Paper*, no. 13 (April 12, 1879): 194.

[260] Kingston, 194.

same: Jack does not take the coins, and he proves to be a loyal sidekick to the upstanding Bill for the rest of their adventures.

From Powder Monkey to Admiral is representative of a broad attempt by the religious press to distinguish appropriate, religious dread from the wrongful, superstitious dread manifest in the penny dreadfuls and Gothic tales. That is not to say, however, that these wholesome boys' adventure stories sought to defuse dread like the outspoken periodical critics of the penny dreadfuls. To the contrary, *From Powder Monkey to Admiral* shows how upward social mobility (and a great deal of boyish fun at sea) is made possible by having a healthy dose of fear of God's judgment. This message corresponds to a wide selection of poems, essays, and obituaries in the religious press that catered to readers of diverse demographics. Positive dread—imperfectly perceiving the dreadful power of God, feeling dread of divine judgment, and performing dread-based ethical actions—features prominently in this Christian corpus, demonstrating that publishers imagined that dread could be effectively used to engage a range of reading communities from boys, to adult male workers, to young mothers, and the upper classes.

While penny dreadfuls are the obvious place to look at the tradition of cultivating dread in the Victorian period, the religious press is an important counterpart that has striking similarities. Both, to some extent, provide entertainment, though the dreadfuls either stopped at amusement or harnessed it toward political reform, as chapters 3 and 4 describe in greater detail regarding democratic enfranchisement and colonial expansion, respectively. Meanwhile, the religious press sought simultaneously to morally instruct and delight. These two bodies of writing testify to dread's purchasing power, which structured massive new reading communities in the nineteenth century. A more diverse reading public could now access the dreadful aesthetic and experience the pleasure of simulating dread, which had long entertained the upper-class

audience of the tragic theatre in the eighteenth century and the middle-class readers of the Gothic romance novels at the turn of the nineteenth century. In the Victorian era, dread became a central component of mass-market reading, but it oscillated in service of widely different aims. The penny dreadfuls opened up realms of fantasy for young male readers that extolled rebellion, whereas the religious press harnessed dread to exhort submission to a higher power and therefore maintain the affect's disciplinary function. This extraordinary cultural preoccupation with dread generated intense pressure between competing presses and critics, and this climate created the conditions necessary for some outlet of defusion. Consequently, a different kind of invocation of the dreadful began to arise at the fin de siècle, one that deactivates the adverb's potency through humor and wit.

Degenerating Dreadful

Somber invocations of the dreadful have always been accompanied by counterpointing invocations that diminish the affect's gravity, as my first chapter has demonstrated. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, slang carried on this tradition. *Dreadful* was not only a quality attributed to popular literature, but also became an intensifier, in certain circles, which characterized an object as "[e]xceedingly bad, great, long, etc."[261] John Camden Hotten's 1870 *Slang Dictionary* informs us that the phrase "dreadful bores" was a staple of "Dandy slang" to refer to "[i]nconvenient friends, or elderly and lecturing relatives."[262] A dandy, according to the *OED*, is "a beau, fop, 'exquisite,'" and, though originally associated with the Regency fashionista, Beau Brummell, the term regained prominence in the late-Victorian era in reference

[261] Murray, "Dreadful," 654.

[262] John Camden Hotten, *The Slang Dictionary; or, The Vulgar Words, Street Phrases, and "Fast" Expressions of High and Low Society. Many with Their Etymology and a Few with Their History Traced* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1870), 47.

to well-dressed, predominantly wealthy figures of the aesthetic movement. The dandy's appropriation of *dreadful* as a slang phrase provides a remarkable class and aesthetic contrast to the terms in which popular adventure tales summoned dread.

Oscar Wilde, known for his flamboyant style, makes abundant use of *dreadful* to droll effect in his fiction and society comedies of the 1890s. The term appears with the greatest frequency, humor, and wit in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a novel whose proximity to the Gothic makes it a relevant analog to the penny dreadfuls, though the two targeted readers of widely different purchasing power and aesthetic sensibilities. Originally published in the July 1890 issue of the middle-class American *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* contains a whopping fifty-three uses of the word *dreadful*, many of which amplify the delightfully wry tone of the principal characters.[263] For instance, the witty aesthete Lord Henry Wotton epigrammatically declares in the opening chapter that "the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man is a dreadful thing," through which we immediately gain a sense of his insouciant and iconoclastic character.[264] Subsequently, Lord Henry—along with his artist friend, Basil Hallward, and the painter's beautiful young muse, Dorian Gray—label sundry mundane scenarios as *dreadful*: crowds at the Academy; the process of aging; the adverb *always*; an ill-matched marriage; American reasonableness; dowdy wives; and female declarations of love.[265] *Dreadful*, when applied to each of these divergent situations, adds a conflicting sense of acuteness and emptiness, which cannot be taken seriously from the mouths of such blasé speakers. When Lord Henry, for instance, declares "always" a "dreadful word," he adds: "It

[263] This calculation is based on the revised and expanded 1891 edition that Ward, Lock, and Company published in book form in 1891. All subsequent quotations are taken from this version.

[264] Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. Joseph Bristow (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 14.

[265] Wilde, 6, 22, 23, 35, 36, 86, 87.

makes me shudder when I hear it. Women are so fond of using it. They spoil every romance by trying to make it last forever. It is a meaningless word, too. The only difference between a caprice and a life-long passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer."[266] Whether we laugh at the expense of women's reported frivolousness or Lord Henry's individual wantonness, the effect is the same when it comes to our understanding of *dreadful*: it is the ironic intensifier of witticisms, and no longer the solemn, quasi-religious, philosophical aesthetic of the sublime.

Famously, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* recounts the moral decline of its eponymous protagonist following his sitting for a portrait painted by Basil. Prompted by Lord Henry's inflammatory remarks about the ephemerality of youthful beauty, Dorian "uttered a mad wish that he himself might remain young, and the portrait grow old; that his own beauty might be untarnished, and the face on the canvas bear the burden of his passions and his sins; that the painted image might be seared with the lines of suffering and thought, and that he might keep all the delicate bloom and loveliness of his then just conscious boyhood."[267] This wish, he presently discovers, is magically fulfilled. For when Dorian ruthlessly breaks off his engagement with a young actress, Sibyl Vane (an act that precipitates her suicide), the painting acquires cruel features that mark his guilt, while the living man remains as flawlessly attractive as before. Subsequently, Dorian removes this "curious secret of his life" to a locked room in order to "hide his soul from the eyes of men" while he vigorously pursues a life of novel sensations, which bring him to both the highest and lowest quarters of London.[268] While the adoring Basil continues to believe in his friend's innocence over the years due to the purity of his friend's

[266] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 23.

[267] Wilde, 78.

[268] Wilde, 103.

features, rumors of Dorian's wicked deeds and malignant influence abound. All the while, the gorgeous man remains infatuated with comparing his countenance to the painting's ever-corrupting physiognomy. When Basil, however, confronts him regarding "the most dreadful things […] being said against [him] in London," Dorian spontaneously murders the artist.[269] This act prompts him to seek redemption, and he refrains from ruining an innocent country girl. When the portrait does not positively alter in response to his selfishly motivated good deed, Dorian destroys the art object in a fit of despair. This act proves to be his last, for he unintentionally slays himself and gains the wicked, hideous visage of the portrait, which, in turn, is restored to its original beauty.

Although this plot summary suggests a great many harrowing scenes, *dreadful* is seldom used in a macabre sense. To the contrary, it most frequently appears in the amusing aristocratic dialogues that take place over social luncheons and dinners. Upon the conclusion of one such meal, Lady Agatha says, "Good-bye, Lord Henry, you are quite delightful, and dreadfully demoralizing. I am sure I don't know what to say about your views. You must come and dine with us some night. Tuesday?"[270] Though "dreadfully" intensifies Lord Henry's "demoralizing" character, Lady Agatha is not earnestly critiquing his dismaying remarks, which include statements such as: "the nineteenth century has gone bankrupt through an over-expenditure of sympathy."[271] Quite the opposite, she finds his insensitive wit "delightful" and immediately follows her declaration of the reprobate's dreadfulness with an invitation for him to dine at her home.

[269] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 126.

[270] Wilde, 38-39.

[271] Wilde, 37.

In a manner that similarly stings and charms, Lady Narborough invokes the dreadful to slight her husband in a charged repartee with Dorian. She informs her guest: "I never had even a flirtation with anybody. However, that was all Narborough's fault. He was dreadfully short-sighted, and there is no pleasure in taking in a husband who never sees anything."[272] Once again, "dreadfully" operates as an adverbial amplifier that sharpens the joke about Lord Narborough's poor sight, at once a literal problem (he cannot see) and a metaphoric one (he cannot perceive his wife's coquetry). We can therefore discern a striking parallel between these aristocratic characters' nonchalant deployment of the dreadful to amuse their listeners and the ways in which prestigious periodicals flippantly treated the penny dreadfuls as a silly, inferior species of writing. Both cases serve to defuse the word's potency, though the former does so by appropriating *dreadful*, while the latter does so by disavowing it.

The dreadful could not be powerful, according to these upper-class lines of thought, because it was associated with the lower orders of society. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* makes this social distinction abundantly clear. While the dialogue of aristocratic characters is peppered with *dreadful*s in order to elicit wry laughter, working-class characters, spaces, and situations are repeatedly described as *dreadful* for the purpose of deprecation. For instance, almost every aspect of the East End theatre where Sibyl acts— the orchestra, the Jewish theatre manager, and the scenery—is declared *dreadful* by either Dorian or Lord Henry.[273] Asserting the dreadfulness of these elements is a rhetorical way through which the upper-class onlooker can distance himself from the vulgar object of his perception. Thus, when Lord Henry tells Dorian that Sibyl "had swallowed something by mistake, some dreadful thing they use at theatres […] I don't

[272] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 148.

[273] Wilde, 45, 71, 59, 65.

know what it was," he is laying the affective groundwork so that Dorian might regard her suicide insensitively: "Yes; it is very tragic, of course, but you must not get yourself mixed up in it."[274] In this way, a "dreadful thing," such as the method by which a working-class girl terminates her life, is beyond the ken and care of the dandies who reserve the word for their glib epigrams. By linking Sibyl with the distant, unknowable, lowly dreadful (a connection that Dorian has already made when he described his lover's acting as "dreadful" before pitilessly terminating their engagement), Lord Henry prepares Dorian to heed this final callous instruction: "Mourn for Ophelia, if you like. Put ashes on your head because Cordelia was strangled. Cry out against Heaven because the daughter of Brabantio died. But don't waste your tears over Sibyl Vane. She was less real than they are."[275]

While Sibyl is rendered a fiction by dint of her association with the dreadful, her brother James is animalized for the same reason. Upon his first appearance in the narrative, when he enters the room in which his sister and mother are embracing, Sibyl playfully calls him a "dreadful old bear" because of his rough figure and unwillingness to receive her kisses. The epithet is teasing but nonetheless meant to be kind. The narrator, however, more judgmentally affirms: "He was not so finely bred as his sister."[276] James is thus immediately introduced in relation to the dreadful because of his laboring stature, a fact that later enables the aristocrats to respond with utter pitilessness to his death in a shooting accident. In this scene, James is once again likened to an animal, though no longer a formidable bear: "There were two cries heard, the cry of a hare in pain, which is dreadful, the cry of a man in agony, which is worse."[277] The

[274] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 84-85.

[275] Wilde, 89.

[276] Wilde, 54-55.

[277] Wilde, 170.

epigrammatic style of this sentence is bitingly funny in its irony, given the tragic nature of the content. Moreover, while the narrator concedes that a person's yell of pain is more terrible than that of a hare, the statement nevertheless closes the distinction between human and animal in a manner that lowers the status of the wounded individual's life rather than elevating the importance of the furry creature's wellbeing. This unsympathetic collapse of human and hare is possible because the person in question is a beater and not a fellow shooter. Sir Geoffrey thus turns angrily toward the thicket and huffs: "Why on earth don't you keep your men back? Spoiled my shooting for the day."[278] Lord Henry similarly declares to Dorian: "My dear fellow, it can't be helped. It was the man's own fault. Why did he get in front of the guns? Besides, it is nothing to us."[279]

Lord Henry's fatalistic dismissal of James's death echoes Dorian's earlier apostrophe upon spurning Sibyl: "Cruelty! Had he been cruel? It was the girl's fault, not his. He had dreamed her as a great artist, had given to her because he had thought her great. Then she had disappointed him."[280] Ultimately, when Dorian realizes that his rejection instigated her suicide, he takes refuge from blame in reaffirming Sibyl's dreadfulness: "How had she played that dreadful last scene? Had she cursed him, as she died? No; she had died for love of him, and love would always be a sacrament to him now. She had atoned for everything, by the sacrifice she had made of her life."[281] Vulgar dreadfulness, by Dorian's account (the one we are given through free indirect discourse), is a crime that only death can expunge.

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[278] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 170.

[279] Wilde, 171.

[280] Wilde, 78-79.

[281] Wilde, 90.

Upon recognizing the two primary ways in which the dreadful appears in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*—for the frivolous amusement of the wealthy and the damning denigration of the laborers—we can fully apprehend the significance of Dorian calling his portrait a "dreadful thing" upon first perceiving "that horrible sympathy that existed between him and the picture."[282] Without appreciating the broader context of the dreadful in this story and fin de siècle culture, we are likely to read his declaration of the portrait's dreadfulness as a sign of intense terror and dismay. But this is not the case. The young man realizes that "[h]is own soul was looking out at him from the canvas and calling him to judgment" but he does not take this visual appraisal seriously.[283] That is, Dorian does not, like religious followers of the past centuries, dread future judgment. As he says to Lord Henry near the end of the novel: "I have no terror of Death. It is the coming of Death that terrifies me."[284] In other words, Dorian has no sense of, let alone an affected reaction to, an afterlife where he is judged for his sins. He avoids feeling dread by placing "a rich pall over the picture" to conceal the "dreadful thing" and diminish its gravity, a weightiness that, for but a moment he thought, "would be a guide to him through life, would be to him what holiness is to some, and conscience to others, and the fear of God to us all."[285] The failure of the painting to stimulate Dorian's ethical behavior results from its connection to the dreadful: a term that has been evacuated of its solemn religious significance and prosocial ethical function. In a context where dread does not indicate mortal fear and dreadfulness is merely a distaste for the vulgar, feelings of dread and perceptions of the dreadful cannot save Dorian.

[282] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 101, 91.

[283] Wilde, 102.

[284] Wilde, 171.

[285] Wilde, 102, 82.

Dorian's lack of dread is emphasized twice in the story. The first instance is when "[h]e almost dreaded his valet leaving the room" after he suspects the painting had altered, for "[h]e knew that when he was alone he would have to examine the portrait."[286] The adverb "almost" calls attention to the affect's presence at the threshold of Dorian's experience, and emphasizes his desire to keep it at bay. Once he does ascertain the painting's power, however, he is able to banish the unwanted feeling entirely by focusing on the certainty that the portrait guarantees. He no longer needs to fearfully anticipate the physical consequences of sin on his terrestrial beauty. Unlike the hero of the "poisonous book" Lord Henry presents to him, Dorian "never knew—never, indeed, had any cause to know—that somewhat grotesque dread of mirrors, and polished metal surfaces, and still water, which came upon the Parisian so early in his life, and was occasioned by the sudden decay of a beauty that had once, apparently, been so remarkable."[287] Quite the opposite of the sublime, Dorian associates dread with the aesthetics of the grotesque and degeneration, in which the feeling does not elevate but enervate. Explicitly devoid of this affect because he cannot decay, Dorian concludes: "the future was inevitable. There were passions in him that could find their terrible outlet, dreams that would make the shadow of their evil real."[288] The uncomfortable uncertainty inherent to dread is therefore replaced by an iniquitous surety regarding the pleasurable vices that *will* happen.

A striking contrast to the dreadless Dorian can be found in the humble and oftentimes ridiculous character of Sibyl Vane's mother, who possesses a shameful secret: her children were

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[286] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 81.

[287] Wilde, 107, 108. As Joseph Bristow explains in a footnote on page 210 in this edition: "it later becomes clearer that the volume is *A rebours* (1884) by J-.K. Huysmans, although Richard Ellmann is correct to state that the 'references in *Dorian Gray* to specific chapters of the unnamed book are deliberately inaccurate' (*Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), 298)."

[288] Wilde, 102.

born out of wedlock. Unlike Dorian, whose emotions flit capriciously, Mrs. Vane is troubled "night and day, for weeks and months" imagining the "terrible moment," a moment that "she had dreaded," when her children might discover the scandalous nature of their birth.[289] James ultimately confronts his mother and learns the truth, after which she experiences "a hideous sense of humiliation."[290] Mrs. Vane's dread of her son's judgment, however, results in a noble, shielding stance toward her vulnerable daughter. When James warns that Sibyl might similarly fall prey to male deception, Mrs. Vane movingly declares: "Sibyl has a mother […] I had none."[291] By stewing in a state of dread and taking seriously the consequences that ensued from her actions, Mrs. Vane rises to the ideal Victorian role of protective mother. While this working-class woman is largely positioned as a figure of scorn due to her melodramatic diction and performative gestures, her sustained and earnest feelings of dread momentarily render her laudable rather than laughable. We can never say this of Dorian.

The perennial youth, by contrast, resembles the poet-prophet of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" analyzed in the previous chapter. Both figures gain a kind of divine power through art that renders the individual an object, rather than a perceiver, of dread. While the speaker of "Kubla Khan" transcends the limits of the human in his imagined act of artistic creation, Dorian acquires superhuman knowledge of the soul by dint of his portrait. The aesthete is explicitly aware that such visual intimacy with the essence of his being is a capacity that approximates the divine. In the final confrontation with Basil, for example, he offers to show the artist his soul, to which Basil replies: "But only God can do that."[292] Dorian audaciously insists: "You shall see the thing

[289] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 62.

[290] Wilde, 62.

[291] Wilde, 62.

[292] Wilde, 129.

that you fancy only God can see."[293] He even re-asserts his superhuman capacity when they enter the locked room: "So you think that it is only God who sees the soul, Basil? Draw that curtain back, and you shall see mine."[294] Because of his assumed proximity to the deity, Dorian feels no dread of judgment in the biological, social, or religious sense. Just as his visage does not show the penalty of sin, so too does he disregard the rumors of his illicit behavior, and he never even mentions the possibility of an existence after death, for he is too preoccupied with his earthly pursuits.

Basil, by contrast, does take the dreadful very seriously and honors the strictures of societal and divine judgment. To be sure, he is the only character to do so. Consequently, Basil explains to Dorian: "I think it right that you should know that the most dreadful things are being said against you in London."[295] The loyal friend worries about these rumors, because "[e]very gentleman is interested in his good name. You don't want people to talk of you as something vile and degraded."[296] While Basil perceives the dreadful as an urgent threat to reputable sociability, Dorian finds it a shining excuse for an epigram: "I love scandals about other people, but scandals about myself don't interest me. They have not got the charm of novelty."[297] Dorian clearly recognizes that the currency of dread has become diluted, a weakness that he co-opts in his sprezzatura. The artist, however, is not amused or convinced, and continues to invoke the dreadful in his urgent concerns.

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[293] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 129.

[294] Wilde, 131.

[295] Wilde, 126.

[296] Wilde, 126.

[297] Wilde, 126.

Basil first juxtaposes Dorian's beautiful face with the loathsome figure of a degenerate aristocrat who offered to pay him handsomely for a portrait. Basil denied him, declaring: "His life is dreadful."[298] The artist then attempts to evoke pity and gain explanations from Dorian regarding the status of his former friends who had fallen into disreputable circumstances—"dreadful end[s]"—following their affiliation with the handsome dilettante. Dorian flatly denies him "with a note of infinite contempt in his voice": "Stop, Basil. You are talking about things of which you know nothing."[299] When it comes to facing the dreadful, Dorian is utterly recalcitrant. He either defuses Basil's gravity with humor or evades the associated feelings of dread entirely with iron scorn.

Nonetheless, Basil continues to thrust the unwanted adjective before Dorian's attention: "Then there are other stories—stories that you have been seen creeping at dawn out of dreadful houses and slinking in disguise into the foulest dens in London. Are they true? Can they be true?"[300] The double questions convey his earnest desire to account for Dorian's affiliation with the dreadful, that which is beneath his status as a gentleman and incompatible with the moral pedestal on which Basil has placed him. Ultimately, the artist pleads: "I want you to get rid of the dreadful people you associate with."[301] Basil's most fervent aim is to exorcize the social and moral taint of the dreadful from the object of his idolatry. Still, doing so first requires a sincere confrontation with these matters.

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[298] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 127.

[299] Wilde, 126.

[300] Wilde, 128.

[301] Wilde, 128.

With this affective adjective thrust so insistently before him, Dorian consequently chooses to reveal to his friend the truly "dreadful thing" that he has hidden away.[302] Upon first viewing this "monstrous" image, Basil declares that it is "some foul parody, some infamous, ignoble satire," a statement that implicitly affirms the dreadful's longstanding association with these two generic traditions, as we might recall from Swift, Byron, and Austen in the previous chapter.[303] There is nothing dismissively funny about this art object, however. It is deadly serious: "Through some strange quickening of inner life the leprosies of sin were slowly eating the thing away. The rotting of a corpse in a watery grave was not so fearful."[304]

Basil's reaction to this "dreadful thing" models an appropriate religious response, one that was surely favored by pious readers of the novel who declared it a moral tale.[305] For Basil exclaims:

> Good God, Dorian, what a lesson! what an awful lesson! […] Pray, Dorian, pray […] What is it that one was taught to say in one's boyhood? "Lead us not into temptation. Forgive us of our sins. Wash away our iniquities." Let us say that together. The prayer of your pride has been answered. The prayer of your repentance will be answered also. I worshipped you too much. I am punished for it. You worshipped yourself too much. We are both punished.[306]

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[302] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 101.

[303] Wilde, 131.

[304] Wilde, 133.

[305] A reviewer for the *Christian Leader*, for instance, declared: We can only hope that [*The Picture of Dorian Gray*] will be read and pondered by those classes of British society whose corruption it delineates with such thrilling power, and that it may be the means of preserving many young lives from the temptations by which they are surrounded." Stuart Mason, *Oscar Wilde—Art and Morality: A Record of Discussion Which Followed the Publication of "Dorian Gray,"* 2nd ed. (London: Frank Palmer, 1912), 138. Similarly, the *Christian World* proclaimed *The Picture of Dorian Gray* "'a moral tale,' intended to excite a loathing for sin." Mason, 139.

[306] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 133.

Basil thus expresses both fear and love of God, for he perceives that they have been taught an "awful lesson" in which they "are both punished," yet there is also hope of forgiveness. An implicit dread of not earning absolution motivates Basil's prayer and he begs Dorian to kneel down beside him. Contrastively, the unredeemable sinner simply declares: "Those words mean nothing to me now."[307] The straightforwardness of Dorian's response is strikingly devoid of affect in comparison to Basil's outburst and appeal to faith. Far from fearing for the future, Dorian is totally absorbed in the present moment when he is suddenly seized with "[t]he mad passions of a hunted animal" and abruptly stabs his repentant companion.[308]

Dorian murders Basil, I argue, because of his friend's insistence on taking the dreadful seriously, which necessarily entails submission to moral and social judgment. The depraved decadent is unwilling to face such arbitration, as he later muses: "Who had made [Basil] a judge over others? He had said things that were dreadful, horrible, not to be endured."[309] Basil's death, like Sibyl's and James's, is ultimately justified by Dorian due to the artist's affiliation with the dreadful. Thus, the murderer refuses to refer to the corpse as "Basil" or even a human body at all: "It was like a dreadful wax image."[310] In a manner similar to the actress's fictionalization, the artist is dismissed as non-sentient material.

Just as Dorian murders Basil to evade a sincere encounter with the dreadful, so too does he finally decide to destroy the portrait in order to eliminate feelings of dread and conscience altogether. To be sure, for the majority of the narrative, the painting had elicited no such compunction. Quite the opposite, "it had given him pleasure to watch it changing and growing

[307] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 133.

[308] Wilde, 133.

[309] Wilde, 156.

[310] Wilde, 135.

old."[311] Nevertheless, following Basil's murder, in addition to the suicide of the man whom he compelled to destroy the corpse, and the death of James Vane, the painting becomes a poignant source of negative affectivity:

> Of late he had felt no such pleasure. It had kept him awake at night. When he had been away, he had been filled with terror lest other eyes should look upon it. It had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere memory had marred many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it.[312]

Eventually, the painting gains temporal supremacy as it becomes a dual source of anticipatory fear and haunting displeasure. While Dorian, on the one hand, dreads its discovery and subsequent social judgment, he, on the other hand, is plagued by persistent reflections on his past sins. He seeks to eliminate this affective state entirely by destroying the "dreadful thing" that he can no longer diminish or evade.[313] The result, as we have seen, is his own death. The allegory thus fits with the overarching premise of these two chapters: dread, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was at the core of human experience. Eradicating dread was tantamount to destroying life itself.

Alexander Bain—whose works Wilde became closely acquainted with while studying *Literæ Humaniores* at Magdalen College, Oxford—described "the darkness of the shadow of death" as "the deepest midnight gloom that the human imagination can figure to itself; and from that quarter emanate the direct forms of apprehension and dread. It is the fact respecting death

[311] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 187.

[312] Wilde, 187.

[313] Wilde, 101.

common to the whole human family."[314] The popular Victorian psychologist thus emphasized how dread of death is one of the few universal emotional experiences of humankind. This is the case, he argues, because "[t]he one fact of the situation is the unknown future that the being is ushered into."[315] Dorian, by contrast, is bolstered by a sense of certainty that the painting safeguards his existence forever. As a result, he rejects feelings of dread and remains wholly absorbed in the immediate temporality of sensation. And for this he is "worshipped," according to Lord Henry: "You are the type of what the age is searching for, and what it is afraid it has found."[316] Dorian is a harbinger of an era in which dread is exorcized by a sense that "the future was inevitable."[317]

Thus, after centuries of inspiring aesthetic greatness, sympathy, and moral goodness, dread's gravity became diminished at the fin de siècle by an over-used concept of the dreadful that is impudent, facetious, and grotesque. Ostensibly, the dreadful in Dandy slang, as represented throughout *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, is unbelievably insensitive and alienating to the lower classes and women in general. The narrative nevertheless continues to draw out the powerful religious underpinnings of dread through Basil's fatal exhortations. Assuredly, the artist's insistence on taking the dreadful seriously and subsequently seeking divine forgiveness for his complicity in Dorian's depravity does not represent the same heavy-handed didacticism that we saw in young Bill's seafaring adventures in *From Powder Monkey to Admiral.* Still, Wilde's Gothic aesthetic novel articulates a divine connection to dread, which contains a forceful

[314] Bain, *Emotions and the Will*, 86. On Bain and Wilde see Joseph Bristow, "Wilde's Abstractions: Notes on Literæ Humaniores, 1876–1878," in *Oscar Wilde and Classical Antiquity*, ed. Kathleen Riley, Alastair J. L. Blanshard, and Iarla Manny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 69–90.

[315] Bain, 86.

[316] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 182.

[317] Wilde, 102.

moral current, as many contemporary readers discerned. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* thereby dramatizes the different inflections of dread that I have been tracing throughout this chapter in order to reveal how the affect did not fundamentally transform at the end of the century. Instead, the varying implications and registers of dread and the dreadful mingled together, creating a rich and unreconcilable tension that resists a simplistic ethics. In this case, then, we must concede to the infamous adage of the Preface: "*There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book*."[318] While conventionally the epigram is understood to mean that fiction makes no ethical claims, we might alternatively take it to signify that a book is neither moral nor immoral absolutely. It could very well be both at once, just like the multilateral invocation of "dreadful."

Cultivating Dread for a Secular Politics

In many ways, James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* occupies a similar cartography to that of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Dorian roams the lower quarters of London with an elitist detachment underpinned by both fear and desire, a mode of urban exploration whose most influential antecedent includes Blanchard Jerrold's *London: A Pilgrimage* (1872). In a similar but more surreal style, the nameless speaker of Thomson's dark epic in twenty cantos wanders through an alternate, nocturnal, mechanical London. The gloomy intricacies of this uncanny metropolitan environment are conveyed through the nameless first-person speaker in the ten odd-numbered cantos, while the ten even-numbered cantos relate the stories and dialogues of various inhabitants who are caught in "[a]n everlasting conscious inanition!"[319] Although the narrative is disjointed and dream-like, it loosely follows the somnambulist speaker as he journeys from the labyrinthine city center to the northern suburbs. This brooding landscape is "demonic in the full

[318] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 3.

[319] James Thomson ("B. V."), *The City of Dreadful Night: And Other Poems* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1880), canto 13, line 41. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t5s75cc7g.

sense of the term," as the modern scholar Peter C. Noel-Bentley maintains, for "everything that exists is a parody of the divine state."[320] If the notion of divinity indicates meaningful telos and the unity of all aspects of creation, then the demonic represents futility and isolation, "insufferable inane," by the speaker's account.[321] Accordingly, one of the most poignant metaphors of the poem likens the soulless bodies that labor in the metropolis to a defunct timepiece: "Take a watch, erase / The signs and figures of the circling hours, / Detach the hands, remove the dial-face; / The works proceed until run down; although / Bereft of purpose, void of use, still go."[322] Ceaseless functioning without meaning is the ethos of the City. As a result, the automatized residents look forward only to death, but rather than serving as a gateway to salvation, death merely offers static nothingness, which, to the speaker and various members of the metropolis, makes suicide a tempting course of action: "We yearn for speedy death in full fruition, / Dateless oblivion and divine repose."[323]

After many similarly despondent musings, the speaker finally arrives on a plateau where an immense statue of Melancholy, based on Albrecht Dürer's *Melencolia I* (1514), is erected overlooking the bleak cityscape. Instead of inciting self-destruction, the patronage of this lugubrious female sustains life: "Her subjects often gaze up to her there: / The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance, / The weak new terrors; all, renewed assurance / And confirmation of the old despair."[324] *The City of Dreadful Night* thus terminates with an

[320] Peter C. Noel-Bentley, "'Fronting the Dreadful Mysteries of Time': Dürer's *Melencolia* in Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night*," *Victorian Poetry* 12, no. 3 (1974): 198.

[321] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 6.24.

[322] Thomson, 2.32-36.

[323] Thomson, 13.42.

[324] Thomson, 21.81-84.

unapologetically grim resolution to continue withstanding the burden of existence in a universe without higher unity, direction, or meaning. In Henry Paolucci's estimation, Thomson's verse represents "the most impressive utterance of despair in western literature."[325]

For all its pessimism, Thomson's dreadful city manifests a very different kind of politics than those in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Whereas feelings associated with the dreadful in Wilde's novel occlude sympathy, *The City of Dreadful Night*'s earnest engagement with the dreadful sublime and its climactic development of dread represents an atheistical version of this historically religious affect, which in turn yields a profoundly moving emotional resonance among the "sad Fraternity" of "[M]elancholy Brothers."[326] These brothers inhabit a space "dark, dark, dark!" just like the imprisoned hero of John Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (1671).[327] But unlike Milton who attempts to "justify the ways of God to men," Thomson leaves his poem's fraternity "battling in black floods without an ark!"[328] *The City of Dreadful Night* nevertheless creates a powerful sense of community out of these struggles. Amy Kahrman Huseby thus describes the poetic project as fostering a "secularist congregation" amongst its readers who had forsaken religious institutions, but still yearned for the fellowship such organizations historically provided.[329] By incorporating himself into the dreadful city, Thomson's speaker develops an acute sense of dread that allows him to remain intact upon facing the "dreadful mysteries of

[325] Henry Paolucci, *James Thomson's The City of Dreadful Night: A Study of the Cultural Resources of Its Author and a Reappraisal of the Poem* (Griffon House Publications [for] The Bagehot Council, 2000), 7.

[326] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 14.25.

[327] Thomson, 14.26.

[328] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Stephen. Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4. Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 14.27.

[329] Amy Kahrmann Huseby, "James Thomson's *The City of Dreadful Night* and the Forms of Secularist Congregation," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 49, no. 2 (2016): 228–48.

Time" devoid of divine orchestration.[330] In short, Thomson reframes dread as a feeling that is integral to survival rather than degeneration in a secular, industrial age. Dread is essential to Thomson's joint socialist sympathies and "mythos of atheism," which Isobel Armstrong discerns as an "attempt to break cultural forms and construct a new imaginative and ideological world, redefining history and consciousness."[331]

The atheistical voice of *The City of Dreadful Night* was unsurprising given the poem's serialization in Charles Bradlaugh's radical working-class weekly, the *National Reformer*, in 1874. As Annie Besant, a columnist for the periodical and active member of its issuing body, the National Secular Society, declared: "[the *National Reformer*'s] policy [is] Atheistic in theology, Republican in politics, and Malthusian in social economy."[332] Thomson's poem unequivocally represents the first of these aims: "And now at last authentic word I bring, / Witnessed by every dead and living thing; / Good tidings of great joy for you, for all: / There is no God; no Fiend with names divine / Made us and tortures us; if we must pine, / It is to satiate no Being's gall."[333] Due to such extreme proclamations, several readers wrote letters of complaint to the *National Reformer*, causing Bradlaugh to halt the poem's serialization temporarily.[334] Its reception, however, was not altogether unfavorable. Thomson's modern biographer, Tom Leonard, claims: "There was a heavier than usual demand for the issues in which the poem appeared. Soon they

[330] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 21.45.

[331] Isobel Armstrong, "James Thomson: Atheist, Blasphemer and Anarchist," in *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019), 426.

[332] Annie Besant, *Autobiographical Sketches* (London: Freethought Publishing Company, 1885), 116. Besant claims to be quoting Bradlaugh here.

[333] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 14.37-42.

[334] According to Thomson in his letter to Betram Dobell on September 4, 1874, as reproduced in Tom Leonard, *Places of the Mind: The Life and Work of James Thomson ('B.V.')* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993), 194.

were out of print."[335] To be sure, when an installment of *The City of Dreadful Night* failed to appear in the periodical, Bertram Dobell, a secondhand bookseller and collector, wrote to Bradlaugh—who passed the note on to Thomson—expressing his admiration for the poem.[336] Six years later, Dobell would partner with Reeves & Turner in the Strand to publish Thomson's first book of verse, *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems*, which was widely reviewed and moderately well received by the mainstream periodical press.[337]

Thomson's untimely death in 1882—brought on by alcoholism, insomnia, and depression—only increased the attention given to his epic poem, which George Saintsbury characterized for the *Academy* as "singularly melodious in expression, dignified and full in meaning, and bearing witness to reading as well as to meditation."[338] H. S. Salt's *The Life of James Thomson (B.V.)* (1889) subsequently reinvigorated analyses of the poet's oeuvre, and these critical conversations continued well into the twentieth century.[339] Remarkably, *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems* was republished in both England and the United States no fewer than seven times between 1888 and 1922.

Despite the fact that Thomson maintained an audience for many years after his death, Victorian critics had mixed feelings about his epic poem and were particularly troubled by its ardent pessimism. The *Examiner*, for instance, flippantly declared: "If Mr. Thomson would enjoy

[335] Leonard, *Places of the Mind*, 192.

[336] Leonard, 194.

[337] Leonard, 237. Critics chose to read the poem as "a bitter satire upon atheism," which made it more palatable than reading it as a proclamation of atheism, which was, indeed, Thomson's intention. Theodore Watts-Dunton, "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night, and Other Poems*," *Athenæum*, no. 2740 (May 1, 1880): 561.

[338] George Saintsbury, "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night*," *Academy*, no. 423 (June 12, 1880): 433.

[339] As a result of Salt's deeply sympathetic biography, critics rendered Thomson a Victorian iteration of the gifted Romantic poet Thomas Chatterton, who took his own life at the young age of seventeen.

his unbelief, and take it as quietly as others their belief, it might give a generally more cheerful tone to his future works."[340] Yet even as they lambasted this dread-laden poem, critics continued to echo its dominant affect. As Theodore Watts-Dunton decried in his review for the *Athenæum*: "the only intelligible intent to be discerned is that the poet, for some reason or another, wishes to make the reader feel that he is himself one of the dreadful occupants of a dreadful city."[341] Watts-Dunton's empathic tone toward the dreadful is disparaging in a manner that Lord Henry and Dorian Gray will later echo. Moreover, like the aristocratic characters in Wilde's story, Watts-Dunton is extremely reluctant to sympathize with the dreadful. The poem itself encourages such distance for the contented reader by describing sympathy in powerful Humean terms of contagion:

> Wherever men are gathered, all the air
>
> Is charged with human feeling, human thought;
>
> Each shout and cry and laugh, each curse and prayer,
>
> Are into its vibrations surely wrought;
>
> Unspoken passion, wordless meditation,
>
> Are breathed into it within our respiration
>
> It is with our life fraught and over fraught.
>
> So that no man there breathes earth's simple breath,
>
> As if alone on mountains or wide seas;
>
> But nourishes warm life or hastens death

[340] "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems*," *Examiner*, no. 3772 (May 15, 1880): 617.

[341] Watts-Dunton, "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night, and Other Poems*," 561.

With joys and sorrows, health and foul disease,
Wisdom and folly, good and evil labours,
Incessant of his multitudinous neighbors;
He in his turn affecting all of these.

That City's atmosphere is dark and dense,
Although not many exiles wander there,
With many a potent evil influence,
Each adding poison to the poisoned air;
Infections of unutterable sadness,
Infections of incalculable madness,
Infections of incurable despair.[342]

Autonomous individuality is thoroughly exploded in these stanzas, as the discrete body is permeated with the vibrations and respiration (also key physiological mechanisms in Alexander Bain's new psychology) of the surrounding environment. Positive and negative emotions are equally and undeniably transmitted between bodies, a phenomenon that becomes utterly terrifying in the final stanza, where the City emerges as inescapably "poisoned" by "sadness," "madness," and "despair." Engaging with Thomson's City thus appears biologically and psychologically hazardous, as Watts-Dunton readily perceived. Just as Dorian Gray "had been poisoned by a book," so too is Watts-Dunton wary of such poetry that works the "morbid vein."[343] As a happy gentleman—who was, in fact, working on his own book of verse, a

[342] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 15.1-21.

[343] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 124; Watts-Dunton, "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night, and Other Poems*," 561.

mystical-romance titled *The Coming of Love, and Other Poems* (1897) that repudiates the materialism and pessimism of the age—Watts-Dunton clearly feared becoming one of the wandering "exiles" in Thomson's wretched urban landscape.

Instead of sympathizing with the pitiful "men that were as phantoms" who are "[c]rushed impotent beneath this reign of terror, / Dazed with mysteries of woe and error," Watts-Dunton affectively distances himself from the poem's secular world by harping on its dreadfulness: "the poet […] has simply written 'dreadful' poetry because just now it is the fashion to be dreadful."[344] Implicitly, the reviewer is referring to the burgeoning penny fiction craze. Even so, he also has a constellation of "'dreadful' poems" in mind, including "Death-Wake; or Lunacy: A Necromaunt in Three Chimæras" (1831) by Thomson's fellow Scotsman Thomas Tod Stoddard who was, in fact, more renowned for his publications on angling than his poetry on necrophilic madness.[345] Oddly enough, Watts-Dunton does not elaborate on the conventions of this genre of so-called "'dreadful' poetry." Instead, he simply references the persistence of its negative affectivity in order to diminish the earnestness of the poem's pessimism. *The City of Dreadful Night* is far less disturbing when the adjective in its title is viewed as a bid for readership rather than an ardent representation of despair.

Thomson insisted in his correspondence, "I have neither tried nor cared to win any popular applause," and, assuredly, the poem's opacity suggests that it was never intended for a widespread audience.[346] Likewise, the speaker in the Proem declares: "Surely I write not for the

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[344] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 7.15, 3.26-27; Watts-Dunton, "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night, and Other Poems*," 561.

[345] Watts-Dunton, 561. It is somewhat surprising that Watts-Dunton referenced this book of verse, which was only republished in 1895 (five years after Watts-Dunton's review) by John Lane. Andrew Lang explained in the introduction to this later volume that the verse was reprinted due to its "extreme rarity." See *The Death-Wake: Or Lunacy, a Necromaunt in Three Chimeras*. 2nd ed. (London: John Lane; Chicago: Way & Williams, 1895), 3.

[346] As reproduced in Leonard, *Places of the Mind,* 194.

hopeful young, / Or those who deem their happiness of worth, / Or such as pasture and grow fat among / The shows of life and feel nor doubt nor dearth, / Or pious spirits with a God above them, / To sanctify and glorify and love them, / Or sages who foresee a heaven on earth."[347] Optimistic youths and those who are content in life and unshaken in their faith should not read this poem, the speaker asserts, not because it would infect them with dread, as Watts-Dunton feared, but because "none of these / Could read the writing if they deigned to try."[348] The speaker thus insistently concludes the Proem: "None uninitiated by many a presage / Will comprehend the language of the message, / Although proclaimed aloud of evermore."[349] By this account, sympathy with the dreadful is not contagious, or even possible, unless the sensate subject already has an inkling of negative affectivity within them. The reviewer of the *Westminster Gazette* must have been of this disposition, for he similarly affirms: "The impress of real genius is upon [*The City of Dreadful Night*], but genius which is only likely to be appreciated by a few […] [Thomson] writes above the heads of the multitude."[350]

The exclusivity of Thomson's poem does not cultivate an elitist distance, as we saw in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. To the contrary, the Proem welcomes willing visitors into the City's secular space, while acknowledging that many types of people would decline the invitation. Within the body of the poem, *dreadful* operates as an engine of sympathetic engagement with the City's secular politics, though it does so partially through its conspicuous absence. Although entitled *The City of Dreadful Night*, that complete phrase never appears thereafter. The fifth stanza of the Proem alludes to "that same city of tremendous night," later in the first canto we are

[347] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 15-21.

[348] Thomson, 22-23.

[349] Thomson, 41-43.

[350] "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems*," *Westminster Review* 58, no. 1 (July 1880): 293.

told "The City is of Night," and in the tenth canto we find again "the City of the Night."[351] On each occasion, there is a tingle of recognition accompanied by the expectation that the full group of words will follow. After all, it is conventional for the title to appear with more developed significance within the body of the poem.[352] Accordingly, the ubiquitous presence of the phrase that echoes but does not reproduce the title anticipates that the complete grouping will appear in full and to climactic effect. Yet, that never happens. By refusing to repeat "the city of *dreadful* night" in the conclusion, Thomson withholds the satisfying recognition of meaning and purpose from the title that readers most likely expect. The disappointment that ensues subtly reflects the profound disenchantment of all those secular inhabitants of the city who "wake from daydreams to this real night," where purposeless mechanism rather than a benevolent and teleological God prevails.[353]

When *dreadful* does appear, however, it is not used to modify the night surrounding the City, but to accentuate Melancholy's valiant stance against the godless universe in the concluding canto:

> Surrounded to expound her form sublime,
> Her fate heroic and calamitous;
> Fronting the dreadful mysteries of Time,
> Unvanquished in defeat and desolation,
> Undaunted in the hopeless conflagration,

[351] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 30; 1.71; 10.69.

[352] I have in mind Alfred Lord Tennyson's "The Lady of Shallot" (1832), John Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (1819), and George Gordon Lord Byron's "Darkness" (1816).

[353] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night,* 12.16.

Of the day setting on her baffled prime.[354]

Here *dreadful* establishes the rich aural quality of this culminating stanza, initiating a hard "d" dirge-like sound that is sustained in the following line with "unvanquished," "defeat," and "desolation," and once again at the opening of the next verse with "Undaunted." Accordingly, there is a somber rhythm to this stanza, which corresponds to the sublime image of the "bronze colossus of a winged Woman" facing the obscure and magnificently ominous "dreadful mysteries of Time."[355] As an adjective, "dreadful" serves to render these temporal enigmas sublime. Historically, however, this aesthetic was always attached to some notion of Judeo-Christian divinity. By contrast, in Thomson's poem the dreadful sublime is generated by a confrontation between the Patroness of humankind and the harrowing inscrutabilities of Time without providence.

Fig. 1: Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I* (1514)

In place of faith, Thomson's Melancholy, like the figure in Dürer's copperplate etching, confronts the mysteries of the universe with technology: "The instruments of carpentry and science / Scattered about her feet."[356] Noel-Bentley argues that these tools allow her to "measure and therefore contain eternity" in a way that provides hope to the otherwise despairing

[354] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 21.43-49.

[355] Thomson, 21.6.

[356] Thomson, 21.19-20.

inhabitants at the end of the poem.[357] By emblematizing "stoical endurance of intellectual and philosophical detachment," she offers fortitude and solace in the face of a demonic universe that is biologically and environmentally determined without purpose.[358] Based on this interpretation, the "mysteries of Time" that Melencolia confronts are not, I would add, "dreadful" because they are terrifyingly imperceptible. To the contrary, these enigmas are "dreadful" because they have no meaning at all. There is nothing to find out. What is dreadful, in other words, is the concept of homogenous empty time, a time that, according to Walter Benjamin, is emptied of Messianic futurity.[359] Homogenous empty time is meaningless in the grand cosmic sense: it is merely partitioned by the clock or the working day.[360] Thomson thus implodes the historic relationship between the dreadful, the sublime, and the divine. Once connected to conceptions of greatness, might, and futurity, *dreadful,* by the end of the century, potently modifies the secular world. The penny dreadfuls may have made *dreadful* a byword for degraded writing, but *The City of Dreadful Night* did something far more profound in reversing and utterly voiding the word's association with reverence of the divine. Once a modifier to hallow, *dreadful* in Thomson's poem has become devastatingly hollow. As Armstrong incisively surmises: "The shock of *The City of Dreadful Night* […] is its use of the traditional language of spiritual experience to overturn it, a language overturned by its own oppressive weight."[361]

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[357] Noel-Bentley, "Fronting the Dreadful Mysteries of Time," 202.

[358] Noel-Bentley, 199-200.

[359] Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 4: 1938–1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott and others (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006), 394-95.

[360] For more on Victorian conceptions homogenous empty time, see Krista Lysack, *Chronometres: Devotional Literature, Duration, and Victorian Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 11-14. On the emergence of homogenous empty time in England, see Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[361] Armstrong, "James Thomson: Atheist, Blasphemer and Anarchist," 426.

A similar atheistical revision of dread transpires in the penultimate canto. A critic for *To-day*, a scientific socialist publication, identifies this section as one of "the finest of all" and fully reproduced it in the magazine's pages.[362] The verse features two stunning encounters: the first between a sphinx and a sword-holding angel; the second between the humanoid feline and an armed warrior. The reviewer correctly interprets these "vivid, weird pictures" as indicative of "the attitude of man towards the riddle of life," though several more points should be added to this explanation.[363] First, we see two types of people emblematized in the angel and the warrior: the person of faith and the person of action. Both shatter and fall "[b]etween the monster's large quiescent paws."[364] The changeless sphinx meanwhile maintains "a solemn trance-like look."[365] The ensuing allegory is clear: neither piety nor activity can withstand the trial of the "infinite void" of life.[366]

What the *To-day* reviewer—in accordance with all of the other Victorian and present-day critics who discuss this famous scene—neglects to notice, however, is the speaker's attitude. Although he is physically present in the first stanza while sitting in the shadowy cathedral, the speaker fades away into a "dull swoon" in the subsequent lines during each of the climactic confrontations with the mythical creature. As a result, attention is fixed on the sphinx, angel, and warrior, rather than the fleetingly conscious speaker. Nevertheless, when we examine this unobtrusive figure more closely, we can perceive a crucial difference between the angel's and the warrior's respective downfalls. The speaker recounts the angel's disintegration in a reporter-

[362] "Poet of To-Day," *To-Day: Monthly Magazine of Scientific Socialism*, no. 3 (July 1883): 314.

[363] "Poet of To-Day," 314.

[364] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 20.41.

[365] Thomson, 20.18.

[366] Thomson, 20.48.

like style that treats the incident as an emotionless matter of cause and effect: "The angel's wings had fallen, stone on stone, / And lay there shattered; hence the sudden sound."[367] The noise simply awakens the speaker from his "evil lethargy."[368] Yet after witnessing the warrior's sword break, he evocatively recounts: "An unarmed man with raised hands impotent / Now stood before the sphinx."[369] In a tone quite different from that of the previous account, the speaker depicts the combatant in a dramatic tableau of agonizing powerlessness before impending obliteration. This climactic pause in front of the terrifying future—symbolized by the sphinx who is likened to "life's laws"—is a moment of intense dread for the warrior and sympathetic observer.

The word *dread*, however, does not appear at this time. The warrior might feel dread facing "the riddle of life," yet it is the speaker who actually experiences this emotion upon the fighter's destruction: "My eyelids sank in spite of wonder grown; / A louder crash upstartled me in dread."[370] The vital difference, then, between the angel's and the warrior's respective ends lies in the narrator's affective reaction: he only feels dread upon witnessing the latter. Due to his atheistic inclinations, the speaker was not expecting the angel to face the sphinx and persevere. We might see the angel's breakdown and the speaker's subsequent rousing as a metaphor for the awakening of atheism. Without religion, then, it should be the duty of the man of action, represented by the warrior, to face the meaning of life himself. Yet the warrior also crumbles before the sphinx. The din of this figure's demise precipitates a jarring arousal for the speaker, which is punctuated by a feeling of extreme fear oriented toward the future: How am I to be in

[367] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 20.25-26.

[368] Thomson, 20.24.

[369] Thomson, 20.34-35

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[370] Thomson, 20.37-38.

the world with neither faith nor action as my raison d'être? In short, dread arises when neither religious nor secular individualist frameworks allow the speaker to confront futurity.

Despite its rich intertextuality with historic masterpieces—Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* (1321) and Milton's *Paradise Lost*—and Gothic infatuation with anachronism and decay, *The City of Dreadful Night* is less concerned with the past than the coming times: "For me this infinite Past is blank and dumb."[371] Fundamentally, the poem is a meditation on the future of secular sociability and an ethics unmotivated by promises of salvation or damnation, "without the fear of waking after death."[372] At first, the poem seems to suggest that atheism is antithetical to community, as the speaker witnesses how the inhabitants "often murmur to themselves, they speak / To one another seldom, for their woe / Broods maddening inwardly and scorns to wreak / Itself abroad."[373] Nevertheless, the speaker's ensuing peregrinations reveal quite the opposite, for various "Brothers of sad lives" eloquently express the tragic histories and disillusionments that precipitated their deconversion.[374] As Huseby cogently argues, *The City of Dreadful Night* "[takes] up schism, disunion, and disjointedness as a productive tactic and a model for an imagined community of secularists."[375]

Ultimately, the City appears as a dark doppelgänger of utopia, where diverse people find themselves united in misery:

> And some are great in rank and wealth and power;

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[371] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 16.28. For an extended examination of Thomson's engagement with Dante in *The City of Dreadful Night,* see Alison Milbank, *Dante and the Victorians* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 112-15; 212-13.

[372] *Thomson, The City of Dreadful Night*, 14.84.

[373] Thomson, 1.64-67.

[374] Thomson, 14.79.

[375] Huseby, "Forms of Secularist Congregation," 229.

And some renowned for genius and for worth;
And some are poor and mean, who brood and cower
And shrink from notice, and accept all dearth
Of body, heart and soul, and leave to others
All boons of life: yet these and those are brothers,
The saddest and the weariest men on earth.[376]

Regardless of status or skill, each inhabitant—from the reformer politician to the opium eater, comedian, disillusioned religious ascetic, king, preacher, alcoholic, and soldier—is uniformly depressed, but united in their sorrow.[377] For this reason, the scientific socialist writer of the *To-day* review honored Thomson's "warm and quiet sympathy for the fellow-men, his fellow sufferers" and deemed him "a thoroughly representative poet."[378]

Thomson himself was a republican; nonetheless, his stirring depictions of the City's "sad Fraternity" reveal a collectivist class consciousness and resistance to meaningless industry that aligns with Victorian socialism.[379] As one inhabitant of the City vociferously condemns the mechanized metropolis: "The world rolls round for ever like a mill; / It grinds out death and life and good and ill; / It has no purpose, heart or mind or will."[380] The speaker thus struggles to conceive of a way of enduring this automated "Death-in-Life."[381] The last canto finally offers Melancholy as a figure to stave off self-destruction and enable the residents to "bear these years

[376] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 11.22-28.

[377] Canto 12 lists all these different types in the City.

[378] "Poet of To-Day," 310.

[379] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 36.

[380] Thomson, 8.36-38.

[381] Thomson, 3.25.

of laboring breath": "Sustained by her indomitable will: / The hands shall fashion and the brain shall pore, / And all her sorrow shall be turned to labour."[382] An eerie precedent to "Work shall set you free," this conclusion suggests that Melancholy can generate productivity, but not meaning.

By contrast, the preceding sphinx canto demonstrates how dread might equally fortify the will to live without demanding mindless action. After the speaker is "upstartled […] in dread" by the crash of the warrior's defeat, he declares: "I pondered long that cold majestic face / Whose vision seemed of infinite void space."[383] Remarkably, it is only upon feeling dread that the speaker can steadily stare at "the sphinx supreme" without reverting to his chronic torpidity. Most significant, unlike the angel and warrior, he does not disintegrate. It is in a state of dread, not piety or pluck, that one can withstand the dreadful future of continuous desolate time. Dread therefore is the affect that accompanies a sudden re-awakening, which then enables sustained thought without movement or resolution. This feeling, then, fosters a negative capability that was antithetical to Victorian notions of Progress, which the *Westminster Review* critic described as the public's desire "to be told that nothing is more certain than their oracle."[384] Thomson's contrastively dreadful orientation toward the future is not one of optimism, teleological productivity, and meaningfulness, but instead one marked by stoicism and contemplative stasis in full awareness of the future's futility.

By contrast, Watts-Dunton, an optimistic Romantic, was not willing to relinquish the position of the warrior in championing Progress: "Some morbid vein there is in every man; for

[382] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 14.81; 21.52-54.

[383] Thomson, 20.47-49.

[384] "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night*," 293.

assuredly the world, though not a City of Dreadful Night, is not what it ought to be, and not, let us hope, what it some day will be. The great thing in the education of life is to leave this vein unworked and do our little part in the progress of the race."[385] The negative emotions of the "morbid vein"—dread and melancholy—could not possibly be productive in his estimation. These unpleasant feelings must be disregarded so that humankind can fulfill its destiny of forward motion. An inhabitant of Thomson's City ruthlessly criticizes this idea by satirizing the type of person who "naturally claimeth to inherit / The everlasting Future, that his merit / May have full scope; as surely is most just."[386] Ultimately, adhering to this strict notion of progress sans morbidity caused Watts-Dunton fundamentally to misread Thomson's poem. He failed to apprehend what is actually dreadful in *The City of Dreadful Night*: there *is* no progress, because there is no ultimate purpose to progress toward, nor is there meaningful cohesion along the way.

W.J. Dawson, a reviewer for *Golden Hours*, better grasped this point, and thus declared: "There is no modern who has given such dreadful emphasis to the moral exhaustion and despair of the latter half of the nineteenth century […] [Thomson] is more than a poet—he is a portent. He symbolises and indeed embodies in himself the tragic failure of atheism."[387] In this appraisal, Dawson self-deludingly redeems Thomson as a man of faith, hope, and love, looking to his other poems and songs to find "signs of what Thomson might have done had his life been happier."[388]

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[385] Watts-Dunton, "Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night, and Other Poems*," 562. This optimistic, striving attitude toward the future nevertheless worked well in Watts-Dunton's personal life: he was responsible for sheltering Algernon Charles Swinburne and curbing that poet's massively destructive alcoholic habit, though he never succeeded in restraining Swinburne's penchant for self-flagellation. Although scholars agree that Watts-Dunton did much good in restoring Swinburne to health by repressing that writer's "morbid vein," they nevertheless consider him responsible for Swinburne's abandonment of his lengthy sadomasochistic novel, *Lesbia Brandon.* See Philip Henderson, *Swinburne: The Portrait of a Poet* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1974), 2.

[386] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 13.22-28.

[387] W. J. Dawson, "James Thomson, B.V.," *Golden Hours* (September 1884): 534.

[388] Dawson, "James Thomson, B.V.," 538.

The City of Dreadful Night, however, does not represent the starkness of atheism in order to spark a renewal of faith. Instead, Thomson subverts the religious underpinnings of dread and represents this affective stance as the necessary condition for facing a universe that is dreadful in its lack of providence. With dread it is possible to stare down the inscrutable future, but this feeling is now wholly separated from implications of divine judgment.

As Dawson observes, Thomson has "a distinct and rare endowment. At his word, magic curtains of interwoven darkness rush down out of the brightest heavens, and every chord of sense vibrates with secret dread."[389] The many reviewers of this poem all comment on and clearly shared this feeling. They reject or affirm this affect based on their faith, class, and politics. Between these critical reactions and an analysis of the poem itself, we can see the immense changes that *dread* and *dreadful* have undergone over the long nineteenth century, though in fundamental ways, these terms have remained consistent. Aesthetically, dread is slow-paced and that which is dreadful is vast, ambiguous, and powerful. The affective stance remains unpleasantly anticipatory, as James Murray's *New English Dictionary* (1891) denoted: "To have a shrinking apprehension of; to look forward to with terror or anxiety: of future or unknown events."[390] Despite its unpleasantness, however, dread was still considered an invaluable affect by some artists and thinkers at the fin de siècle.

Thomson's poem artfully represents this idea: we need dread in order to contemplate the dreadful and not be shattered by it. The speaker therefore moves beyond dread of divine judgment—dread for the purpose of salvation—to dread for dread's sake: dread as the essential

[389] Dawson, 537.

[390] Sir James Augustus Henry Murray, Sir William Alexander Craigie, and Charles Talbut Onions, eds., "Dread," in *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles: Founded Mainly on the Materials Collected by the Philological Society*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), 654.

affective stance of existence. This position is not a Foucauldian one of self-regulation, whereby dread is self-imposed so that the individual can operate as a high-functioning member of capitalist society. Instead, this emotional posture resists capitalism's alienation of labor and meaningless consumerism: "What merchandise? Whence, whither, and for whom?" the speaker asks as he perceives how "all things good which should have been our portions, / But have been strangled by that City's curse," a curse of futile industry.[391]

The concluding dread of Thomson's poem combats such sterility. For the speaker's contemplation of the sphinx and the "dreadful mysteries of Time" results in the production of the poem. We recall from the Proem that the speaker has composed this verse "To show the bitter old and wrinkled truth," a truth we know he has gained in the end by staring down the riddle of life.[392] Dread begets the dreadful, which begets dread in the poem's magnificent "ecstasy of negation," to use Paolucci's apt description.[393] Without faith or action, *The City of Dreadful Night* shows how facing the dreadful with feelings of dread results in an artistic production that is unpalatable—perhaps even unfathomable—to those who are invested in an indefatigable conception of progress that is linear, hierarchical, and teleological. Nevertheless, for some, such as the radical *To-day* reviewer, there was "comfort" in "the dreadful calm" of this conclusion.[394] For all its pessimism, there is something reassuring about the peaceful way in which the poem harnesses dread to face up to the impenetrable secular future. As the *Westminster Review*

[391] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 9.15, 20-21.

[392] Thomson, 9.

[393] Paolucci, *James Thomson's The City of Dreadful Night*, 187.

[394] "Poet of To-Day," 315.

declares: “Let us strongly recommend ‘The City of Dreadful Night’ to all who are interested in the great problems of existence.”[395]

Conclusion

We have thus traced dread and the dreadful through a variety of avenues in the Victorian era from psychological discourse to popular fiction, an aesthetic Gothic novel, and a pessimistic, secular poem. In each of these contexts, the affect functions very specifically to develop a sense of ethics and sociability within an aesthetics of dark magnitude. Above all, I have attempted to demonstrate how dread and the dreadful were conducive to extensive reflection by historical readers and fictional characters alike. Even though highbrow critics dismissed the penny dreadfuls as vapid, these stories nonetheless received a great deal of careful scrutiny in the mainstream periodical press in addition to sympathetically cohering a massive body of working-class readers. Similarly, the facile humor of the dreadful frequently deployed in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* belies the word’s clever and disturbing implications, which are integral to the development of the novel’s characters and their ethical positions. While the dreadful, in a colloquial sense, may have signified the most derisory side of popular culture by the end of the century, literary representations of dread remained solemnly slow-paced and pregnant with implications of grandeur that directed thinking toward situations and actions in times to come. Though participating in diverse genres and reaching widely disparate audiences, these sources all represent an epistemology of the future premised on painful but productive anticipatory fears that were inextricably tied to matters of moral sympathy.

[395] “Rev. of *The City of Dreadful Night*,” 295.

Chapter 3
Dread in the Age of Revolution:
Gothic Alternatives to Alarmism in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Monk*

The Marquis de Sade famously proclaimed in 1799 that English Gothic fiction was "the necessary offspring of the revolutionary upheaval, which affected the whole of Europe," an assertion that has generated longstanding critical interest in the Gothic's relationship to political turbulence.[396] The most thorough and compelling of these accounts is Joseph Crawford's *Gothic Fiction and the Invention of Terrorism* (2013), which argues that "the developing genre of Gothic fiction provided a crucial conceptual vocabulary through which the often confusing events of the Revolution could be understood."[397] But the Gothic, this chapter contends, did more than construct meaning retroactively out of the incomprehensible violence in France. At the same time, these fictions engage with the ominous and uncertain future that would succeed the Reign of Terror and the rise of Napoleon. The Gothic affectively intervened in the impending historical process by representing slow and contemplative narratives of dread, which acquired allegorical significance and political consequences in relation to real-world English forebodings about a French invasion.

Dread propels the plots and suffuses the atmospheres of the most widely read and reviewed Gothic novels of the 1790s: Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), two works that modern critics conventionally read in the context of terror and horror, respectively. To be sure, terror and horror have been the primary emotions of Gothic analysis since Radcliffe's influential essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry"

[396] Marquis de Sade, *The Crimes of Love*, trans. David Coward (Oxford University Press, 2008), 13.

[397] Joseph Crawford, *Gothic Fiction and the Invention of Terrorism: The Politics and Aesthetics of Fear in the Age of the Reign of Terror* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 41.

(1826) distinguished between them. In her view, terror is imaginative and uplifting, whereas horror is gruesome and stultifying.[398] Once we shift our attention to dread in these novels, it becomes possible to discern how characters experience anticipatory fears, rather than immediate ones, thereby offering emotional scripts to readers who likely looked ahead to the future with grave misgivings. Beyond providing a more nuanced understanding of the English zeitgeist of fear during the Revolution, this investigation into anticipatory feelings also casts new light on the cultural work of the Gothic mode. The Gothic does not merely "dwell[…] in the historical past, or identif[y] 'pastness' in the present, to reinforce a distance between the enlightened now and the repressive or misguided then," as Robert Mighall has asserted.[399] The Gothic, I argue, vitally engages with times-yet-to-come by representing, allegorizing, and striving to activate feelings of dread.

This chapter examines the interwoven aesthetics and ethics of dread in Radcliffe's and Lewis's respective narratives. In complementary ways, both *Udolpho* and *The Monk* present dread as a slow-paced, generative, and protective emotion that should be honed through seeking encounters with the dreadful in order to curtail intemperate desire and violence. The ethics of this fictional feeling thus strikingly align with the Enlightenment philosophy discussed in the first chapter. Examining dread in these Gothic stories, however, reveals an additional edge to this affect and its political implications. Proper dread in the Gothic is portrayed as an inherently English emotional state, which not only distinguishes the nation from Continental excess but also

[398] Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry," *New Monthly Magazine* 16, no. 1 (1826): 149.

[399] Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xviii. Scholars have especially focused on the pastness of *Udolpho*'s affective atmosphere. Adela Pinch cogently argues, for instance, that the "phenomenology of feeling" in *Udolpho* marked by melancholy and nostalgia represents "an emptying out of the present and an attenuation of feelings located in the past." See *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 125.

serves as an emotional safeguard against invasion, thereby competing with political rhetoric that advocated alarm as a preemptive response to danger.

Assuredly, alarmism became a powerful tactic in the 1790s as reactionary politicians, such as Edmund Burke and the Tory Prime Minister William Pitt, intentionally stimulated the public's fear and vigilance in order to secure social control in the face of a French invasion. "Alarm," as Lily Gurton-Wachter astutely articulates, "is both a feeling and an imperative: it combines the passivity of an overwhelming emotion that stunts action with a call to action, or rather a call to prepare for action, a call to arms."[400] Thus, alarm fixes attention and precludes the perception of other details separate from the stimuli. The affect is also characterized by rapidity and noise: consider the sharp sound soldiers make when they stomp and clap to "Attention!" Consequently, "Alarms spread with an electrifying speed in the Romantic period."[401] The ensuing panic rendered the populace submissive to repressive governmental actions, such as the suspension of habeas corpus in 1793. As Elaine Scarry asserts, alarm has historically been elicited by men in power in order "to stunt the mind, to immobilize, to bring about a genuine enslavement of attention."[402] Gothic dread, by contrast, is marked by a deacceleration of narrative pacing and frequently accompanies a character's extended musing. In what follows, I elucidate how *Udolpho* rewards its heroine for her commitment to dread, while *The Monk* vividly illuminates the damning consequences of its villain's failure to dread. These antipodal narratives nevertheless reveal a consistent sense of dread's aesthetic expression and ethical

[400] Lily Gurton-Wachter, *Watchwords: Romanticism and the Poetics of Attention* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2016), 63.

[401] Gurton-Wachter, 64.

[402] Elaine Scarry, *Thinking in an Emergency* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011), 42.

implications, which inform a burgeoning sense of English national identity and sociability in a time of revolutionary anxiety.

Gradual Dread and English Heroinism in *Udolpho*

Radcliffe was not overtly motivated by ideology in writing her fourth and most successful novel, *Udolpho*, which G. G. and J. Robinson purchased for an unprecedented sum of £500 in 1794. The publishers, nevertheless, "were well repaid for their speculation, the work being universally sought for, and many large editions rapidly sold," as an obituary in the *New Monthly Magazine* later reported.[403] Little is known about Radcliffe, for, according to the *Edinburgh Review*: "She never appeared in public, nor mingled in private society, but kept herself apart."[404] Christina Rossetti abandoned her biography of Radcliffe in 1883 due to the dearth of information about the celebrated Gothic author. More recently, however, Rictor Norton has fared better in discovering new documents about Radcliffe's life that inform his critical biography, *Mistress of Udolpho* (1999). Prior to Norton, many scholars, such as E.J. Clery, emphasized the conservative ideology at work in Radcliffe's conclusions, where "the significance of the whole is subsumed in the final tableau of idealized wedlock."[405] Robert Miles was the first to elucidate "the robust, liberal, critical energies of the dissenting 'middle classes'" that shaped Radcliffe's work.[406] Norton corroborates Miles's account with new biographical data, which suggests that Radcliffe "emerged from a radical Unitarian, rather than a conventional

[403] "Biographical Particulars of Celebrated Persons, Lately Deceased," *New Monthly Magazine* 9, no. 29 (May 1823): 232.

[404] "The Periodical Press," *Edinburgh Review* 38, no. 76 (May 1823): 360.

[405] E. J. Clery, "The Politics of the Gothic Heroine in the 1790s," in *Reviewing Romanticism*, ed. Philip W. Martin and Robin Jarvis (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1992), 81.

[406] Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 4.

Anglican, background."[407] Norton, like Miles, firmly argues that "Ann Radcliffe was fully aware of the radical politics of her time and sympathized with them."[408]

While Radcliffe may have been influenced by radical Dissenters, she never explicitly engaged with politics or "attempted to justify her writing on any grounds other than its artistic merit."[409] Even in her *Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*, in which she recounts passing through war-ravaged areas in the Netherlands and Germany with her husband, there is hardly any indication that she was interested in Revolutionary events. Regardless of the author's own political agenda, the immense popularity of *Udolpho* in Britain, France, and Germany (as well as in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century when that country underwent its own series of revolutions) indicates the novel's deep resonance with readers who lived in dread of future hostilities. Readers such as Hester Lynch (Thrale) Piozzi certainly made the connection between contemporary political events and Radcliffe's *chef-d'oeuvre*. Three months after the novel's publication, Piozzi wrote to Penelope Pennington that "love seems banished from the novels, where *terror* (as in the Convention,) becomes the *order of the day*. Miss Radcliffe however plays that game best which all are striving to play well."[410]

Udolpho transports its violence to sixteenth-century France and Italy, following the adventures of the young Emily St. Aubert. Despite her upbringing in early modern Gascony, Emily is an analog of Enlightenment English sensibility. Raised by a doting mother and father, who instruct her in "the duty of self-command" while also indulging her taste in nature and the

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[407] Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe* (London; New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), xi.

[408] Norton, x.

[409] Norton, 11.

[410] Hester Lynch Piozzi and Penelope Sophia Weston Pennington, *The Intimate Letters of Hester Piozzi and Penelope Pennington, 1788-1821*, ed. Oswald Greenwaye Knapp (London: John Lane, 1914), 116.

sublime, Emily is orphaned in the first volume and left to reside with her aunt, Madame Cheron. Pompous, ambitious, and vain, Emily's new guardian not only grates upon her gentle sensibilities but also destroys her happiness by impeding the heroine's marriage to her beloved Valancourt. When Madame Cheron abruptly marries a visiting Italian lord, Signor Montoni, the still-grieving and newly heartbroken heroine is swept off to Venice. The narrative becomes increasingly Gothic as Emily is pursued aggressively by Count Morano and nearly tricked by her uncle into marrying the nobleman. She is apparently saved from these unwanted attentions, however, when Montoni's nefarious activities in Venice rapidly prompt him to relocate the family to his Gothic castle, Udolpho, in the Apennines.

In Udolpho, Emily and her aunt are subject to increasingly tyrannical measures by Montoni, which ultimately result in his wife's death. Emily, for her part, suffers from threats real and imagined: sexual assault and murder seem likely at many points, yet the heroine also repeatedly fears ghosts, banditti, and something unspeakably terrible behind a veil near her chamber. Montoni manipulates these fears in order to compel Emily to yield her estates to him, which she eventually does after much resistance. Yet upon fortuitously escaping the castle with a fellow prisoner Du Pont, her maid Annette, and her maid's beloved Ludovico, Emily is able to seek recourse. The novel thus concludes quite happily, with the heroine finding refuge in a new home with a benevolent patriarch and his young daughter. A mystery in Emily's family is resolved and, more important, she reunites with Valancourt and returns to her childhood home, which has been restored to her after Montoni is captured and imprisoned in Venice. In the fitting estimation of the *Analytic Review*: "the history closes so as to leave virtue crowned with happiness, and vice in deserved punishment."[411]

[411] "A. Y.," "Rev. of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*," *Analytical Review* 19, no. 2 (June 1794): 144.

Udolpho is unquestionably a moral and didactic tale that links virtue with an affective practice. Emily's father "endeavored, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command, and to look, with cool examination, upon the disappointments he sometimes threw her way."[412] He also "instructed her to resist first impressions, and to acquire that steady dignity of mind, that can alone counterbalance the passions, and bear us, as far as is compatible with our nature, above the reach of circumstance" (5). Emily's first trial to prove this education's efficacy comes at her mother's deathbed, where Madame St. Aubert "conversed much with St. Aubert and Emily, on the prospect of futurity, and on other religious topics" and expressed "the firm hope of meeting in a future world the friends she left in this" (19). In response to these stirring, anticipatory meditations, "[n]ever had Emily felt the importance of the lessons, which had taught her to restrain her sensibility, so much as in these moments, and never had she practiced them with a triumph so complete" (19). Significantly, Emily's emotional restraint is entwined with her mother's religious sense of futurity: looking forward to a heavenly future allows the heroine to inhibit her present grief. It is only after her mother passes and discussions of futurity cease that Emily "sunk at once under the pressure of sorrow" (19).

This early scene establishes a temporal-affective dichotomy that develops over the course of the novel, wherein anticipating the future is associated with emotional restraint while total absorption in the present moment corresponds to passionate excess. This distinction not only proves true for feelings of grief, but also for feelings of fear when Emily is brought under Montoni's power in Italy. Emily and the women around her—namely, her aunt and Annette—repeatedly experience two types of fear: dread, which anticipates a future crisis, and alarm,

[412] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée with an introduction and notes by Terry Castle, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5. Subsequent page numbers will be marked in parentheses in the body of the chapter.

which responds to an immediate perceived danger. In addition to their varying temporalities, these affects are also marked by different velocities. Dread is slow-paced while alarm is rapid, and these tempos respectively inhibit or exacerbate the subject's affective responses. Dread, as we will soon see, is clearly portrayed as the more sophisticated, virtuous, and enlightened affect.

The narrator of *Udolpho* presents a stark distinction between gradual dread and immediate alarm while relating Emily's walk through castle Udolpho late at night. The heroine must pass by a room that Annette has declared haunted, for she recently saw "a tall figure gliding along" outside (301). Annette, who is described "as usual, […] full of alarm," recounts this story to her mistress "in broken sentences" that Emily finds "tedious," a quality conveyed to the reader through an abundance of exclamation points and intrusive parentheses (303, 300). This syntax conveys the breathless manner of the servant's alarm after dashing down the corridor: "I ran as fast I could, to get to your door," she tells Emily (301).

Emily's response to navigating the same walkway provides a stark contrast to the precipitous motions of her servant:

> As [Emily] passed along the wide and lonely galleries, dusky and silent, she felt forlorn and apprehensive of—she scarcely knew what; but when, entering the corridor, she recollected the incident of the preceding night, a dread seized her, lest a subject of alarm, similar to that, which had befallen Annette, should occur to her, and which, whether real, or ideal, would, she felt, have an almost equal effect upon her weakened spirits. The chamber, to which Annette had alluded, she did not exactly know, but understood it to be one of those she must pass in the way to her own; and, sending a fearful look forward into the gloom, she stepped lightly and cautiously along, till, coming to a door, from whence issued a low sound, she hesitated and paused. (309)

Here dread plainly appears as a prophylactic against alarm; even though being "seized" by dread is not a conscious action, Emily's affective education has prepared her to effectively process this state of feeling. Assuredly, Emily is aware that if she were to become alarmed, as Annette had, it would "have an almost equal effect upon her," meaning that it would undermine the heroine's self-control and reason, thereby causing her to move, speak, and think frenetically, like the distraught domestic. The effect would be "almost" the same, however, because the socially superior Emily was trained by her benevolent father in the "duty of self-command" (20). Although Emily is not entirely composed, she at least perceives the danger of falling prey to the thoughtless panic of alarm. The heroine thus opens herself up to a different kind of fear, and she is "seized by" anticipatory "dread." Remarkably, she refuses to be startled by any threat immediately before her, but instead calmly imagines what fears might lie ahead. Rather than inciting Emily to quicken her pace, dread leads her to step "lightly and cautiously" and actually "hesitate and pause" before the supposedly haunted chamber. The syntax of this passage correlates with her unhurried gait. The compound-complex sentences are protracted by semi-colons and artfully interrupted by commas, which mirror Emily's cautious footsteps. The long dash, moreover, creates an extended break, suggesting sustained thought around the ambiguous object of her apprehension.

Emily's reflective response to her situation is made manifest further when she pauses at the door and "during the delay of that moment, her fears so much increased, that she had no power to move from the spot. Believing, that she heard a human voice within, she was somewhat revived" (309). Although the extremity of dread renders her physically immobile, it does not make her insensible. To the contrary, she listens closely and, as a result, discerns a sound that fortifies her. As it turns out, Emily's slow and silent dread protects her from being discovered by

the explosive Montoni as he rapidly exits the chamber moments later. Consequently, she discovers the truth: the room is not haunted at all, but instead contains a mortal prisoner. While Annette's reflexive alarm led to a supernatural explanation, Emily's reflective dread yields true knowledge of the situation.

Part of what makes Emily's sustained sense of dread in Udolpho so productive is the intellectual and intentional quality surrounding the feeling. Alarm, by contrast, is a reaction to sense perception, such as when Count Morano sneaks into Emily's room while she is sleeping, and she is "alarmed by [his] sounds" (260). While abrupt, frightening stimuli rarely fail to elicit alarm from Emily and Annette (but mostly the socially inferior servant), dread only arises in certain conditions, which necessitate protracted contemplation. To better understand these conditions, it is first worth examining a famous scene where, despite its ominous quality, dread does not appear. When Montoni endeavors to trick Emily into signing a contract that would cede her familial estate to him, she perceives his plan and emphatically refuses to endorse the legal document, to which Montoni responds: "You speak like a heroine […] we shall see whether you can suffer like one" (381). Despite the menacing nature of her uncle's intimation, Emily feels no dread, but rather retorts with "mild dignity": "the strength of my mind is equal to the justice of my cause; and that I can endure with fortitude, when it is in resistance of oppression" (381). Emily's words and affective performance here are paradigmatic of her father's teachings. Yet she experiences no dread at this time, because she has no doubts about the "justice" of her case. Emily's naiveté is on full display here, for she assumes, quite mistakenly, that natural justice exists by itself. For this reason, she does not pause to consider the wrongful dangers with which Montoni might beset her.

An event soon occurs, however, that ruptures Emily's stoic calm and consequently activates dread as she becomes attuned to the exigencies of her plight. Gazing out of a window, Emily discovers that a woman whom she had admired in Venice, Signora Livona, is in the castle. But Annette soon informs her that the signora is not a prisoner, as Emily believed, but arrived "freely" with two female companions who all "seem merry enough" (382). Given the recent passing of her aunt, Emily is scandalized by "the gaiety of [Livona's] air" as she listens to the "female voices mingling with [the men's] laughter" (383). Such comportment "confirmed [Emily's] worst surmise, concerning the character of Signora Livona and her companions" (383). As a result, Emily's "soul recoiled in horror" from the "scenes of vice" (384). In typical Radcliffean fashion, these scenes are not actually described; rather, we are left to infer from Emily's horrified response that they entail sexual debauchery.[413]

These events force Emily to reconsider her precarious position: "It was at this moment, when the scenes of the present and the future opened to her imagination, that the image of Valancourt failed in its influence, and her resolution [to withhold her estates] shook with dread" (384). In "this moment," Emily becomes newly aware of the female body's vulnerability. Although her own physical security has previously been jeopardized by Morano's attempted abduction, the Count's explicit aim was to marry her rather than force an immediate sexual encounter. By contrast, Signora Livona and her companions, Emily suddenly realizes, are engaged in extramarital orgies, throwing the castle into a "hurly-burly" where "there was not one of the Signors sober; and what is more, not one of those fine ladies sober, either" (389). Such behavior violates all rules of decency for the chaste heroine and forces her to realize that a

[413] Katherine Ding, among many others, has noted the way in which Radcliffe creates "atmosphere or aura by giving impressionistic, evocative renderings of barely glimpsed scenery in lieu of realistically accurate or minute descriptions. See "'Searching after the Splendid Nothing': Gothic Epistemology and the Rise of Fictionality," *ELH* 80, no. 2 (2013): 546.

woman "of a mind so gentle" as Signora Livona—a woman who had "charmed" her in Venice—may be corrupted by wicked men (382). This discovery prompts Emily to engage in an extended thought-experiment, wherein she dreads her own unknown sexual future. Emily's uncertainty is emphasized by the fact that "[s]he *thought* she understood all the horrors, which Montoni was preparing for her" (384, emphasis added). Because she remains quite innocent, Emily is only dimly aware that she might be abused sexually, and that this is likely the course that Montoni's vengeance would take. The image of Valancourt, her habitual source of strength, cannot possibly provide solace at this moment, for should Emily be sexually violated at Udolpho her marriage to him would become impossible. It is because of these prospective musings that "her resolution shook with dread." Just as dread safeguarded her in the supposedly haunted corridor, dread likewise protects Emily in this moment. Although Emily was courageous in resisting Montoni's ploy to claim her property, this decision was not well informed or prudent. The "scenes of vice" that elicit the heroine's dread, by contrast, challenge her naïve resolve and enable her to responsibly consider the potentially acute repercussions of her decision.

Importantly, however, Emily does not immediately react to these feelings but is "almost determined to yield" (384). In other words, she considers relinquishing the estates, but does not act instantly. As she continues to contemplate her situation, her memories of Valancourt return to "plunge her into the distractions of doubt" (384). Dread does not precipitate instant action but instead prompts her to hesitate as she imagines alternate futures. On the one hand, Emily shudders at the prospect of Montoni's ruffians violating her. On the other hand, the heroine recalls her love for Valancourt, and knows that possession of the estates would enable their marriage.[414] While vacillating in this temporal maelstrom of past, present, and future, Emily's

[414] Valancourt comes from a well-to-do family; however, he is a second son without independent resources (hence his enrollment in the army). Emily's estate therefore is necessary to enable the young couple's domestic security.

dread reflects her maturing understanding of her own sexuality, which strengthens both her reasoning capacities and willpower. Her continued unwillingness to sign the contract at this moment thus gains extra force: she is not simply reacting to a fleeting passion, but rather harnessing dread's ability to vividly conjure future scenarios to think deeply about her prospects. It is not Emily's initial naïve rebuttal of Montoni that makes her a heroine (which the villain, in a way, rightly mocks), but rather her contemplative dread that endows her with "superiority to Montoni," as the narrator, slipping into her consciousness, informs us (382).

While dread facilitates Emily's decision-making process about the estates, a sudden alarm renders all of these thoughts null and void. After being chased through the nocturnal castle by a lusty Signor Verezzi, Emily realizes the dire nature of her position and resolves to "resign the estates at once" in exchange for her physical safety (436). She therefore approaches Montoni to relate "to him some circumstances of her alarm and entreat […] his protection from a repetition of them" (436). Montoni agrees, so long as Emily concedes to "an immediate compliance with his terms" (436). After over a hundred pages of agonizing over the matter, within sentences Emily has (anti-climatically) signed away her estates to be deceived by Montoni yet again: he promises to protect her from sexual assault, though he refuses to permit her return to France as she stipulated. The narrative therefore illustrates how alarm is easily manipulated because this feeling provokes hasty action. While the narrator does not condemn Emily for succumbing to alarm, the narrative clearly reveals the ways in which this emotional state leads to submission. Alarm characterizes Emily's lowest point at Castle Udolpho, whereas dreading develops her emotional restraint and prudence.

Beyond individual character development, Emily's dread also corresponds to a Smithean sense of sociability that is premised on alleviating the dreadful misfortunes of others. In this light, Emily's contemplative dread dramatically distinguishes her from Montoni, who "delighted in the energies of the passions" (182). Montoni, as we have seen, becomes increasingly explosive toward his wife and niece in Udolpho, and after many alarming scenes of intimidation and aggression, he finally accuses his wife of a "dreadful charge": attempting to poison him before a gathering of signors at the castle (314). Passions blaze as Madame Montoni "vehemently and wildly remonstrated upon this mysterious suspicion: but Montoni's rage heightened with her indignation" (314). Only Emily remains composed, then "dreading the event of [Montoni's temper], threw herself between them, and clasped his knees in silence, looking up in his face with an expression, that might have softened the heart of a fiend" (314). This gesture was so significant that it was chosen for illustration in G. G. and J. Robinson's fifth edition (see Figure 2).[415] Assuredly, this dramatic act marks a pivotal development in Emily's character, as she, temporarily at least, transforms from a passive victim into an assertive heroine with Smithean sympathizing capacities. In the first quarter of the novel, Emily's extreme sensibility is stultifying; for instance, upon the death of her father she is found "lying senseless across the foot of the bed, near which stood the coffin" (87). In her excessive grief, she emits "no sigh, no sound

Fig. 2. Emily kneeling before Montini

[415] "The Mysteries of Udolpho," The British Library, accessed October 15, 2019, https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-mysteries-of-udolpho.

of anguish," but implodes into "a state of insensibility" (87). Similarly, when Emily first experiences Montoni's maleficence as he attempts to deceive her into marrying Morano, she falls into a state of "stupefaction; a consciousness of misery was all that remained in her mind" (217). Emily, however, has evolved such that when she is faced with Montoni's inordinate violence toward her aunt here, she manages to control herself and feel one single emotion: dread. This affect prompts her to take physical action—another reversal of her penchant for swooning—and place herself in bodily danger at the knees of her tormentor for the sake of her female relative. Dread is therefore a powerful motivating feeling for Emily that precipitates an appeal for ethical restraint over violent excess.

Emily's dread in this moment thus fits into the schema of feeling that Ronald Paulson shrewdly discerns throughout *Udolpho*: "The deeply intuitive feelings of Emily are the quiet English virtues of the spectator of sublime overthrow across the Channel; the 'wild energy' of Montoni is what Burke associates with the French rabble."[416] Emily's dread of the unknown-but-ominous consequences of Montoni's rage prompts an ethical intervention, which reflects an inherently English goodness. In opposition, Montoni's intensifying fury and wrongful perpetuation of the "dreadful charge" is decidedly Continental. Yet the conclusion of this scene should not be read as an allegory advocating British intervention in France motivated by dread, for Montoni "was totally and alike insensible to the distress of his wife, and to the pleading looks of Emily, whom he made no attempt to raise" (315). Emily's dread-based reaction demonstrates virtuous courage, but it does not prove efficacious in modulating Montoni's aggression or protecting her aunt, who is soon forcibly removed by armed guards.

[416] Ronald Paulson, "Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution," *ELH* 48, no. 3 (1981): 543.

Although unable to alter the villain, Emily's dread does protect her from his influence. Both Paulson and Mary Poovey characterize Emily as a "susceptible young spectator who *might* be seduced by the real center of energy [Montoni] into becoming another Agnes [the fallen woman of Lewis's novel, to which I will turn presently]."[417] Yet, at the same time, as Poovey notes, Emily does not succumb to "the wild energy of passion, inflaming imagination, bearing down the barriers of reason and living in a world of its own" (329). I maintain that it is Emily's dread that protects her, for dread is antithetical to the "wild" passions. This is evident in dread's physical characteristics: Emily assumes a submissive posture, clasping Montoni's knees, and silently imploring his mercy with her gaze, thereby physically modelling the moderation she hopes he will exert. Emily's silence in this scene is significant when considered in juxtaposition to alarm. Sounding an alarm is noisy, while the feeling itself is startling; alarm would certainly fall among the "wild" passions attributable to the Continental Montoni. Indeed, in the 1790s Charles James Fox—a prominent Whig statesman who William Radcliffe, Ann's husband, supported in the *Gazetteer* while he served as editor—vehemently censured politicians who "keep alive the passions of the people… to agitate and alarm their minds, so as to put them under the dominion of terror."[418] It is noteworthy, then, that Emily does not experience passionate alarm in this scene, but rather silent and restrained dread. Dread thus appears as the ethical English antithesis to the violent and domineering Continental emotions of Montoni.

It is dread, moreover, that motivates the distressed heroine to search the castle for her aunt, once the older woman has been removed by Montoni's henchmen to an unknown location.

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[417] Paulson, "Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution," 543. See also Mary Poovey, "Ideology and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*." *Criticism*, vol. 21, no. 4 (1979): 307–30.

[418] William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066, to the Year, 1803*, vol. 31 (London: T.C. Hansard, 1818), 554.

Emily keenly feels a "consciousness of her duty" to confirm or refute a "dreadful truth": that her aunt was "murdered, perhaps, by the hand of Montoni" (323). Consequently, she proceeds alone and unarmed through the "intricacies and perplexities" of the foreign castle packed with sword-fighting ruffians to scour the east turret where she believes her aunt is held. As she mounts the steps:

> … a thousand times she wished herself again in her chamber; dreaded to enquire farther—dreaded to encounter some horrible spectacle, and yet could not resolve, now that she was so near the termination of her efforts, to desist from them. Having again collected courage to proceed, after ascending about half way up the turret, she came to another door, but here again she stopped in hesitation; listened for sounds within, and then, summoning all her resolution, unclosed it, and entered a chamber. (322-23)

Just as when she interceded with Montoni on her aunt's behalf, here Emily's valiant search is activated by dread. This scene, moreover, shows an even greater performance of hesitancy and protraction, which allows the narrator to subtly develop the heroine's agency: she must "collect … courage to proceed" and "summon … all her resolution" to open the door. Emily is not simply reacting to dread. Instead, she is choosing to probe into the "dreadful truth" prompted by familial duty. Although historical and present-day critics often emphasize the pleasurable nature of curiosity and suspense in this narrative, I contend that Emily's dread-laden quest for her aunt is not the same as her dark desire to lift the infamous veil.[419] While the latter is motivated by a

[419] An anonymous writer for the *Critical Review*, generally believed to be Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was the first to comment on the way in which "curiosity is kept upon the stretch from page to page, and from volume to volume, and the secret, which the reader thinks himself every instant on the point of penetrating, flies like a phantom before him, and eludes his eagerness till the very last moment of protracted expectation." See "Rev of. *The Mysteries of Udolpho, a Romance; Interspersed with Some Pieces of Poetry*," *Critical Review* 11 (August 1794): 361. Sir Walter Scott similarly hailed how "incident after incident, maintained the thrilling attraction of awakened curiosity and suspended interest." See *Lives of the Novelists*, ed. Henry Frowde (London: Oxford University Press, 1906), 309. In modern scholarship, Mark R. Blackwell has explored the ways in which "Radcliffe and other talented Gothic writers adjust the cadence of their storytelling so as to manipulate their readers' feelings," including their sense of curiosity.

personal attraction to the unknown, the former arises out of a social-ethical commitment to "objects in distress," which requires a confrontation with the dreadful, as Adam Smith, Lord Kames, and Edmund Burke all argued.

Although Emily does not find Madame Montoni, this dread-laced scene develops her character and indicates the success of her father's project to train Emily's ability to harness her passions for ethical ends. In his dying breath St. Aubert tells his daughter: "one act of beneficence, one act of real usefulness, is worth all the abstract sentiment in the world," and he chastises those who "turn from the distressed […] because their sufferings are painful to be contemplated" (80). St. Aubert thus illuminates the Smithian point that feeling and action must be united for the sake of ethical intervention in the dreadful plights of others. "Sentiment is a disgrace," St. Aubert adds, unless it causes you to do good deeds (80). Emily's dread therefore appears as a moral sentiment, not least because it prompts her to risk her own wellbeing for a woman whose verbal abuse and heartless treatment have been relentless. Not only did Madame Montoni thwart Emily's marriage with Valancourt, but the aunt was also complicit in Montoni's plan to force her niece's marriage with Morano. Emily's magnanimity is notable when her "pity was thus awakened" for her aunt, and "she forgot the injurious treatment she had received from her" (277). Even beyond cultivating pity, however, Emily's use of dread to access the "dreadful truth" about her aunt's welfare illustrates dread's ability to foster discernment as well as compassion.

See "The Gothic: Moving in the World of Novels," in *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cynthia Wall (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 155. In a more political line of thought, Barbara M. Benedict argues that *Udolpho* and other 1790 Gothic novels "transform a traditional exploration of the limits of curiosity into a political drama about what happens to identity in an environment rent by tyranny and oppression." See "Radcliffe, Godwin, and Self-Possession in the 1790s," in *Women, Revolution, and the Novels of the 1790s*, ed. Linda Lang-Peralta (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999), 89-90.

The innumerable dreadful people, objects, and situations in castle Udolpho give Emily ample opportunity to refine her sense of dread and harness this feeling for heroic ends. Yet in the exposition the narrative carefully reveals that Emily was not devoid of dread prior to her entrapment. Back in Gascony, when Madame Montoni foiled her marriage to Valancourt, the devastated chevalier proposed a daring elopement. Emily is tempted to consent, for she both loves Valancourt and fears Montoni's power over her in a foreign country. Nevertheless, the narrator informs us that "a few minutes" elapse until

> … duty, and good sense, however hard the conflict, at length, triumphed over affection and mournful presentiment; above all, she dreaded to involve Valancourt in obscurity and vain regret, which she saw, or thought she saw, must be the too certain consequences of marriage in their present circumstances; and she acted, perhaps, with somewhat more than female fortitude, when she resolved to endure a present, rather than provoke a distant misfortune. (155)

Although the narrator initially describes the ascendancy of "duty" and "good sense" over feelings of "affection" and "mournful presentiment," Emily's ethical reasoning capacities do not occur in an emotionless vacuum. To the contrary, the narrator implicitly subscribes to David Hume's philosophical stance that "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions."[420] And the narrator, like Hume, is concerned with what types and intensities of passion lead to reasonable, moral decision-making.

Several scholars have explored the relation between Hume's skeptical empiricism and *Udolpho*'s narrative techniques. Katherine Ding elucidates how "Radcliffe's fiction," like Hume's philosophy, "depends upon an epistemological schism between the object and the

[420] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 415.

experience of perception in order to create the harrowing scenes that draw her readers in."[421] Similarly, Margaret Russett argues that "Emily literalizes Hume's effort" to explain the connection between causes and effects, affirming that "Emily's dread apparently comprises 'the reason of conjunction' between facts and ideas."[422] Adela Pinch likewise examines how "*Udolpho*'s adjudication between spurious terrors and authentic emotions" relates to Hume's discussion of tragedy, in which imitation heightens and transforms the spectators' emotions.[423] While these analyses all concentrate on Hume's understanding of inference and imitation, I propose that Hume's theory on the passions, morality, and the will also vitally inform the portrayal of Emily's decision-making.

Hume forcefully articulates that "morality is not an object of reason" because "reason is perfectly inert, and can never either prevent or produce any action or affection."[424] By contrast, he declares that "[n]othing can oppose or retard the impulse of passion."[425] That is not to say that people always act upon their most immediate feelings, for Hume acknowledges that "[m]en often counter-act a violent passion in prosecution of their interests and designs."[426] In other words, Hume might have said that nothing can impede a passion, except another passion. On this basis, Hume concludes "that when we wou'd govern a man, and push him to action, 'twill commonly

[421] Ding, "Searching after the Splendid Nothing," 557.

[422] Margaret Russett, "Narrative as Enchantment in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*," *ELH* 65, no. 1 (1998): 170-71.

[423] Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion,* 114.

[424] Hume, *Treatise*, 468, 458.

[425] Hume, 415.

[426] Hume, 418.

be better policy to work upon the violent than the calm passions" rather than "what is vulgarly call'd his *reason*."[427]

Udolpho illustrates this generative and moral account of the passions in Emily's response to Valancourt's "hasty, impudent proposal!" (159). Rather than calmer feelings of "affection" or "mournful presentiment," Emily is guided by a more protracted and intense state of dread. Notably, her resolve against the clandestine marriage is not based on her certainty that such a union would fail in the future. She only "thought she saw" the misfortunes that might lie ahead. This doubt crucially bolsters her decision to reject Valancourt's proposition, thereby aligning with Hume's understanding of obscure situations: "the effort which the fancy makes to compleat the idea, rouzes the spirits, and gives an additional force to the passion."[428] Emily's dread thus amplifies itself and enables her to overcome the relatively weaker feeling of "affection" for Valancourt, which would have induced her elopement.

The narrator firmly commends Emily's moral fiber as exceeding the level of most women. This is not to say that the narrative characterizes dread as a masculine feeling, for the hyper-virile Montoni is completely devoid of this emotion while Emily is portrayed in feminine terms. Dread is not inherently gendered, but it does allow Emily to achieve an idealized role of womanhood. That is to say, dread gives Emily agency so that she can ultimately enter into a proper marriage and fulfill a life script that is just, beautiful, and satisfying.

Ultimately, Emily's resolve against the elopement allows her to undergo significant affective lessons over the next three volumes, which ensure her final domestic bliss. From the narrator's point of view:

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[427] Hume, *Treatise*, 419.

[428] Hume, 422.

> O! how joyful it is to tell of the happiness, such as that of Valancourt and Emily; to relate, that, after suffering under the oppression of the vicious and the disdain of the weak, they were, at length, restored to each other—to the beloved landscapes of their native country,—to the securest felicity of this life, that of aspiring to moral and laboring for intellectual improvement—to the pleasures of enlightened society, and to the exercise of benevolence, which had always animated their hearts. (672)

These remarks are both instructional and prescriptive. They are designed to impose a matching affective response in the reader: we too are supposed to feel "joyful" to learn of our protagonists' happiness. The self-certifying narrator thus affirms the value of the dread-laden story, suggesting that it brings about both pleasure and morality in its characters, which might be mapped onto actual readers.

In the final paragraph, the narrator comes very close to Radcliffe herself: "And, if the weak hand, that has recorded this tale, has, by its scenes, beguiled the mourner of one hour of sorrow, or, by its moral, taught him to sustain it—the effort, however humble, has not been in vain, nor is the writer unrewarded" (672). *Udolpho* thus ends with a meta-critical commentary on the relationship between reading, feeling, and action. On the one hand, it recognizes how a novel might be diverting in difficult times. But on the other hand, it suggests that reading about a fictional character's moral-affective development might empower a reader to endure, rather than forget, their own tribulations. This declaration bears political implications. *Udolpho* may have comforted readers who feared the Montoni-like explosion of energy emanating from France. But even more to the point, we might see *Udolpho* as offering an affective template, a way of developing and harnessing dread, that allowed readers to emotionally confront these trying times with emotion-based reason, prudence, restraint, and morality like Emily St. Aubert.

While *Udolpho* narrativizes the affective ethics of dread in a positive way, Lewis's counterpointing Gothic novel represents the conditions under which dread fails to inspire such moral resolution and social cohesion. We must first consider this complementary example before returning to the political stakes of these dread-based ethics in a revolutionary age dominated by terror and alarm.

Failure of Dread in *The Monk*

The Monk, as one contemporary admirer aptly described it, "boldly traces the progress of vice, accompanying her in her first deviation from the path of virtue, through all her subsequent transitions to the different stages of guilt, and at length exhibits her suffering the punishment due to her crimes."[429] Indeed, the novel begins with an exemplary monk named Ambrosio who is tempted to stray from his pious path by a revelation: his intimate brother Rosario is actually a woman in disguise named Matilda, who joined the order due to her passion for the impeccable young monastic. Flattered and attracted to Matilda, Ambrosio initially resists her advances by "[d]reading the influence of her charms."[430] As a result of this feeling, "Ambrosio remained with his eyes closed," when confronted by Matilda, "and offered up his prayers to St. Francis to assist him in this dangerous trial!" (62). The monk's dread is thus connected to a pious and chaste response, which a reviewer for the *European Magazine* deemed an "honourable tribute […] to *ecclesiastical establishments*."[431] This affected religious performance, moreover, has a physical component: the monk makes a concerted effort to maintain his chastity by interrupting the

[429] *Impartial Strictures on the Poem Called "The Pursuits of Literature" And Particularly a Vindication of the Romance of "The Monk"* (London: J. Bell, 1798), 35.

[430] Matthew Gregory Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Howard Anderson, rev. Nick Groom (Oxford University Press, 2016), 62. Subsequent page numbers will be marked in parentheses in the body of the chapter.

[431] "R. R.," "Rev. of *The Monk. A Romance*," *European Magazine* 31 (February 1797): 112.

sensory appeal of the woman before him. Such embodied restraint is similar to Emily's silent gaze while kneeling before Montoni.

Slow, somatic dread frequently characterizes Ambrosio's resistance to Matilda's seduction. Though he initially agrees to permit her to stay in the monastery, after a sensual dream "He shuddered […] and found that He had been a slave to flattery, to avarice, and self-love. If in one hour's conversation Matilda had produced a change so remarkable in his sentiments, what had He not to dread from her remaining in the Abbey?" (53).[432] Prompted by this anticipatory fear of temptation, Ambrosio contrives another meeting with Matilda to insist upon her departure. The monk remains affectively bolstered in this encounter, for "He dreaded the melodious seduction of her voice" and therefore "summon[ed] up all his resolution" to "hastily interrupt" her attempt at speech (54). Instead of succumbing to the alluring stimuli immediately before him, Ambrosio speaks to Matilda about the future in syllogistic terms:

> You are but too interesting, too amiable! I should love you, I should doat [*sic*] on you! My bosom would become the prey of desires, which Honour and my profession forbid me to gratify. If I resisted them, the impetuosity of my wishes unsatisfied would drive me to madness: If I yielded to the temptation, I should sacrifice to one moment of guilty pleasure my reputation in this world, my salvation in the next. (55)

Ironically, the novel's conclusion validates this prediction. On the one hand, Ambrosio's ultimate demise illustrates dread's heuristic power (he *does* yield to temptation and sacrifice his salvation). On the other hand, it calls into question dread's ability to guarantee a desired future outcome (heavenly deliverance).

[432] Lewis capitalizes "He" in the original.

Unlike Emily St. Aubert, whose dread cultivates her moral sentiments, Ambrosio is unable to sustain this state of frightened anticipation. After several more encounters with Matilda, the monk becomes "[d]runk with desire" until "he no longer reflected with shame upon his incontinence, or dreaded the vengeance of offended heaven" (174). As a result, he "rioted in delights till then unknown to him: Swift fled the night, and the Morning blushed to behold him still clasped in the embraces of Matilda" (70, 173). In short, Ambrosio's passion for Matilda overwhelms his dread of God's judgment, and the once pious monk transforms into a nymphomaniac. His increasingly voracious sexual appetites propel the remainder of the plot.

There is a remarkable lack of dread in the ensuing narrative as Ambrosio's desire for Matilda wanes and he yearns for Antonia, an innocent young woman whom he has met in church. When the girl's mother, Elvira, perceives the monk's inappropriate attentions to her daughter and subsequently limits their contact, Ambrosio receives Matilda's supernatural assistance to gaze on Antonia bathing in an enchanted mirror. This titillating spectacle prompts Ambrosio to accept Matilda's plan to sneak into Antonia's home with a magic myrtle branch and sexually assault the unknowing girl while she is rendered senseless by a potion. Elvira foils this plot, though she does so at the cost of her life, as Ambrosio stabs her in order to escape with impunity. After thus disposing of the watchful mother, Ambrosio eventually succeeds in poisoning the orphaned girl once again, which sends her into a death-like state that allows Ambrosio to remove her body to the crypt of his monastery. He forcefully satisfies his iniquitous lust when she awakens, though the horrified girl attempts to escape and is murdered by her assailant in the attempt.

Eventually, Ambrosio and Matilda are apprehended by the Inquisition, and Ambrosio is tortured twice before confessing to his sins. When he is condemned to burn in an auto-da-fé, the

mysteriously free Matilda visits him and encourages him to sign his soul to Satan, as she had, in order to escape. After some hesitation, he does so. Lucifer then delights in informing Ambrosio of his longstanding plot to gain the monk's soul, adding the devastating revelation that Elvira was his mother and Antonia his sister, thereby adding matricide and incest to his list of crimes. The deceptive Devil proceeds to drop the wretched monk off a cliff, at the bottom of which Ambrosio is left to languish for seven days in agony while insects and eagles prey upon his festering body until he is drowned in a flood and doomed to eternal perdition.

This incomplete plot summary (I have, for now, excised the parallel love plot of Raymond and Agnes, a nun entrapped in the adjacent abbey) suggests numerous "dreadful scenes," which come to pass once the eponymous villain forsakes his religious dread (290). The crucial question that undergirds the novel, and its reception in contemporary periodicals, is why Ambrosio's dread flags and ultimately fails to guide his moral compass. Burke's thoughts on the dread of God (discussed in Chapter 1) help elucidate the stakes of the subtle affective didacticism at play in Lewis's story. In his *Enquiry*, Burke insists that "true religion" (implicitly meaning the Church of England) has "a mixture of salutary fear," which mingles "dread" and "love." Whereas Burke sees dread of God as a "natural" response to sublime omnipotence, he asserts that it is only through "long habits of piety and contemplation […] that any man is able to attain an entire love and devotion to the Deity." In other words, loving God takes practice, which Ambrosio cannot obtain, the novel suggests, in the Catholic cloister.[433]

Diana Long Hoeveler—aligning herself with scholars including M. M. Tarr, Irene Bostrom, Maurice Lévy, Victor Sage, and Susan Griffins—claims "that the Gothic was

[433] As Peter Brooks, points out, Lewis was well aware of the "veritable explosion of 'claustral' literature at this period," for "shortly before starting to write *The Monk*, Lewis had seen one of the most celebrated melodramatic plays on the theme, Boutet de Monvel's *Les Victimes cloítrées*—which he later translated." See "Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*," *ELH* 40, no. 2 (1973): 258-59.

thoroughly invested in a crude form of anti-Catholicism that fed lower class prejudices against the passage of a variety of Catholic Relief Acts that had been pending in Parliament since 1788."[434] These scholars all acknowledge the Gothic's critique of clerical celibacy, which resonated strongly with Protestant readers who viewed the Catholic taboo as causing perverse sexual excess. Steven Blakemore has shrewdly articulated how *The Monk* participates in "the Black Legend of monastic Catholicism," which espoused that "Catholicism perverted 'pure' religion, producing deviant sexual practices originating from 'unnatural' vows of chastity violating 'nature.'"[435] Such "sexual demonization of the aberrant Catholic 'Other' was part and parcel of the ideological formation of English, Protestant national identity."[436] No study, however, has explored the ways in which this ideological project was premised on an affective script. *The Monk*'s critique of Catholicism, I maintain, is forcefully conveyed by linking this religious institution to a unilateral sense of dread that is devoid of love. Such unalloyed Catholic dread was incompatible with the Protestant notion that dread (a painful feeling) should be mingled with reverence (a positive one) when an individual contemplates the divine. The national importance of such religiously inflected emotions was necessarily heightened during the age of revolution, as the following section explains.

Before exploring the political stakes of this religious affectivity, we must first understand the ways in which *The Monk* pits the emotional tenor of Catholicism against English Protestantism. In the 1790s, it would have struck an English Protestant reader of *The Monk*'s first chapter that the devout Ambrosio is never described as loving God, despite his enormous piety.

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[434] Diane Long Hoeveler, "William-Henry Ireland, T. I. Horsley Curties, and the Anti-Catholic Gothic Novel," *European Romantic Review* 24, no. 1 (2013): 45.

[435] Steven Blakemore, "Matthew Lewis's Black Mass: Sexual, Religious Inversion in *The Monk*," *Studies in the Novel* 30, no. 4 (1998): 521.

[436] Blakemore, 521.

Instead of warm reverence, a "singular austerity" distinguishes his life in the monastery (14). As Antonia's suitor, Lorenzo, explains: "[Ambrosio] is now thirty years old, every hour of which period has been passed in study, total seclusion from the world, and mortification of the flesh. Till these last three weeks, when He was chosen superior of the Society to which he belongs, He had never been on the outside of the Abbey-walls" (14). Given the isolated and physically painful nature of Ambrosio's worship, it is no surprise that his opening sermon is "fraught with all the terrors of the Tempest, while He inveighed against the vices of humanity, and described the punishments reserved for them in a future state" (16). These frightening pronouncements on futurity could not be more different than the consoling remarks made by Emily St. Aubert's dying mother. The affective response of the Spanish listeners is accordingly very different. While Emily's intense emotions are calmed, "Every Hearer" of Ambrosio's sermon, by contrast, "looked back upon his past offences, and trembled: The Thunder seemed to roll, whose bolt was destined to crush him, and the abyss of eternal destruction to open before his feet" (16). Ambrosio's primary intent as a preacher is to motivate moral behavior based on fear of divine retribution. In the words of Antonia's aunt, "when He spoke about sinners He seemed as if He was ready to eat them" (18). Even upon "changing his theme" from fire and brimstone, Ambrosio does not attempt to inspire love of the deity, but rather eagerness for the "recompense" of "everlasting glory," which awaited those with an "unsullied conscience" (16). Significantly, Ambrosio omits any mention of penance and forgiveness motivated and attained through the love of God. The effect, the narrator shows us, is a laughably hypocritical congregation that is "irresistibly attracted" to the orator but utterly fails to absorb and carry out his moral teachings (16).

The opening scene of the novel thus makes a sharp distinction between "the Crowd [that] was assembled" at the Church of the Capuchins, where "[e]very corner was filled, every seat was occupied," and the solitary monk about to give the sermon:

> The only persons truly anxious to hear the Preacher were a few antiquated devotees, and half a dozen rival Orators, determined to find fault with and ridicule the discourse. As to the remainder of the Audience, the Sermon might have been omitted altogether, certainly without their being disappointed, and very probably without their perceiving the omission. (7)

The narrator's principal intent is to mock the insincere Catholic audience, yet these opening remarks also suggest a biting irony regarding Ambrosio's place in society. The monk is overtly esteemed yet actually valued very little. The people bear no love for him or his religious message, despite Antonia's suitor at church declaring that, "You will find [Ambrosio's name] in every one's mouths at Madrid" (14). Ambrosio's specious social connectivity is significant in the context of contemporary English sermons, which frequently discussed the relation between divine and social love. English preacher Robert Nares, for instance, in a discourse dedicated to William Pitt when he was chancellor of the exchequer, eloquently affirmed "that we cannot truly love God, unless we first love our brethren."[437] This terrestrial love must be social, Nares avers, for "a love of God founded on the mere consideration of self, if it could exist, would be a narrow and unworthy passion."[438]

Ambrosio's relationship with God is exactly this kind of "unworthy passion." After his sermon, he is accompanied back to his cell by several brothers whom he dismisses "with an air

[437] Robert Nares, *Discourses Preached before the Honourable Society of Lincoln's-Inn, by the Assistant-Preacher, Robert Nares, A. M. Chaplain to His Royal Highness the Duke of York, &c.* (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1794), ix.

[438] Nares, 226.

of conscious superiority, in which Humility's semblance combated with the reality of pride" (31). Once alone in his room, "He looked round him with exultation, and Pride told him loudly He was superior to the rest of his fellow-Creatures" (32). Ambrosio's religious enthusiasm actually distances him from the brotherhood, which, the novel shows, pushes him away from God. For it is in this arrogant isolation that the monk is filled "with such enthusiasm" for the Madonna portrait in his chamber (33). Though he claims these feelings are kindled for "the Divinity that [he] adore[s]!," the reader is aware that his passion is actually for "the Woman's beauty" (33). Rather than experiencing reverent love for a father figure, Ambrosio experiences desire for a female idol.

Not only does Ambrosio fail to love God properly by English standards, but he also fails to fear God appropriately. Many popular Protestant tracts at the time articulated the ideal affective orientation toward the divine as "that reverence which partakes of dread," to use the words of Oxford theologian Robert Holmes.[439] "Fear," Holmes maintains, is an inferior attitude, whereby an individual is motivated by "real apprehension of punishment," rather than a desire to please the deity.[440] Alexander Mather puts the matter most plainly in his "Sermon on Christian Perfection." He asserts that "a tormenting dread of [God's] vindictive justice" is a "kind of fear possess[ing] the spirit of a slave."[441] The true believer, he maintains, "is a son, and has a consciousness of his relation to God, with affections suited to the nature of that relation, viz. a

[439] Robert Holmes, "Four Tracts.—I. On the Principle of Religion, as a Test of the Divine Authority. II. On the Principle of Redemption, Whether If Premial It Is Agreeable, or If Judicial Contrary, to Divine Rectitude. III. On the Angelical Message to the Virgin Mary. IV. On the Resurrection of the Body, as Inferred from That of Christ, and Exemplified by Scriptual Cases. With a Discourse on Humility," *Critical Review* 65 (March 1788): 204.

[440] Holmes, 204.

[441] Alexander Mather, "Two Discourses on Christian Perfection," *Arminian Magazine* 19 (January 1796): 12.

holy awe, a reverential dread, a filial loving fear."[442] Ambrosio stands in stark contrast to these conceptions, for in Matilda's words: "'tis not respect for God which restrains you, but the terror of his vengeance" (87). As Peter Brooks rightly perceives, ethics in *The Monk* are premised on terror rather than virtue, such that "guilt is no longer related to a sense of unworthiness in relation to the Godhead, but rather to the fear of retribution entailed by transgression."[443]

Brooks convincingly argues that this sense of terror and guilt results from Enlightenment desacralization. His explanation, however, does not take into account the novel's Catholic framework. While I agree that *The Monk* "demonstrate[s] a remarkable understanding of [its] own historical situation," I would suggest that Lewis is not so much concerned with the epistemology of Enlightened rationality as enthusiastic religiosity's effect on English national identity in the wake of the Revolution. Lewis's novel consistently portrays Catholicism as fomenting the slavish variety of fear that English preachers such as Mather firmly disparaged. Thus, when Ambrosio forsakes dread and indulges his lust, he becomes impiously in thrall to fear:

> Confused and terrified in his weakness He drew himself from Matilda's arms. His perjury presented itself before him: He reflected on the scene which had just been acted, and trembled at the consequences of a discovery. He looked forward with horror; His heart was despondent and became the abode of satiety and disgust. He avoided the eyes of his Partner in frailty; A melancholy silence prevailed. (172)

Dread is noticeably absent from the many emotions plaguing Ambrosio. Instead, the narrative marks his anticipation with "horror," which prompts him to evade blame rather than seek

[442] Mather, "Two Discourses on Christian Perfection," 12.

[443] Brooks, "Virtue and Terror," 252.

redemption. First, he places the burden of his guilt on Matilda: "Into what an abyss of misery have you plunged me!" he exclaims to her (172). Then, by her prompting, he endeavors to "let the World be ignorant of [their guilt]" while they "[i]ndulge in those pleasures freely" (172). Demonic forces thus easily manipulate Ambrosio's ignoble fear of divine and social punishment, resulting in a steady accumulation of vicious deeds without remorse.

English readers would surely have recognized the Christian framework underwriting Ambrosio's affective-moral failure. They would also likely have discerned its resonances with Smith's widely reprinted *Moral Sentiments.* Smith argues that fear of punishment alone does not lead to virtuous conduct. Like contemporary theologians, Smith perceives a mixture of negative and positive emotions in the moral sentiment of remorse, which "is made up of shame from the sense of the impropriety of past conduct; of grief for the effects of it; of pity for those who suffer by it; and of the dread and terror of punishment from the consciousness of the justly-provoked resentment of all rational creatures."[444] True remorse, according to Smith, requires a deep sense of caring for others and genuine sorrow for the "dreadful" wrongs committed against them.[445] Thus remorse, though an individual feeling, is externalized to the social collective.

Lewis's monk, by contrast, becomes entirely absorbed in his own dread of punishment without any regret for his heinous crimes. Thus, as he awaits the auto-da-fé: "[w]ith affright did He bend his mind's eye on the space beyond the grave; nor could hide from himself how justly he ought to dread Heaven's vengeance" (326). Ambrosio continues to stew in this overwhelming affective state: "On the night preceding this dreaded day, his fears for the morrow permitted him not to sleep" and "The nearer that the time approached, the more did he dread appearing before

[444] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley (New York: Penguin Classics, 2010), 103.

[445] Smith, 103.

the Throne of God. He shuddered to think how soon He must be plunged into eternity; How soon meet the eyes of his Creator, whom He had so grievously offended" (329, 334). It is striking how many times the word "dread" recurs in these final moments before the monk's inglorious end. This repetition indicates the consuming nature of his unalloyed affective experience, which goes against both English Protestant doctrine and the secularized notion of moral sentiments. The monk's doom therefore resides in his inappropriate experience of dread, which is selfish and unmitigated by love. To be sure, it is because of this emotional state that Ambrosio agrees to summon Satan and sell his soul: "He reflected that here at least was a resource from the fate which he dreaded" (148). This fatal conclusion thus unequivocally shows the danger of unilateral dread of personal punishment without reverence for the divine or love for the terrestrial social body.

By representing the wrong way to dread, *The Monk* models a way for readers to feel a beneficial sense of dread that aligns with Smith's moral sentiments. In Smith's words: "The jurisdiction of the man within is founded altogether in the desire of praiseworthiness, and in the aversion to blameworthiness; in the desire of possessing those qualities, and performing those actions, which we love and admire in other people; and in the dread of possessing those qualities, and performing those actions, which we hate and despise in other people."[446] Along these lines, *The Monk* functioned didactically by invoking the prospect of becoming like Ambrosio as itself an object of dread. An anonymous champion of Lewis's novel in 1798 thus asserted that a reader "shrinks with abhorrence, and loathes the idea of imitation" when it comes to Ambrosio's "co-operation of the most diabolical arts and infernal mysteries."[447] The reader, this reviewer further

[446] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 152-53.

[447] *Impartial Strictures on the Poem Called "The Pursuits of Literature*," 38.

argues, therefore perceives "a good and useful moral" in the monk's spectacular punishment, one that should instill a salutary dread of succumbing to temptation.[448] His conclusion corresponds with Smith's general claim that human beings generally strive to avoid any actions that will renders us "the objects of all those sentiments for which we have the greatest dread and aversion."[449]

Gothic Dread and Revolutionary Terror

Thus far I have explored the ways in which *Udolpho* and *The Monk* promote a dread-based ethics, which is indebted to Protestantism and Enlightenment philosophy. Yet in addition to these eighteenth-century influences, a contemporary climate of fear in England informs Radcliffe's and Lewis's respective narratives. While *Udolpho* was written and published at the height of the Reign of Terror, *The Monk* appeared at a time of "crisis and disintegration" in England: freak weather caused food shortages, rebellion broke out in Ireland and Haiti, Scots refused to join the British Militia, the British navy mutinied at Spithead and the Nore, and France attempted an invasion.[450] As a result of this turbulence, two affective watchwords rose to the fore of cultural consciousness: terror and alarm.

After Bertrand Barère exclaimed, "Let's make terror the order of the day!" at a meeting of the National Convention in September 1793, Maximilien Robespierre famously linked terror and virtue in the name of the revolutionary cause: "Terror is nothing more than speedy, severe and inflexible justice; it is thus an emanation of virtue."[451] Both Barère and Robespierre thus conceive of terror as punctual and swift, and this timeliness furthers their consolidation of power.

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[448] *Impartial Strictures on the Poem Called "The Pursuits of Literature*," 35.

[449] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* 183.

[450] Crawford, *Gothic Fiction and the Invention of Terrorism*, 93.

[451] John Hall Stewart, *A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 475-76.

Gurton-Wachter has illuminated how the English responded to this threatening affect with alarm: "A wartime watchfulness inseparable from fear, surveillance, and suspicion was demanded at all times by a new group of politicians who called themselves, proudly, 'alarmists.'"[452] To be sure, "'alarm' became a genre of its own by the end of the eighteenth century, when wartime broadsides, ballads, and pamphlets proliferated with titles that began with the words 'an alarm to . . .'"[453] Like terror, alarm was a fast-paced affect. In Anna Barbauld's words: "[H]ow quick the alarm has been taken, and sounded from the Church to the Senate, and from the press to the people; while fears and forebodings were communicated like an electric shock!"[454] Although Barbauld was among a substantial number of opponents to alarmism, an even more ample population believed that collective alarm would safeguard the nation from foreign and domestic threats.

During this time, the Gothic frequently capitalized on terror and alarm to create page-turning scenes, thereby earning the epithet "terrorist novels." Unsurprisingly, "terror" appears 140 times in *Udolpho* and 75 in *The Monk*, while "alarm" turns up 139 times in the former and 43 in the latter. The anonymous writer to the *Monthly Magazine* on "The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing" thus described these works as "hysterical" and "epileptic," while William Wordsworth characterized this mode of fiction as "frantic."[455] In addition to the grisly and

[452] Gurton-Wachter, *Watchwords*, 10.

[453] Gurton-Wachter, 63.

[454] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts (1790)," in *Anna Laetitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), 264.

[455] "Letter to the Editor [The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing]," *Monthly Magazine* 4, no. 21 (August 1797): 103. See preface to *Lyrical Ballads* William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1802*, ed. Fiona Stafford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 99.

supernatural nature of this popular genre, contemporary critics were deeply distressed by the brisk pacing of certain narrative structures and the frenzied motion of terrified characters.

Yet, as I have already shown in *Udolpho*, the Gothic dealt in dread as well as in terror and alarm. As we have seen, Emily St. Aubert heroically develops a steady, prudent sense of dread over the course of four massive volumes. The sheer length and often prolix style of the narrative, moreover, function to sustain a sense of anticipatory fear in the reader. This twofold experience of diegetic and real-world dread arguably intensified the novel's impact upon its readers. In point of fact, the English Independent minister and theological writer Charles Bucke—known for his *Theological Dictionary* (1802)—was "charmed" by reading *Udolpho* nine whole times![456] What made the novel so repeatedly re-readable? Bucke never explained the allure himself, but one contemporary reviewer proclaimed: "It is not enough to say, that the Mysteries of Udolpho is a pretty, or an agreeable romance. The design has ingenuity and contrivance; the style is correct and elegant; the descriptions are chaste and magnificent; and the whole work is calculated to give the author a distinguished place among fine writers."[457] Beyond its refined style and picturesque scenes, perhaps part of the novel's satisfaction lay in the way it showed its protagonist successfully harnessing her own dread to safely navigate her future—a message that would have been deeply resonant for a culture aptly described as experiencing "war at a distance."[458] *Udolpho* illustrates the benefits of composed dread over passionate terror and reactive alarm as a response to danger. Remarkably, Wordsworth, that critic of "sickly and stupid German Tragedies," would follow Radcliffe's affective model almost a decade later in *The*

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[456] Charles Bucke, *On the Beauties, Harmonies, and Sublimities of Nature: With Occasional Remarks on the Laws, Customs, Manners, and Opinions of Various Nations*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837), 116.

[457] "A. Y.," "Rev. of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*," 140.

[458] See Mary A. Favret, *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Prelude (1805) by evocatively describing his "substantial dread" following the September Massacres.[459]

If *Udolpho* was praised for its "transcendent merits," *The Monk*, by contrast, was widely criticized for its "libidinous minuteness," in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's words, and blasphemous treatment of the Bible.[460] Almost every reviewer balked at the explanation of Antonia's mother censoring her daughter's copy of the holy scripture for, in the older woman's estimation: "Many of the narratives can only tend to excite ideas the worst calculated for a female breast" (199). Because of this scene, Coleridge concluded that Lewis was an author of "blasphemies" and "if a parent saw [*The Monk*] in the hands of a son or a daughter, he might reasonably turn pale."[461] This appraisal quickly acquired political implications through the satirical work of Thomas Mathias. Echoing Coleridge, in *The Pursuits of Literature* (1794-1797) Mathias argues that *The Monk* "thrust[s] upon the nation the most open and unqualified blasphemy against the very code and volume of our religion," averring that this "*popular* novel" has "*a tendency* to corrupt the minds of the people, and of the younger unsuspecting part of the female sex, by *traducing and discrediting* THE HOLY SCRIPTURES."[462] Mathias goes even further than Coleridge, however, in viewing Lewis's novel as a matter of national security—an affront to "the kingdom at large"—that demands urgent intervention by "all those whose office it is to maintain truth, and to

[459] William Wordsworth, "*The Prelude*," in *William Wordsworth - The Major Works: Including The Prelude*, ed. Stephen Gill, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 599, 534.

[460] Campbell, "Biographical Particulars of Celebrated Persons, Lately Deceased," 232. [Samuel Taylor Coleridge], "Rev. of *The Monk: A Romance*," *Critical Review* 19 (February 1797): 197.

[461] [Coleridge], 198, 197.

[462] Thomas James Mathias, *Pursuits of Literature. A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues, with Notes*, 3rd ed. (London: T. Becket, 1797), ii, iv.

instruct the rising abilities and hope of England."[463] Unlike his anonymous detractor in *Impartial Strictures* (1798), Mathias roundly does not think *The Monk* could protect the nation from French passions through its evocation of dread.[464]

Mathias also fails to recognize a vital overlap between his own views and Lewis's. Both are wary of alarmism. Mathias expresses his concern about the "attention of the nation," which seems "to be in a state between slumber and alarm; in the supineness which attends the former, and with that confusion in ideas and measures which too frequently accompanies terror."[465] *The Monk* likewise portrays the deleterious effects of unbridled alarm. As one inset story goes, the Baron of Lindenberg was visited nightly by a vision of his murdered paramour Beatrice dressed in the bloodied habit of a nun: "His alarm at length became so insupportable that his heart burst, and one morning He was found in his bed totally deprived of warmth and animation. His death did not put an end to the nocturnal riots. The bones of Beatrice continued to lie unburied, and her Ghost continued to haunt the Castle" (136). Alarm thus decimates the sensate subject, but it does not rectify the fearful situation. It is no wonder that the vehement critic of alarmism, Charles James Fox, leading Whig MP, crossed the house of Parliament in order to congratulate Lewis, when he took chambers, on the publication of his novel.[466]

Rather than alarm or terror, Mathias implies that dread is the appropriate affective posture needed to edify and protect the nation "in a day of darkness and of thick gloominess, and in an

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[463] Mathias, *Pursuits of Literature*, v.

[464] Henry Francis Robert Soame similarly declares he is "totally unable to account for the violent outcry against the immorality of The Monk (which appeared to [him] to have a tendency directly the opposite)." See *Epistle in Rhyme, to M. G. Lewis, Esq. M.P. Author of The Monk, Castle Spectre, &c. With Other Verses. By the Same Hand* (London: Bunney, Thompson, and Co., 1798), 1.

[465] Mathias, *Pursuits of Literature*, xvi.

[466] See D. L. Macdonald, *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 129.

hour of turbulence, of terror, and of uncertainty."[467] This idea becomes clear when the bard of his "literary manifesto" "Scans all th' ethereal wilderness around, / Pour on his ear the thrilling scream of sound."[468] Remarkably, as he attends to the "[s]trains," "[n]otes," and "their numerous pause, or accent deep," the speaker declares: "His choral passions dread accordance keep."[469] This experience is reminiscent of *Udolpho*, as watchful dread moderates the passions and imbues them with majesty. Moreover, it is only after this steady survey of the surroundings that the bard "bends his weary eyes / On life and all it's [*sic*] sad realities; / Marks how the prospect darkens in the rear, / Shade blends with shade, and fear succeeds fear."[470] We therefore witness how the bard's vigilant scan endows him with the necessary perspective to muse and calmly commentate on the frightening world around him.

The Monk does not positively represent dread in this way. Instead, the novel shows how failing to adequately dread results in terrible, unprincipled violence that cannot reflect on itself. This climatic scene occurs in a plotline parallel to Ambrosio's capitulation to vice, which requires some context. The narrative arc follows the thwarted love of Raymond and his friend Lorenzo's sister, Agnes. Agnes is forced into the convent adjacent to Ambrosio's monastery and imprisoned in a subterranean cell when the Domina discovers she is pregnant. Raymond, meanwhile, strives to locate her and receives a message from one of the nuns that Agnes has been murdered by the Prioress. Lorenzo, with the consent of the Grand Inquisitor and the aid of his ducal father and friend Don Ramirez, thus prepares a troop of archers to arrest the Prioress during a religious festival taking place outside the convent. The event includes a stunning

[467] Mathias, *Pursuits of Literature*, xxx.

[468] Mathias, 22.

[469] Mathias, 22.

[470] Mathias, 22.

procession of bedazzled nuns, ancient relics, and "a Machine fashioned like a throne, rich with jewels, and dazzling with light" behind which the Domina marches with "secret pride at displaying the pomp and opulence of her Convent" (268).

The scene is thrown into "general confusion and surprize, when Don Ramirez starting forward, challenged her as his Prisoner" (269). The fawning masses rally to the Domina's cry for "the People to rescue a Daughter of the Church" (269). Don Ramirez, however, "commanded them to forbear, and threatened them with the severest vengeance of the Inquisition. At that dreaded word every arm fell, every sword shrunk back into its scabbard" (269). Fear of punishment by the powerful institution—a symbol of status quo power that stands in for the French monarchy of the 1780s—generates immediate compliance and restrains the group's violent urges, at least for the moment. Notably, the sense of dread is not contagious, spreading from one body to another in the way that Mary Fairclough has shown crowd affects were often imagined in the Romantic period.[471] Rather, dread in this scene is simultaneously experienced by all the individuals in the collective as "every arm fell" and "every sword shrunk back into its scabbard" at once. Dread is a personal feeling that nonetheless exerts enormous power to unite a social body.

Even so, the conclusion of this scene shows the limitations of a punctual kind of dread that is not slow-paced, meditative, and accompanied by positive affects, such as love and reverence. When another nun, St. Ursula, recounts the Prioress's cruel treatment of Agnes and seeming murder of the pitiful girl, "a multitude of voices exclaimed, that the Prioress should be given up to their fury" (274). The crowd's increasing agitation compels Ramirez to "convey his Prisoner out of the Throng," but his efforts are "[i]n vain":

[471] Mary Fairclough, *The Romantic Crowd: Sympathy, Controversy and Print Culture*, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

> Wherever He turned, a band of Rioters barred his passage, and demanded her being delivered over to them more loudly than before… He threatened the Mob with the vengeance of the Inquisition: But in this moment of popular phrenzy even this dreadful name had lost its effect. (274)

Once the crowd's passions reach a critical mass, their dread of Inquisitorial punishment evaporates. Without this restraining sense of fear, the mob commits "every species of cruelty which hate or vindictive fury could invent," torturing the Domina, stoning her to death, then continuing to "exercise… their impotent rage upon her lifeless body" (274-75). This affective failure amplifies the inadequacy of dread in Ambrosio's opening sermon, which fails to curb the vices of the churchgoers. Although this intense affect can temporarily fascinate, thereby creating the illusion of compliance, it does not lead to lasting moral-social cohesion.

While *Udolpho* shows how Emily's beneficial dread restrains her undesirable impulses, cultivates her reasoning capacities, and strengthens her sense of social duty, *The Monk* depicts an inferior form of dread associated with the Catholic Church, which results in anarchy. Above all, *The Monk* illustrates how Catholic dread fails to prevent acts of terror. As Maria Purves argues: "Lewis might be seen to be constructing a narrative in which the Church is both the cause and principal victim of revolution: built on anachronistic principles, lies and greed, the Roman Church deserves to be torn down by free-thinking modernists wielding the innocent oppressed as their instruments of destruction."[472] Although the novel explicitly critiques Catholic hypocrisy, the significant point is that it does not glorify the Jacobin-like destruction of the clergy and monastery, for the violence against them is too wildly excessive to evoke any sense of sympathy with the insurrection. Purves rightly affirms that "Lewis's use of the cloister theme in *The Monk*

[472] Maria Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism: Religion, Cultural Exchange and the Popular Novel, 1785-1829* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), 93.

suggests that his novel was interested in gaining acceptance amongst a readership with Burkean sympathies" which "can be linked to the era's pro-Catholic discourse."[473]

Purves's observations enable us to see that although *The Monk* critiques the shortcomings of the Roman Church, the novel is not exclusively fired by anti-Catholic sentiment. Instead, Lewis invokes what is supposed to be the "good kind" of Protestant dread in order to reflect on the difficulties of discerning between destructive and salutary forms of future oriented fear. By displaying the inadequacy of acute Catholic dread to prevent terror, *The Monk* attempts to develop a superior sense of English Protestant dread that can instead thwart terror. Although Lewis's novel can be read in this edifying way (and was, as we have seen, by several readers), it is hardly heavy-handed in its didacticism. *The Monk* was principally designed to delight, not instruct. Still, Lewis's novel should be understood as adjacent to a larger body of Protestant sermons and didactic literature, which highlighted the protracted, contemplative, and social qualities of beneficial dread. Such attributes are plainly visible in the Revd. William Mason's contemporary poem, "The Ploughboy's Dream" (1795) featured in Hannah More's popular *Cheap Repository Tracts* (1795-1814). The speaker, a sleeping laborer, dreams that he beats his horses while shouting obscenities until he is visited by an angel, then a thunderstorm erupts, and a "dread and deep" voice reminds him of the impending Day of Judgment.[474] The boy-speaker

[473] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism*, 100-101. While numerous scholars have read *The Monk* as a subversive work that is hostile to Catholicism, Purves meticulously demonstrates how the novel fits into a well-established tradition that sentimentalizes Catholicism. Moreover, she affirms that Gothic readers at this time were "educated, leisured pre-dominantly conservative. For these readers, an allegiance to the church and king was increasingly seen as a virtue from 1789 onwards." Purves, 131. See also pp. 93-103.

[474] William Mason, "The Ploughboy's Dream," in *Cheap Repository Tracts: Entertaining, Moral, and Religious*, revised edition, vol. 7 (New York: American Tract Society, [1800?]), 167. I was unable to locate the original English tract containing "The Ploughboy's Dream," but I did discover a letter from Hannah More to her sister in 1795: "Mr. Mason has sent me half-a-dozen ballads for the *Repository* […] one of which was called *The Ploughboy's Dream* will do very well." See William Roberts, *The Life of Hannah More: With Selections from Her Correspondence* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1872), 146.

thus concludes: "quiv'ring like an aspen leaf, / I wakened from my sleep. / And though I found it but a dream, / It left upon my mind / That dread of sin, that fear of God, / Which all should wish to find."[475] In a far more dramatic way, Lewis's novel implicitly bolsters a corresponding sense of English Protestant identity that is predicated on the reverent combination of dread and love. This sustained and temperate feeling of fear about the future that "all should wish to find" contributed to a sense of English Protestant identity that was thought to insulate the nation from revolutionary terror. Thus Henry Soame, an apologist for *The Monk,* sees the novel working "to redeem our youth"—that is, "Britain's affluent sons"—who "in thriftless rambles dissipate their time."[476]

Though these political implications are important to bear in mind, it also worth repeating that there is no evidence that either Radcliffe or Lewis were ideologically motivated in writing these frightening stories. *Udolpho* and *The Monk* are not radical Gothic novels in the vein of William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) or Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or, the Wrongs of Woman* (1798). Though Lewis was a Whig member of Parliament, Nigel Leask declares: "His six years (1796–1802) in the House of Commons were remarkably undistinguished, although he served on four select committees in 1796–7, and he appears to have made only one speech, in support of better treatment of debtors."[477] Jack G. Voller moreover affirms that Lewis "was in fact very much an 'establishment' figure in many ways, eagerly cultivating the acquaintance of

[475] Mason, "The Ploughboy's Dream," 167-68.

[476] Soame, *Epistle in Rhyme*, 2.

[477] Nigel Leask, "Lewis, Matthew Gregory [Called Monk Lewis] (1775–1818), Novelist and Playwright," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 2015), Accessed October 4, 2019. https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-16597.

the nobility and the influential."[478] While Radcliffe may have had more radical connections through dissenting familial relations, she nevertheless "avoided overt political statement."[479] My aim is not to cast Lewis's or Radcliffe's respective novels as explicit scripts that negate alarmism as a response to revolutionary terror. Nevertheless, I have suggested that both novels represent moderate dread as protecting characters from superstitious fears, physical violence, and perverted vice. In so doing, dread in the age of revolution counteracts the emergence of more intense and exploitable forms of fear, while still fitting soundly within the eighteenth-century paradigm of moral sentiments and the English Christian tradition of dreading the day of judgment.

[478] Jack G. Voller, "Matthew Gregory 'Monk' Lewis (1775-1818)," in *Gothic Writers: A Critical and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Douglass H. Thomson, Jack G. Voller, and Frederick S. Frank, (Westport: Greenwood, 2001), 256.

[479] Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 18.

Chapter 4
Dread and Democracy:
Affective Ethics and Popular Politics in *Sweeney Todd*, *The Mysteries of London*, and the Mid-Victorian Penny Press

The Gothic romance—that forceful vehicle of gradual, thoughtful dread during the age of revolution in France—slowly dwindled in sales during the 1820s, as the threat of Napoleon faded away. But the Gothic mode did not disappear. It went on to infuse popular melodramas and the *Newgate Calendar* (1774, 1824, 1826), which recounted first-person biographies of notorious criminals.[480] Yet when Europe was shaken again with revolutions in the 1840s and the English working-class advocated for their voting rights, the Gothic vigorously arose in a new form: the "blood-and-thunder-novel" or "penny blood." While the multi-volume Gothic novels of the 1790s were primarily read by the middle classes who could afford these costly tomes, the "bloods" of the 1840s, as the epithet denotes, were priced at a penny per issue. These works were serialized in affordable periodicals that targeted newly literate members of the laboring class. Reading about dreadful situations proved to be just as enthralling for people of humble means as it had been for the upper orders. Significantly, too, dread in this popular fiction retained the slow-paced aesthetic properties and inducement to ethical deliberation that characterized earlier Gothic romances. Thus, contrary to upper-class fears, popular dread-laden fiction did not actually champion violent revolution. This chapter will examine how two of the most renowned penny bloods of the decade, James Malcolm Rymer's *The String of Pearls: A Romance* (1846-47) and George W. M. Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London* (1844-48), inspire dread of

[480] The first major Gothic melodrama was Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (1797), which was staged at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane forty-seven times in its opening season. After a long run in the following year, *The Castle Spectre* remained in the theatre's repertoire until the late 1820s and was revived throughout the nineteenth century.

economic, political, and social injustice in England in order to facilitate non-violent, collective reform.

In 1846, Rymer began serializing *The String of Pearls* in Edward Lloyd's penny journal, the *People's Periodical and Family Library*.[481] The story centers on the beautiful, young Johanna Oakley's search for her missing beau, Mark Ingestrie, whose absence prompts her to penetrate into the secrets of Sweeney Todd's barbershop. Ultimately, Johanna helps uncover Todd's nefarious scheme with the baker, Mrs. Lovett: Todd murders wealthy patrons and Lovett bakes their bodies into succulent pies. This well-known story is most commonly called *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, the title provided by Charles Fox to the "penny dreadful" version serialized from 1878 to 1880. This title, which I employ for the remainder of this chapter, has enjoyed popularity into the twenty-first century, with Tim Burton's 2007 film based on Stephen Sondheim's 1979 musical production. This macabre tale immediately captivated a massive audience who clamored to see George Dibdin Pitt's stage adaptation before the serial concluded in print.[482] *The String of Pearls*'s ready adaptability to the stage signals the original work's correspondence with melodrama: its plot-based narrative is quick-paced in order to create optimal emotional intensity; characters fulfill the archetypes of innocent heroine,

[481] The authorship of *The String of Pearls* has a controversial history. Mid-twentieth century scholars attributed authorship to Thomas Peckett Prest, another prolific writer employed by Edward Lloyd, or assumed it was written by several authors. Helen R. Smith makes what I find to be a compelling case for Rymer's authorship in *New Light on Sweeney Todd, Thomas Peckett Prest, James Malcolm Rymer and Elizabeth Caroline Grey* (London: Jarndyce Books, 2002). Her work is further substantiated by Rebecca Nesvet's recent contribution in "Blood Relations: Sweeney Todd and the Rymers of London," *Notes and Queries* 64, no. 1 (2017): 112-16. Although Robert L. Mack, who edited *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), does not ascribe authorship to Rymer, Robert Kirkpatrick does in his bibliographic study *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller* (London: British Library and New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2013), 20.

[482] Mack, "Introduction" in *Sweeney Todd*, 107. See also Sarah A. Winter, "'His knife and hands bloody': Sweeney Todd's journey from page to stage," *Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance* 8, no. 3 (2015), 233-47.

persecuted hero, and exceedingly violent villain; and the story concludes with an unveiling of truth and virtue rewarded.[483]

In many ways, *Sweeney Todd* builds on a formula that Reynolds perfected in *The Mysteries of London,* a behemoth constituted by two series that were published in fifty-two weekly parts by George Vickers. At the level of plot, these works have much in common. Both feature heroines who seek to protect the men they care about by donning male disguises and brazenly confronting hardened criminals. At the other end of the moral spectrum, each tale portrays schemes of systematized murder perpetrated by greedy villains who stockpile gold. Moreover, these two narratives predominantly explore sinuous connections between London locales, although both have recourse to the claustrophobic, Gothic topography of the lunatic asylum, where feebler characters are wrongly immured by those in power.

Assuredly, these themes and plot devices were very well received by a massive body of readers. In Louis James's estimation: "[*The Mysteries of London*] was almost certainly the most widely read single work of fiction in mid-nineteenth century Britain, and attracted more readers than did the novels of Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton, or Trollope."[484] Reynolds's self-described "Encyclopedia of Tales" loosely follows the paths of the Markham brothers: the virtuous Richard—"generous, humane, liberal, and upright!"—and the conniving Eugene, alias George Montague Greenwood.[485] Richard's generosity and naivete render him unjustly imprisoned and

[483] See Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Linda Williams, "Melodrama Revised," in *Refiguring American Film Genres: History and Theory*, ed. Nick Browne (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 42-88.

[484] Louis James, "Forward," in *The Mysteries of London*, ed. Dick Collins, vol. 1 (Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2013), v–xii.

[485] Reynolds declared his twelve-year writing project an "Encyclopedia of Tales" in the postscript to the final volume of *The Mysteries of the Court of London*. See George W. M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of the Court of London*, vol. 8 (London: John Dicks, 1856). George W. M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, ed. Dick Collins, vol. 1 (Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2013), 1040.

penniless, while Eugene's amoral ingenuity earns him a vast fortune and a seat in Parliament. Yet consistent with the conventions of melodrama, Richard is ultimately rewarded while Eugene is punished: the former marries an impressive princess and rises to the throne of Castelcicala (a fictional Italian state), while Eugene is finally murdered by his valet. Parallel to Richard's narrative is the fate of Eliza Sydney, an innocent girl duped by her guardian to commit fraud and subsequently incarcerated in Newgate. Nonetheless, her strict commitment to virtue allows Eliza to ascend from this lowly beginning and finally marry the benevolent Grand Duke of Castelcicala. While offering scintillating views into palaces and aristocratic fêtes, *The Mysteries of London* also delves into the dirtiest poverty-stricken hovels in London's Golden Lane and the iniquitous dens of Smithfield.

Although today Reynolds's story has not enjoyed a popular resurgence equivalent to *Sweeney Todd*, scholarly attention to both of these works has swelled over the past two decades alongside a greater interest in penny dreadful fiction. Yet it is important to clarify that the term "penny dreadful" was never applied to either Rymer's or Reynolds's respective works when they were first published. The appellation "penny dreadful" did not exist until November 1868, a decade after Reynolds wrote his last work of fiction. The term first appeared in the *Bookseller*, where an indignant, respectable journalist deemed it the appropriate name for "raw-head-and-bloody-bones serials."[486] Such "garbage literature" is never attributed to Reynolds in either the *Bookseller* or other periodical critiques of dreadfuls that appeared frequently throughout the following decades. (This is a point I explore in Chapter 5.) Instead, in September 1862 the *Saturday Review* identified Reynolds as the chief practitioner of "blood and thunder" novels, a

[486] "A Reader's Experience," *Bookseller* 130 (November 2, 1868): 810.

popular genre that the writer aligns with the Gothic tradition.[487] To be sure, various contemporary periodicals declared "Reynolds the penny blood-and-thunder novelist" and noted the relations between so-called bloods and Chartist politics.[488] Rymer, however, never experienced fame as a penny blood author (indeed, it was only in 2002 that Helen R. Smith proved that he was the author of *Sweeney Todd*). Yet in 1855, *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* identified *The String of Pearls* as a high-selling "penny number," a species of "'thrilling' stories which circulate among the lowest classes," or, as the writer prefers to call them, "the humblest classes."[489] He maintains, moreover, that such stories "are not so bad as has been represented by clap-trap writers and talkers, and have done by no means unmixed mischief."[490]

Thus, in the 1840s and 50s, "dreadful" did not carry the connotation of literary trash or perniciousness with which the late Victorian period associated it. By the fin de siècle, critics, at their most generous, deemed penny dreadfuls "exceedingly foolish and frivolous" and censured them for encouraging readers "to escape from thought."[491] At its worst, this fiction was supposed to inspire readers to perpetrate crimes: "Find me the boy who murders his mother or steals his father's watch, and I will find you the Penny Dreadful."[492] The dreadfulness of these tales, therefore, was attributed to their inferior prose style and immoral ramifications. Although, for these reasons, the term "dreadful" was not generically applied to Rymer's or Reynolds's

[487] "Novels in Penny Numbers," *Saturday Review* 14, no. 359 (September 13, 1862): 308.

[488] "Mr. Charles Lever," *Sphinx* 2, no. 71 (December 18, 1869): 301. "ION," "Letters to Chartists," *Leader and Saturday Analyst* 2, no. 53 (March 29, 1851): 302.

[489] "Reading Raids," *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (April 1855): 224.

[490] "Reading Raids," 224.

[491] Francis Hitchman, "The Penny Press," *Macmillan's Magazine* 43, no. 257 (March 1881): 398.

[492] "A Penny-Dreadful Scare," *National Observer* 14, no. 358 (September 28, 1895): 546.

respective stories, the phenomenon of dread, nonetheless, is a frequent and vital affect that actuates their plots and propels the main characters.

Present-day affective studies of penny fiction often focus on the pleasure that these stories were meant to elicit in their readers, and they investigate the extent to which a Victorian reader's delight impacted his or her intellectual capacity and behavior.[493] Ian Haywood was among the first to explore the connection between affective potency and radical politics in his 2004 study, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*: "it is clear that Lloyd saw working-class culture […] as deeply and flexibly responsive to a progressive print culture premised on democratic ideals of improvement and social justice but not excluding popular pleasure."[494] More recently, Ellen Rosenman has examined the Crimean War-inspired stories of Reynolds that represent utopias in nations outside England and the West, pointing to the popular pleasure generated by penny fiction fantasies of restitution where "working-class readers could imaginatively enter an alternate reality, a virtual England in which they were privileged members."[495] Rosenman thus elucidates the enormous role of affect in alternative populist narratives of belonging. Counterintuitive as it may seem in these discussions of pleasurable imagination and community-building, dread, I will demonstrate, is a particularly potent affect for these radical missions. This distinct mode of feeling both promotes sovereign exertions of self to judicious effect and stimulates anticipatory terror: an affect well-known for gratifying the masses

[493] See Shu-chuan Yan, "Emotions, Sensations, and Victorian Working-Class Readers," *Journal of Popular Culture* 50, no. 2 (2017): 317-40; Lewis C. Roberts, "Disciplining and Disinfecting Working-Class Readers in the Victorian Public Library," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 26, no. 1 (1998): 105–32.

[494] Ian Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 167.

[495] Ellen Rosenman, "Beyond the Nation: Penny Fiction, the Crimean War, and Political Belonging," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 46, no. 1 (2018): 97.

after the explosion of Gothic fiction in the 1790s and the advent of British melodrama at the turn of the century.[496]

This chapter first focuses on *Sweeney Todd*'s dread-based critique of urban consumption practices before extrapolating this affective lens to *The Mysteries of London*'s wide-ranging engagement with popular politics. I build on a large body of scholarship that assesses the radicalism of *Sweeney Todd*'s bold critique of excess—specifically its condemnation of insatiable capitalism in a metropolis that voraciously devours its inhabitants. Matthew Kilburn, for instance, identifies Todd as "a personification of early nineteenth-century fears of the anonymity of urban life."[497] In a similar vein, Robert L. Mack observes: "In a manner that was at once uncomplicated and yet at the same time terrifyingly *real*, Todd was quite simply revealed to be greedy."[498] The implications of these points have been treated in detail by both Andrew King and Sally Powell. King claims that *Sweeney Todd* serves as an allegorical "warning about the dangers of capitalism in a city where people are reduced to commodities and alienated from the production processes of what they consume."[499] Correspondingly, according to Powell we can grasp that Mrs. Lovett's contaminated pies relate to the widespread reporting on food

[496] Matthew S. Buckley, "The Formation of Melodrama," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737-1832*, eds. Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 466.

[497] Matthew Kilburn, "Todd, Sweeney [called the Demon Barber of Fleet Street] (supp. fl. 1784), legendary murderer and barber." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (January 23, 2004) Accessed March 21, 2018. http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-53666

[498] Mack, "Introduction," xxiii.

[499] Andrew King, "'Literature of the Kitchen': Cheap Serial Fiction of the 1840s and 1850s," in *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. Pamela K. Gilbert (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011): 44.

adulteration in the 1840s: "*The String of Pearls* is clearly troubled by the moral alienation of the producer from the nature of the product."[500]

By expanding on these analyses, I argue that dread, as conveyed through the melodramatic development of character and plot, resists the alienating metropolis and its insatiable consumption, not by extreme revolution, but by representations of ethical self-control and democratic sociability. My analysis links *Sweeney Todd's* progressive politics to an ethics founded in dread and represented in the melodramatic mode, which Peter Brooks has described "at its most ambitious" as "a fundamental drama of the moral life and finding the terms to express it."[501]

The first section of my discussion explicates the religious usage of dread, familiar to mid-Victorian readers, as a distinctly future-oriented affect with positive moral consequences. In light of this lexical understanding, the second section reveals how Johanna Oakley's and Mark Ingestrie's respective encounters with the dreadful shape their gendered identities and make their concluding marriage possible. Beyond the individual, dread works throughout the narrative to build an ethical community committed to truth and justice, which Rymer suggests as a model for democratic reform. Finally, a closer look at the commercial profitability of this story and its progressive politics discloses a link between affective and capitalist economies. In *Sweeney Todd*, I contend, it is the affective potency of dread that moderates both melodrama's excess and capitalism's consumption. Rymer's project, sanctioned by Lloyd, is to represent to his readers the benefits of dreading well in order to precipitate a politics of enfranchisement and mindful

[500] Sally Powell, "Black Markets and Cadaverous Pies: The Corpse, Urban Trade and Industrial Consumption in the Penny Blood," in *Victorian Crime, Madness and Sensation*, ed. Andrew Maunder (London: Leicester University Press, 2004), 53.

[501] Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 12.

appetite. In so doing, Rymer is aware that by 1846 melodrama had become, as Matthew Buckley has observed, a "spectacular narrative drug" and "an industrially produced vehicle of emotional intoxication."[502] At the same time, I show that while dread frequently begets more dread in *Sweeney Todd*, the narrative offers a precise mode of ethical decorum, which, far from manifesting inebriation, is distinctly sobering.

The Ethics of Dread

What, then, did it mean to experience the dreadful in the penny bloods before the "penny dreadful" earned that pejorative? English newspapers reported various dreadful occurrences in the year 1846: a railway accident, the horrors of American slavery, a minor sickness, and extensive flooding, to name a few.[503] The adjective "dreadful" in many of these cases corresponded to the *OED* definition: "exciting fear or aversion."[504] This was clearly the case with the "dreadful railway accident" and the "dreadful institution" of slavery. However, "dreadful" was also colloquially used as a strong intensive meaning: "Exceedingly bad, great, long, etc."[505] Such is the case with the "dreadful cold" comically bemoaned in an "Amusing Incident" related in the *London Journal*. Dreadful, thus, had several registers—serious and humorous—at the time of *Sweeney Todd*'s and *The Mysteries of London*'s respective serializations.

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[502] Buckley, "The Formation of Melodrama," 468-69.

[503] See "Dreadful Accident on the Lyons and Saint Etienne Railroad," *Examiner*, no. 1988 (March 7, 1846): 154; "American Slavery," *The Anti-Slavery Reporter* 1, no. 6 (June 1846): 95-96; "Miscellaneous," *London Journal* 2, no. 46 (January 10, 1846): 287-88; "Accidents, Offences, and Occurrences," *Examiner*, no. 2010 (August 8, 1846) 507.

[504] "dreadful, adj., adv., and n." *OED Online*, accessed March 21, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/57587.

[505] "dreadful, adj., adv., and n."

As I have said, the conception of "penny dreadful" as a genre of fiction did not exist until the late 1860s when the term was used in an anonymous *Bookseller* article.[506] By 1887, however, the *Edinburgh Review* demarcated the "penny dreadful" as a distinct body of fiction that offered "pictures of school life hideously unlike the reality; exploits of pirates, robbers, cut-throats, prostitutes, and rogues."[507] The abundance of such fiction amounted to a "nauseous mass" that the *Edinburgh Review* deemed "useless" and impossible for its elevated readers "to wade through."[508] These characterizations of popular penny fiction had much to do with a shift in understanding what constituted a "dreadful" phenomenon. In contradistinction to its affiliation with "unwholesome and vicious trash" at the fin de siècle, the word "dreadful" in 1846 was frequently used in religious contexts.[509] For example, a review of *The Power of the Soul over the Body, Considered in Relation to Health and Morals* published in the *Critic* in 1845 reminds its readers: "There's not a sin that we commit, / Nor wicked word we say, / But in the dreadful book 'tis writ, / Against the judgement day."[510] The term accordingly carried a reverential and future-oriented connotation, as it invoked fearful anticipation of God's judgement. As Paul Megna argues, there existed "a long ascetic tradition of casting dread as an essential engine for cultivating ethical behavior" that extended from early modern devotional texts to nineteenth and twentieth century existential philosophy.[511] In the British religious context, dreading well

[506] "A Reader's Experience," 810.

[507] [B. G. Johns], "Literature of the Street," *Edinburgh Review* 165, no. 337 (January 1887): 43.

[508] [Johns], 43.

[509] [Johns], 41.

[510] "Philosophy," *Critic* 2, no. 25 (June 21, 1845): 149.

[511] Paul Megna, "Better Living through Dread: Medieval Ascetics, Modern Philosophers, and the Long History of Existential Anxiety," *PMLA* 130, no. 5 (October 2015): 1296.

required deep reflection and imagination. The laity were encouraged to contemplate past actions and envision how they would be judged in the afterlife.[512] The purpose of this practice was to inspire moral action that was not motivated out of fear of punishment, but rather out of love and reverence for God.[513]

Despite the fear inherent in its definition, dread was, in some cases, a positively construed affect. Interrogating this feeling cultivated imagination of the future, deliberation, self-control, and ethical behavior. These qualities are evident in several religious poems that appeared in mid-century periodicals, such as "W. G. M."'s "Prayer" in the *London Saturday Journal*. The speaker is a penitent sinner who reflects on his "useless life."[514] Although, at the outset of the poem, he "dread[s] to die" because of his "blighted path," the subsequent verses lack any mention of divine punishment in the after-life.[515] Rather, the speaker dreads death because he has not made good use of the "great blessings" endowed by the deity at his birth. It is not fear of punishment, then, but the shame of squandering his God-given existence that causes distress in the speaker. Thus, the poem itself is a self-reflection affectively prompted by dread, a point that comes into even sharper focus in its concluding invocation:

> I bow beneath Thy chastening rod,
> And pray for help to Thee, O God!
> To Thee, who in Thy word hast said,
> Thou hatest nothing Thou has made:

[512] Megna, "Better Living Through Dread," 1286.

[513] Megna, 1288.

[514] "W. G. M.," "Prayer," *London Saturday Journal* 3, no. 73 (May 21, 1842): 245.

[515] "W. G. M.," 245.

In the dread name of Him who died

For me and all mankind beside,–

Lord God of Heaven and Earth and Air,

Oh, hear thy suppliant servant's prayer.[516]

By affectively hallowing "the dread name" of Jesus, the quintessential figure of sacrifice, the poem reinforces its solemn call to action. What the "suppliant servant" prays for is continued self-control to lead an obedient, disciplined, and meaningful life for the remaining "measure of [his] years."

"W. G. M.," a one-off contributor to this periodical, therefore exemplifies a vernacular religious conception of dread as a future-oriented affect with ethical ramifications. I argue that it was this feeling, though used in a context very different from religious poetry, that sold so well to Lloyd's and Reynolds's working- and lower middle-class readers.

This assertion goes against the more obvious supposition that readers were drawn to the anticipatory excitement of the Sweeney Todd story and the urban mysteries. Caroline Levine argues in *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense* (2003) that the feeling of expectation inherent in suspenseful narratives was both a source of satisfaction and exactor of critical skepticism for Victorian readers.[517] *Sweeney Todd*, however, unlike a Dickens serialization or the sensation stories of the subsequent two decades, did not rely on suspense to maintain its weekly readership. Although the unknown nature of Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett's scheme intrinsically stimulates curiosity, Lloyd's serialization neglects to harness this attribute. As Mack notes:

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[516] "W. G. M.," 245.

[517] See Caroline Levine, *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003).

"Edward Lloyd appears to have done little to encourage his author to whet the appetites of his readers towards the end of each installment. Individual chapters were broken up with seemingly little regard to the narrative action itself, and the story was fragmented in such a way as can only be described as utilitarian at best."[518] Rather than the pleasure of suspense, the melodramatically enhanced power of dread, as I will demonstrate, appealed to readers who were already sympathetic to democratic reform.

Although the opening chapter of *Sweeney Todd* introduces us to the "ill-put-together" barber, the exposition does less to set up a mystery and more to establish a romance plot, as the subtitle promises.[519] The first customer to walk into the shop is a sailor who bears sad tidings for the lovely Johanna Oakley: her lover, Mark Ingestrie, has been lost at sea. Although this patron's sudden disappearance from the barber's chair is emphasized in italics, the rapid-paced narrative returns almost immediately to the romance problem, as another customer walks in and speaks of Mark, concluding with "God knows what's become of him" (11). Despite the first man's assertion to the contrary, these remarks within the generic conventions of romance and melodrama suggest that Mark may well be alive. This foundational problem creates an affective position of dread for the heroine, who is introduced in the second chapter.

Initially, Johanna is characterized by her disquietude for the future as she awaits information about Mark. Reflecting on this uncertain interval, Johanna philosophizes: "[W]e suffer much more from dread of those things that never happen than we do for actual calamities which occur in their full force to us" (39). This platitude establishes a critical dichotomy between

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[518] Robert L. Mack, *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd* (London; New York: Continuum, 2007), 103.

[519] James Malcolm Rymer, *Sweeney Todd,* ed. by Robert L. Mack (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4. Subsequent page numbers will be marked in parentheses in the body of the chapter.

future-oriented dread and presentist fear. Dread is a mood of "[e]xtreme fear; deep awe or reverence; apprehension or anxiety as to future events."[520] In addition to being, by definition, more intense than fear, dread is also necessarily anticipatory. We only dread the future, but we can experience fear in a present moment during "actual calamities." Even when a particular object or subject is dreaded, the mood remains constituted by nebulous uncertainty. While pining for Mark, Johanna alternately dreads him drowning, languishing under disease, and being murdered. None of these scenarios takes priority in her imagination, but instead her mind flits between each spontaneously. Dread is thus the affective stance of her infinite unknowing about the future: Will Mark return? If he does not, will he send a message?

Johanna's dread is immediately rendered in a melodramatic mode when her father mentions the date—unbeknownst to him, the very date by which Mark promised to communicate with his daughter—and Johanna, the narrator informs us, sinks "into a chair and burst into tears" and then proceeds to speak to Mr. Oakley "incoherently and amidst sobs" (13). These rhetorically performed gestures of emotion make abundantly clear that "the Flower of Fore-Street" is feeling anguish, with which the reader is encouraged to sympathize (8). This display situates Johanna in both the melodramatic mode and the romance tradition by characterizing her as an afflicted heroine, one who embodies unquestionable commitment to her beloved. Her undisguised emotional response signals virtue: she cannot repress her love for Mark, nor can she hide these feelings from her father. In this way, Johanna's performance corresponds with Elaine Hadley's argument in *Melodramatic Tactics* (1995) that the mode "hearken[s] back to a deferential society and its patriarchal grounds for identity."[521] Furthering this traditionally

[520] "dread, n." *OED Online*, accessed March 21, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/57581.

[521] Elaine Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800-1885* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 11.

conceived femininity even more, Johanna recounts a dream wherein she witnesses a storm and intuits that Mark is drowning, yet laments: "I was helpless—utterly helpless, utterly and entirely unable to lend the slightest aid" (16-17). This particular compound of form and affect is quintessentially melodramatic, as Brooks points out: "in the passivity of response to anguish […] we accede to the experience of nightmare."[522] Johanna's impotence in the dream corresponds to her inability to take action in reality. From the outset, then, Johanna is rendered a melodramatic enactor of dread, which she passively experiences while waiting for news of her missing love.

The next day, Johanna receives a note instructing her to go to Temple Gardens at sunset where she will meet a man carrying a white rose. This encounter seems to promise total alleviation of her suffering, and accordingly Johanna eagerly exclaims: "Yes, yes, I will be there. One hour before sunset, ay two hours before sunset, I will be there" (39). The palliation of dread, therefore, is a powerful motivator for action; however, the narrative does not reward Johanna's haste, for the mysterious note-writer turns out not to be Mark, but an acquaintance of his, Colonel Jeffery, who has little to report. He is, rather, speaking on behalf of his friend Thornhill, who had a string of pearls for Johanna from Mark, but has mysteriously disappeared since going to Sweeney Todd's barbershop. While Jeffery goes off in search of Thornhill, Johanna remains in agonizing uncertainty, and convinces herself that Thornhill and Mark are the same person. As a result, she is not only keenly invested in Jeffery's exertions, but also contemplates how she herself could make headway in the mystery. Dread thus begins to operate like a narratological black hole, pulling its affected subject into exponentially deeper dimensions of plot.

The second meeting between Jeffery and Johanna reveals how the heroine's dread centrifugally propels her into a confrontation with the dreadful. Jeffery has failed to discover

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[522] Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 35.

anything for certain, but shares his suspicion that Thornhill met foul play at Todd's shop. Confronted with this glaring misgiving, Johanna declares: "I will ascertain his fate, or perish"; and she then retorts to Jeffery's admonitions: "But can I endure this dreadful suspense?" (128-29). In one sense, "dreadful" here corresponds to the colloquial usage in order to intensify Johanna's suspense. That is, the suspense is "very bad." Simultaneously, "dreadful" is undergirded by its religious significance, which attends to moral conduct and future reception in the "dread book of Judgement."[523] What this nuanced adjective subtly develops is Johanna's vital awareness of her ability to take future action instead of waiting in ignorance for Mark. In other words, she not only is in suspense regarding Mark's fate, but also dreadfully anticipates her own decision-making to do something. The negative feelings inspired by dread—fear of the unknown future—are overcome by a positive apprehension of potentiality and free will. The possibility that Mark is alive and the belief that she can exert herself to find him saves her from despair, and this action, she reckons, will reveal the truth about the whereabouts of Mark and/or Thornhill, as well as solve the mystery of Sweeney Todd.

Accordingly, the feeling of dreadful suspense motivates Johanna to take moral action. Initially, she expresses her dread-inspired resolution in markedly feminine melodramatic language:

> Affection conquers all obstacles, and the weakest and most inefficient girl that ever stepped, if she have strong within her that love which, in all its sacred intensity, knows no fear, shall indeed accomplish much. I feel that in such a cause, I could shake off all

[523] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by J. Shawcross, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 80.

> girlish terrors and ordinary alarms; and if there be danger, I would ask, what is life to me without all that could adorn it, and make it beautiful? (128)

This enunciation participates in what Brooks identifies as "the precise 'sublimity' of melodramatic rhetoric: the emphatic articulation of simple truths and relationships, the clarification of the cosmic moral sense of everyday gestures."[524] The sublime force of Johanna's speech is generated by her exaggerated rhetoric ("*the weakest* and *most* inefficient girl that *ever* stepped") and the preeminence of feeling (the "sacred intensity" of love, "girlish terrors and ordinary alarms"), which emphasize her girlhood and virtue. Remarkably, Johanna does not attribute the active and courageous conquering of obstacles to herself, but rather to "Affection." It is not a human agent, but emotion personified that confronts and progresses through tribulation. As affect becomes linked with "the weakest and most inefficient girl that ever stepped," weakness and inefficiency are rendered assets rather than limitations: the physical fragility of the girl is what allows for the "sacred intensity" of her love, now distinctly hallowed, to become utterly effective in "accomplish[ing] much." Only in the second sentence does Johanna replace the agent "Affection" with herself, but does so by asserting "I feel," which serves less to replace herself with affection and more to fuse herself with the personification of affection. It is by *feeling* that Johanna can, paradoxically, alleviate some feelings—"girlish terrors and ordinary alarms"—to solve the "dreadful mystery" (243).

Despite employing the rhetoric of melodrama in this monologue, Johanna's exertions at this point mark a divergence from the typical melodramatic pattern, where the villain's persecutions determine the heroine's course of action. Although we will learn at the very end of the story that Sweeney Todd was partly responsible for Mark's absence (he is imprisoned in Mrs.

[524] Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 13-14.

Lovett's subterranean bakery), the barber does not directly menace Johanna. Thus, iniquity and injustice are not directly imposed upon her, as is the case with a typical melodramatic heroine. In Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery, A Melo-Drame* (1802), to give a well-known example, Selina overhears and thwarts a murderous plot. Even so, she is later banished, wrongfully, from her home, because the patriarch Bonano suspects she is illegitimate. This episode bears out Brooks's observation: "Virtue is almost inevitably represented by a young heroine," one whose persecutions are almost always carried out by the evil villain.[525] Johanna, however, is not imperiled within her ancestral home or exiled from its walls, but rather chooses to leave the security of domesticity in order to resolve the dangerous mystery of the barbershop. In this way, Johanna acts more like an inquisitive Gothic heroine—an Emily St. Aubert exploring Castle Udolpho—by intentionally pursuing an encounter with the dreadful.

In so doing, however, Johanna participates in a melodramatic convention of disguised identity, a necessary obfuscation for the ultimate unveiling of truth.[526] After leaving Thornhill and consulting with her quixotic friend Arabella Wilmot, Johanna decides to go to "that dreadful and dreaded man," Sweeney Todd, dressed as a boy to assume the position of apprentice and surveil his barbershop (258). As Johanna embarks on her mission she thinks: "What is continued existence to me, embittered with the constant thought that such a dreadful mystery hangs over the fate of Mark Ingestrie?" (243). Instead of remaining passively "embittered" by uncertainty, Johanna actively ventures toward the "dreadful mystery." Most strikingly, the moment that Johanna *seeks* rather than *encounters* dread, she cross-dresses as a boy.

[525] Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 32.

[526] Brooks, 29-30.

What follows is a quintessential scene of acute melodramatic dread: "The lad advanced a step towards the door, hesitated, retreated, and then advanced again, as if he wished to apply for the vacant situation, and yet dreaded to do so" (243). It is significant that Johanna experiences dread at this climatic moment, literally on the threshold of making a choice to act. Johanna's hesitation, retreat, and advance dramatize—in a manner that can easily be imagined on the stage—an intense experience of *being able*. Her profound dread far exceeds meagre fear of Sweeney Todd, who is menacingly stropping a razor in the window. Her anxiety is the product of exerting her will while in a state of complete ignorance. She does not know how to act like a boy, let alone a shop-boy. Neither does she understand how Sweeney Todd will behave toward her, nor how she will investigate the shop, nor even what she is looking for. The pause at the doorway followed by backward then forward movement literalizes, in a performative manner, the hesitant deliberation and ultimate actuation precipitated by dread.

This moment also clarifies how dread appealed to working-class readers on an aesthetic level. Unlike the sublime, upon which Gothic romances often expatiate in interminable sentences, the dreadful is demotic: syntactically simple and written in familiar language. Significantly, too, it is an ordinary urban experience, one that involves applying for an open shop position, that evokes dread, and not an extraordinary natural phenomenon while traveling in a foreign mountain range. Dread, unlike the sublime, was an accessible aesthetic for the newly literate urban working class. Nevertheless, dread, like the sublime, is still an intensely philosophic mood and mode of perception. It corresponds therefore with the aim of all of Lloyd's periodicals in that decade, as Haywood has observed. Such writing sought to present

> before a large and intelligent class of readers, at a charge comparatively insignificant, those same pleasures of the imagination which have hitherto, to a great extent, only

> graced the polished leisure of the wealthy… correct tastes, glowing fancies, and an admirable perception of the poetical and the beautiful, are as well to be found by the humble fire-sides, as in the lordly mansions of the great and noble.[527]

Dread indeed kindles "glowing fancies" and brings about "the beautiful," as Johanna asserts to Jeffery. The editorial statement in *Lloyd's Penny Weekly* and the presence of dread in *Sweeney Todd* share the moderately radical project of representing the lower classes with deep reflective capacities and moral courage.

Johanna goes on to play a key role in the police capture of the barber, which is all the more important given the obfuscation of her gender. The more likely assistant hero, for Victorian readers, would have been Tobias, Todd's first shop boy whom he incarcerates in a mad house when the boy discovers his secret. Although the narrative follows Tobias's travails and daring escape from the corrupt asylum, his role—in comparison to Johanna's—is ultimately marginal in the capture of Todd. In contrast, the penny dreadfuls of subsequent decades would always feature young boy heroes and were specifically marketed toward a juvenile male audience; though the resolution of these later tales rarely complied with the conventional moral framework that the melodramatic mode of *Sweeney Todd* demands.[528] Melodrama, unlike penny dreadfuls, is "not only a moralistic drama but the drama of morality: it strives to find, to articulate, to demonstrate, to 'prove' the existence of a moral universe which, though put into question, masked by villainy and perversions of judgement, does exist and can be made to assert its presence."[529] Johanna must disguise her identity in order to descend into the troubled moral universe of Fleet Street, so

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[527] Editorial statement from *Lloyd's Penny Weekly* as cited in Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*, 167.

[528] Patrick Dunae, "Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth-Century Boys' Literature and Crime," *Victorian Studies* 22, no. 2 (1979): 133-34.

[529] Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 20.

that the ultimate revelation of her true femininity can parallel the unveiling of truth about the barber and the baker. Enabling this dynamic plot is Johanna's intentional encounter with dread, which transforms her physically and thus capacitates her penetration of the criminal underworld.

In the ensuing apprehension of Sweeney Todd, the disguised Johanna demonstrates how confronting the dreadful—an object of excessive terror—simultaneously cultivates self-control. Her feminine emotional outbursts at the start of the tale, when she passively experiences "dreadful suspense," are overridden once she chooses to face "the dreadful and dreaded man" in the sartorial parlor. After such extraordinary threats as "I'll pull out your teeth by degrees, with red hot pincers" and "I'll be the death of you, you devil's cub," Sweeney Todd departs on an errand, and Johanna indulges in a "violent burst of grief, she wrung her hands and wept; but then, as a thought of the danger she would be in should Todd return and see the signs of emotion crossed her mind, she controlled her tears, and managed to bear the outward semblance of composure" (246, 252-53). Innovatively, Rymer employs language akin to stage directions to curtail Johanna's melodramatic effusion of feeling. It is to Johanna's exterior performance, not interiorized feelings, that the narrator directs us: her "violent burst of grief" is evidenced by wringing hands and weeping. This action is followed by the cessation of tears and an "outward semblance of composure." Although the narrator informs us that Johanna "thought of the danger she would be in," we have no sense of what these thoughts are like. The reader is not privy to an internal monologue or even free indirect discourse. Rather than relating Johanna's thought process or describing the feelings themselves, Rymer endows his heroine with meaning by narrating her embodied activity.

The heroine's physical control over her body, indicated by repressed tears and composed features, is coded as masculine, given the gender of her disguise. As a girl, it was previously

permissible for her to express herself in corporeally invested metaphors such as "shake off all girlish terrors," but as a boy placing himself in a dreadful situation, Johanna must master "his" affective expression (128). The feeling of dread therefore enables not only a physical but also an emotional transformation, one that—especially when it is juxtaposed with the barber's excessive violence—serves as a model for ethical conduct.

Just as this link between Johanna's physical and emotional self-restraint is forged, so too is Sweeney Todd's embodied excess manifested in contrast. While Johanna is mastering her feelings and features in the shop, Todd meets with a chemist to purchase poison intended for his accomplice's brandy bottle: "Todd walked away with the poison in his pocket, and when he had got a few yards from the chemist's door, he gave such a hideous chuckle that an old gentleman, who was close before him, ran like a lamp-lighter in his fright" (251). Although the villain physically controls himself for "a few yards from the chemist's door" to evade detection (he has acquired the toxin purportedly to combat a rat problem in his shop), his body ultimately emits "such a hideous chuckle" that an unknowing bystander cannot mistake its malevolence. In this parallel scene to Johanna's, then, we witness a reversal: Todd's composure is a sham through which embodied evil eventually breaks through, whereas Johanna's violent grief is a natural emotional response to the dreadful situation that must be heroically conquered in order to triumph over the forces of evil.

Ultimately, Johanna's dread-induced suppression of her natural emotions and gender is not criminalized but valorized, as it participates in an ethical commitment to the final divulgence of truth that undergirds the melodramatic mode. Though the magistrate gently chastises her for "embark[ing] in a very dangerous enterprise–an enterprise which, considering [her] youth and [her] sex, should have been left to others," he still commends her "great chivalry of spirit" (253).

Moreover, rather than extricating her from the shop, he employs her assistance in the apprehension of Todd. Subsequently, Johanna gives the police access to the barbershop while Todd is away, conceals officers in an unlocked cupboard discovered by her own initiative, and allays Todd's suspicions when he returns, thereby preserving the officers' lives. By intentionally confronting dread, Johanna is "able to do good service in aiding to unmask that villain" (254). Deliberately facing the dreadful, therefore, precipitates justice.

By venturing into Sweeney Todd's shop to acquire truth, Johanna learns the right way to dread, having forsaken the wrong way of passively sinking into her despair of Mark's demise at the outset of the story. Freely and actively exerting her will (as a boy) to infiltrate the shop yields the ultimate unveiling of facts at the end of the narrative: Sweeney Todd murders wealthy patrons and disposes of their bodies in Mrs. Lovett's pies. For Johanna, however, an even more important truth is revealed: it turns out that Mark Ingestrie is not dead but was enslaved in Mrs. Lovett's subterranean bakery. Her reward for confronting the dreadful is union with her lost love and the restoration of her femininity, corresponding with the virtue rewarded expectation of melodrama. Dread thus operates both subversively and conservatively: seeking this mood transforms the girl into a boy, but gender relations are reinstated once the ethical work of dread is accomplished. Such reinstatement, however, is not—as I argue below—reactionary.

Dread, Capitalism, and Democracy

The parallel evolution of Mark Ingestrie's dread connects the ethical nature of this affect to issues of labor, commodities, and consumption. As in Johanna's case, the cultivation of dread is necessary for the development of Mark's character and plotline. It is only by soliciting this affect that he becomes a masculine hero worthy of his beloved. Numerous characters at the outset of the story remark on Mark's immaturity and question his suitability for the lovely

spectacle-maker's daughter. "One would have thought that if Mark Ingestrie had really loved you," Mr. Oakley muses disapprovingly to his daughter, "and found that he might make you his wife, and acquire an honorable subsistence both for you and himself – it seems a very wonderful thing to me that he did not do so" (15). Over the course of the narrative however, Mark metamorphoses from a worthless youth "scampering about the world in an unsettled manner" into an appropriately brave, active, and steadfast man by confronting the dreadful in Mrs. Lovett's oubliette bakery (18).

Upon first assuming the position, which he begged for in a state of starvation, the interned baker is compliantly content with making and gorging himself on the delectable pies. Mark's lack of dread of the future, the narrator implies, corresponds with his submissiveness: "The fact was, his mind had been so intensively occupied during the time he had been there in providing for his physical wants, that he had scarcely time to think or reason upon the probabilities of an uncomfortable termination of his career" (173). In other words, Mark lives entirely within the present moment constituted by appetite, and therefore shirks contemplation of "probabilities" of the future, which are likely to be "uncomfortable." Notably, the narrator establishes a binary where the present is associated with the satisfaction of physiological needs, while the future is linked with abstract "think[ing] or reason." A change occurs, however, when "he had become surfeited with the pies, and tired of the darkness and gloom of the place, many unknown fears began to creep across him, and he really trembled, as he asked himself what was to be the end of all" (173). Although Mark has eaten pies in excess, his overindulgence is not infinitely continuous, at least under certain conditions of setting. Rather, once Mark has "become surfeited with the pies" he simultaneously becomes "tired of the darkness and gloom," thereby signaling how meeting the body's needs allows for perception of the external environment. Upon

apprehending the setting, Mark is then able to be affected by "many unknown fears." In a melodramatic mode, the narrator informs us that Mark "*really* trembled." The adverb, which I have emphasized here, conveys his trembling as a physiological fact acted out in reality, and not merely a metaphoric shudder. Importantly, this shudder is not simply a reaction to his disconcerting setting, but instead provoked by fear of the unknown future: "what was to be the end of all." In short, Mark begins to dread, though for reasons that promptly focus his thoughts on the economic system in which his mind and body are entrammeled.

Thus, the narrator focuses on a tableau of Mark "sitting in a rather contemplative attitude with a pie before him" immediately before he resolves: "No, no! damn it, I cannot eat it, and that's the fact" (172). He then shouts to Mrs. Lovett through the trapdoor, "I cannot be made into a mere machine for the manufacture of pies" (173). In this way, becoming mindful of his practices of consumption plainly awakens Mark to his dehumanized role in an automated system of labor. His situation is the uncanny apotheosis of Karl Marx's bleak vision in the *Grundrisse* (1857-58):

> once adopted into the production process of capital, the means of labour passes through different metamorphoses, whose culmination is the *machine*, or rather, an *automatic system of machinery* […] set in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself; this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages.[530]

[530] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 692. A number of scholars have cogently applied Marxist critique to the Sweeney Todd story in its prose and drama iterations. See Mack, *The Wonderful and Surprising History*, 67; King, "'Literature of the Kitchen'"; Powell, "Black Markets and Cadaverous Pies"; Lawrence Phillips and Anne Witchard, "Introduction," in *London Gothic* (London: Continuum, 2010); Louise Creechan "Attend the Tale of Sweeney Todd: Adaptation, Revival, and Keeping the Meat Grinder Turning," *Neo-Victorian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2016); Anette Pankratz, "The Pleasures in the Horrors of Eating Human Flesh: Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler's *Sweeney Todd*," in *The Pleasures and Horrors of Eating*, ed. by Marion Gymnich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); Rosalind Crone, "Selling *Sweeney Todd* to the Masses," in *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press,

Mark, however, rejects his position as a baker's automaton by confronting dread, and consequently furthers a stimulating plot line. He explores the bakery prison and attempts to uncover its mysteries.

Of particular interest to Mark is how the meat is restocked, for he never witnesses a supplier entering or leaving the dungeon. Upon exploring the meat vault, Mark finds no explanation, as there is only one door that opens on to the main room where he works. He does, however, discover a message written on the inner side of the door declaring there is "a hideous secret" connected with the vault that is "so hideous, that to write it makes one's blood curdle, and the flesh to creep" (175). It is remarkable that the note writer, who evidently knew the meat was human flesh, does not describe it as "dreadful." Instead, the secret is twice called "hideous" and his reaction is couched in somatic metaphors. These are familiar Gothic horror techniques of the M. G. Lewis school, made infamous in *The Monk* (1796), where "direct encounter[s] with physical mortality" are represented in all their repulsive corporeality.[531] In another common Gothic move, the note cuts off without providing Mark, or the reader, any information about the hideous secret whatsoever. Mark therefore exclaims: "what can this most dreadful secret be…?" (175). As opposed to the previous pie-maker, Mark perceives the secret as "dreadful" because he remains largely ignorant about the nature of the enigmatic meat. Where the previous baker has experienced fear at the concrete reality of cannibalism, Mark develops a sense of dread of the unknown possibilities of the situation.

2012); and Aaron C. Thomas, *Sondheim and Wheeler's* Sweeney Todd (London: Routledge, 2018). However, these critics, with the exception of Creechan, largely concentrate on the cannibalism/capitalism trope, whereas I focus on Mark's position as an automaton.

[531] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 2014), 69.

This affective state bolsters Mark physically and mentally to discover the truth about the nefarious bakery and devise his escape. The narrator relates a vivid scene of performative gestures wherein Mark wields a "javelin-like poker as a battering ram" to barrage the wall of the meat vault until it yields a secret passageway (271). He is met with a "dreadful sight" (271). Why does this sight remain ambiguously "dreadful" when the truth was concretely "hideous" for the previous baker? One explanation is that the scene remains obscure for the reader, who is only given access to Mark's physiological reaction to a sight that "had so chilled his young blood, and frozen up the spring of life" (271). Consequently, the reader remains in a state of dreadful unknowing. Another explanation, however, is that Mark's dread dominates his horror. At first sight of the butcher's room, he gives a "cry of horror," falls, and "lay for a full quarter of an hour insensible upon the floor" (271), which is a paradigmatic reaction according to Ann Radcliffe's famous dictum that horror "contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates…"[532] However, upon awakening Mark displays an anxious desire to take action: "What shall I do? O, what shall I do?" he immediately soliloquizes (271). Aware that he has entered into a greater web of depravity than he had ever conceived, Mark's rhetorical questions demonstrate a commitment to taking action to save himself and expose Mrs. Lovett. Action-oriented and politically informed dread thus prevails over stultifying horror.

It is only when he is motivated by dread that Mark can formulate a plan to evade his prison. His means of escape are truly compelling in the context of mechanized labor. While once Mark was rendered "a mere machine," here he breaks out of the dungeon through reasserting his human-ness and spectacularly turning the machine back into what it is: a tool to be used by a

[532] Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry," *New Monthly Magazine* 16, no. 1 (1826): 149.

human being. He leaps on to the pie tray that ascends to the bakery by an ingenious pulley system, and he is hoisted by Mrs. Lovett herself into the very center of the crowded shop.

Mark's ability to use machinery to his own advantage has significant bearing on the politics connected with Edward Lloyd's own career as an innovator of printing technology. The publisher was always fascinated by mechanical systems that improved workplace efficiency, and in 1856 he introduced Hoe's rotary steam press into Britain. The press was so effective that Lloyd began supplying paper to other publishers. This technological success corresponded with a massive escalation in Lloyd's sales and reputation as a respectable publisher. According to Kirkpatrick: "In 1853, [Lloyd's] *Weekly Newspaper* was selling 90,000 copies to a largely working class and lower-middle class readership, and, following the abolition of the stamp and paper duties, and a corresponding reduction in the price of his newspaper to one penny in 1861, circulation rose to 500,000."[533] Later in life, Lloyd would renounce his penny fiction days and comfortably affiliate with the upper echelons of London society. Indeed, he accumulated immense wealth from his modest start in the industry, leaving £565,240 at his death in 1890, which puts his income "well within the richest 1 percent of Victorian Britain."[534] For Lloyd, then, mechanical innovation and its shrewd application to a business model were crucial to financial and social success.

When we turn to the presence of technology in *Sweeney Todd,* it encourages us to reflect on both Lloyd's skillful use of printing machinery and Mark's mastery over the bakery's pulley system. Each case rejects the imbrication of workers in an automatic system of machinery where "it is the machine which possesses skill and strength in place of the worker, is itself the virtuoso,

[533] Kirkpatrick, *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha'penny Dreadfuller*, 71.

[534] King, "'Literature of the Kitchen,'" 41.

with a soul of its own in the mechanical laws acting through it."[535] In *Sweeney Todd*, it is the affective power of dread that enables Mark to "animate . . . and make . . . into his organ with his skill and strength" the bakery's machinery.[536] Let the automaton do the work in the basement, the narrative suggests, while the human being literally rises above to the social sphere where he spouts truth and brings justice. This has implications for a certain kind of gendered logic, for upon landing in the center of the teeming pie shop, Mark announces: "Ladies and Gentlemen–I fear that what I am going to say will spoil your appetites; but the truth is beautiful at all times, and I have to state that Mrs. Lovett's pies are made of *human flesh!*" (280). His speech, performed like a gentleman opening a grand event, resonates with Lloyd's own social mobility as a result of technological mastery. The language itself is reminiscent of Johanna's declaration to Colonel Jeffery: "what is life to me without all that could adorn it, and make it beautiful?" (128). The classic linkage of truth and beauty figures significantly in Johanna's motivations and Mark's perceptions. Upon averring that life is not worth living without beautiful affections, Johanna initiates her "romantic, strange […] plan" to discover her missing lover (129). Aspiring toward a beautiful life propels her to uncover the truth at Sweeney Todd's shop. In the opposite direction, Mark understands his revelation of truth about the bakery as endowing the macabre situation with beauty. Truth, for both Johanna and Mark, is beautiful, but paradoxically, this beauty can only be brought about by boldly entering into dreadful situations.

The conclusion of the narrative rewards Johanna's and Mark's respective commitments to the productive economy of dread with their reunion, marriage, and the narrator's assurance that they "lived long and happily together, enjoying all the comforts of an independent

[535] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 693.

[536] Marx, 693.

existence" (282). It is strange, however, that this independent existence is not made possible by the eponymous string of pearls. As a matter of fact, the purloined jewels disappear from the plot entirely after Todd successfully pawns them halfway through the story. It is unlikely that Rymer simply forgot about the pearls, given the original publication's title. More plausibly, he deliberately avoids using the oriental necklace to conclude the story in order to reinforce his critique of exploited labor in systems of orchestrated excess. For Rymer to make this point, it is crucial that his protagonists do not prosper from a string of pearls acquired by invisible and abused labor in the Empire. Instead, their wealth is stated in the abstract, without a quantified sum, and unaccountably endowed outside capitalist modes of production in the metropolis. Thus, without providing a revolutionary subversion of the dominant economic system, the ending of *Sweeney Todd* requires its readers to imagine a financial position, one gained without exploitation, which offers "comfort" without excessive luxury. While George Orwell found the "radiant idleness" of such endings dissatisfying, mid nineteenth-century readers of the industrious classes, who were employed under conditions of hard physical labor nine to ten hours a day for five to six days a week, would most likely have viewed this comfortable domesticity without labor as a highly desirable reward.[537]

Johanna and Mark's marriage, which was indicated all along in the subtitle to the original publication, is a noteworthy consequence of their dread-induced adventures.[538] Although dread

[537] George Orwell, *Critical Essays*, ed. George Packer (London: Harvill Secker, 2009), 44. See Paul Clayton and Judith Rowbotham, "How the mid-Victorians Worked, Ate, and Died," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 6, no. 3 (March 2009): 1240.

[538] *Sweeney Todd's* original demarcation as a romance does not preclude its participation in the melodramatic mode. To the contrary, Brooks asserts that melodrama "generally operates in the mode of romance, though with its own specific structure and characters." *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 30. As Walter Scott reminded his readers in 1824, Dr. Johnson defined a romance as "a tale of wild adventures in love and chivalry." "Essay on Romance," in *Essays on Chivalry, Romance, and the Drama,* Chandos Classics (London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1887), 65. This generalization certainly applies to *Sweeney Todd*. At the same time, the narrative engages the melodramatic mode through what Linda Williams articulates as "a dialectic of pathos and action," in which there are characters that

would eventually become, as I mention above, central to existential philosophy, which revolves around subjective experience, dread in *Sweeney Todd* does not champion atomistic individualism.[539] Indeed, the reward for confronting dread is a felicitous marital union. Yet even prior to their marriage, Johanna's and Mark's personal encounters with dread connect them in a network of other people—concerned friends, the local magistrate, and Bow Street Runners—all of whom are suspicious of Todd. Although dreading is a personal and private experience of reflection, its effects therefore are not isolating, but socializing. *Sweeney Todd* advocates justice attained through collective individualism, where the thoughts and actions of individuals synergistically contribute to the common good. This is the essential objective of the melodramatic mode: "to make the world we inhabit one charged with meaning, one in which interpersonal relations are not merely contacts of the flesh but encounters that must be carefully nurtured, judged, handled as if they matter."[540]

"embody primary psychic roles organized in Manichaean conflicts of good and evil," and "focus on victim-heroes—with whom the audience is made to identify —and the eventual recognition of their virtue." "Melodrama Revised," 62. Jim Davis warns present-day critics against anachronistically imposing the generic marker of melodrama on texts that were not conceived as such. "Melodrama On and Off the Stage," in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Literary Culture*, ed. by Juliet John (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 687. Regardless of whether or not readers identified *Sweeney Todd* as melodrama, however, an analysis of these specific features (which we recognize today as melodramatic) still holds true.

[539] Søren Kierkegaard's *Begrebet Angest* (1844) was originally translated from Danish as *The Concept of Dread* in 1944 and then as *The Concept of Anxiety* in 1980. Scholars on Kierkegaard often use "dread" and "anxiety" synonymously in their work. See, for instance, Megna, "Better Living Through Dread"; Hugh S. Pyper, "Kierkegaard and English Language Literature," in *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard*, ed. John Lippitt and George Pattison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Jonathan Judaken, "Introduction," in *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). For more on dread and philosophy see Samuel Moyn, "Anxiety and Secularization," in *Situating Existentialism*, eds. Jonathan Judaken and Robert Bernasconi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Hagi Kenyan and Ilit Ferber, "Moods and Philosophy," in *Philosophy's Moods* (New York: Springer, 2011); Dan Magurshak, "The Concept of Anxiety," in *Concept of Anxiety, International Kierkegaard Commentary* 8 (1985); and Arland Ussher, *Journey through Dread: A Study of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1955).

[540] Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 22.

It is perhaps understandable that some commentators have concluded that the "romance" of this penny blood rises above adversity. King maintains that this ending where "love triumphs over the inhumanity of the profit motive" suggests "the vitality, even in the midst of horror, of the sentimental."[541] The sentimental, King asserts, "reacted against the encroaching calculations of capitalism by valorizing sympathy – fellow feeling – above utility."[542] While this view of the narrative as a triumph of tender attachments holds true, it fails to account for the ethical and political consequences of dread actuating this melodramatic romance plot. Dread underscores the power of free will and the moral necessity of contemplating the manifold future consequences of our actions, and hence has much to bear on agitations for democratic reform that would reach their apex just one year after *Sweeney Todd's* completion in the *People's Periodical and Family Library,* a publication that, as Haywood asserts, "yokes together radical tradition and the important new cultural terrain of family reading."[543] In April 1848, the new Chartist Convention presented a third petition to Parliament in which the very first reform of the People's Charter declared: "every male inhabitant of these realms be entitled to vote for the election of a Member of Parliament," subject to an age condition (at least twenty-one years old), no criminal history, and mental competency.[544] Mark Ingestrie's realization of manhood through dreadful willpower certainly indicates the working man's desire for his will to be politically recognized. Mark's character development is, in many ways, a didactic sketch directed at working men: exerting the will is not just a right, but an ethical form of conduct that requires continual contemplation.

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[541] King, "'Literature of the Kitchen,'" 44.

[542] King, 44.

[543] Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*, 168.

[544] Working Men's Association, *The People's Charter; with the Address to the Radical Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland, and a Brief Sketch of Its Origin* (London: Charles Fox, 1848), 11.

In the end, *Sweeney Todd* both appeals to and shapes a working-class democratic politics, wherein individuals are encouraged to think deeply about the possibilities of the future, which in turn encourages them to make a personal contribution to a collective system of justice. While the middle and upper classes may have dreaded revolution in 1848, working-class dread in Rymer's penny fiction repudiates the thoughtlessness and de-individualization that constitutes mob violence. This critique is perceptible in Rymer's other penny fiction, such as *Varney the Vampire* (1845-1847), where the mob that "will obey any impulse" is repeatedly represented as "bewildered," "disorderly," and even cowardly.[545] Very simply, the narrator of *Varney* states: "Mobs do not reason very closely and clearly."[546] Nor is the mob attributed feelings of dread, for this "assemblage which seemed to be unchecked by all sort of law or reason" only reacts to immediate stimuli rather than contemplating the future.[547] Quite the opposite of feeling dread, the mob perpetrates one "dreadful deed" after another, such that Troy Boone argues "*Varney* repeatedly raises the reader's interest in violence in order to undermine fascination with it and to direct the reader's interest towards other possibilities."[548]

Machinations and Chartism in *The Mysteries of London*

Although the organized, controlled, and thoughtful group of justice seekers who investigate the dreadful in *Sweeney Todd* ostensibly serve as a model for working-class enfranchisement, the narrator never makes any explicit political overtures. This is certainly not the case in Reynolds's *Mysteries of London*, a radical work where dread also appears to

[545] James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest, *Varney the Vampire*, ed. by Curt Herr (Crestline, CA: Zittaw Press, 2008), 256, 292, 254, 299.

[546] Rymer and Prest, 273.

[547] Rymer and Prest, 256.

[548] Rymer and Prest, 297; Troy Boone, *Youth of Darkest England* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 53.

modulating and judicious effect as the characters who "learn to dread [the world's] cruel artifices and deceptive ways" are rewarded.[549] In much the same way as Rymer, Reynolds sends his protagonists to interrogate the dreadful, not just witness it, but investigate and understand it. As a result, these characters cultivate feelings of dread that allow them to break free of oppressive situations and simultaneously assist others in need. Such affectively driven ethical action aligns with Reynolds's socio-political agenda, as evidenced in his contemporaneous series "Letters to the Industrious Classes" published in his *Miscellany* (January-May 1847). There is, nonetheless, a significant difference between the ways in which *The Mysteries of London* and *Sweeney Todd* bring about their respective happy conclusions of social integration. As we saw in Rymer's story, the mystery is unveiled and justice restored by human mastery over machinery. By contrast, *The Mysteries of London* offers a cautionary tale that illustrates the ease with which people turn their fellows into "tools" through "machinations." *The Mysteries of London* thus extends the dread of instrumentalization that *Sweeney Todd* eventually forecloses in order to mobilize working-class resistance to dehumanizing labor practices.

After a didactic prologue decrying the unjust distinctions between "Wealth" and "Poverty," the opening action of *The Mysteries of London* begins melodramatically with a stormy night that causes an ambiguous figure to become lost in the seedy streets of London's East End. Despite the youth's masculine blue frock coat, the narrator's heavy emphasis on his "extreme effeminacy," "long, luxuriant hair, of a beautiful light chestnut colour," and a countenance "as fair and delicate as that of a young girl," strongly suggests that the character's

[549] George W. M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, vol. 1, ed. Dick Collins (Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2013), 382.

true gender is female.[550] Utterly disoriented, the boyish figure enters an open door in an unknown street and soon discovers himself in a thieves' hideout. When the ruffians return, he is caught inside and must quietly wait for them to leave. In so doing, he overhears their plan to rob Markham Place. Soon, however, the youth is discovered and forced to face a "dread truth": the villains murder intruders by chucking their bodies through a trapdoor in the floor that leads to the Thames (17). Such is the lad's fate. But by a stroke of good fortune (a plank has fallen over the water), he escapes this subterranean doom and immediately writes a warning letter to Mr. Markham. The robbery does not take place. Thus, *The Mysteries of London* immediately shows us how confronting dread, even in a forced situation, correlates with noble, pro-social behavior.

When we next encounter this youth in the narrative, he is indeed revealed to be a woman in a luxurious boudoir, which "contained articles of male and female use and attire strangely commingled—pell-mell—together" (43). As illustrated in George Vicks's first 1846 edition in Figure 3, a young lady "of great beauty" lingers in bed, stewing in a state of dread, despite the arrival downstairs of her guardian and benefactor, Mr. Stephens (44). As she tells her loyal maid, Louisa: "I feel as if one of those dreadful attacks of despondency—one of those fearful fits of alarm and foreboding—of presentiment of evil, were coming on; and—" (45). The redundancy of the clauses and use of em-dashes convey the protracted quality of her thoughts, which are so extensive that Louisa sees fit to cut them off. Importantly, her

Fig. 3: Eliza Sydney

[550] George W. M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, ed. Dick Collins, vol. 1 (Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2013), 5. Subsequent page numbers will be marked in parentheses in the body of the chapter.

mistress is not presently experiencing a violent "fit" of alarm or "attack" of despondency. Instead, she senses these upsetting occurrences might happen in the future as a result of "that horrible mystery," which "[c]ompell[s] [her] to sustain a constant cheat" (46). For this reason, she exclaims, "I seem to be walking blindfold upon the brink of an abyss!" (51).[551] The young lady, who we soon learn to be Eliza Sydney, has been induced by Stephens to take on her deceased brother Walter's identity until he comes of age, at which time she can assume his fortune and retire in a foreign land as a woman once again. Stephens, however, has not explained the extent of his scheme to Eliza. She is not fully aware that they are committing an illegal act of deception. Her dread arises as a result of this ignorance.

Stephens is patently aware that Eliza's contemplative dread could unravel his plan, one in which he stands to gain a vast part of the Sydney fortune. Thus, he strategically banishes her fearful anticipations about the future by inundating her with present delights. In Eliza's words: "He has surrounded me with every comfort and every luxury which appetite can desire or money procure" (47). At this point, Eliza is like Mark Ingestrie upon his first admittance to Mrs. Lovett's bakery, mindlessly stuffing himself with pies. And just like the trapped employee who becomes entrammeled in the bakery's machinery, Eliza acknowledges to Stephens: "I am at present only a blind instrument in your hands—a mere machine—an automaton——" (51). The double em-dash after "automaton" underscores Eliza's passivity. But whereas Mark Ingestrie is disgusted by becoming a cog in Mrs. Lovett's mechanical baking system, Eliza "resignedly" views her complicity with dehumanization as her "duty" (47). "My gratitude is due to [Stephens]," Eliza informs Louisa (47). By comparing Mark's and Eliza's respective attitudes

[551] Although Reynolds was most likely unfamiliar with Kierkegaard's contemporary treatises on existential dread, they both arrive at the same metaphoric articulation of this feeling.

toward becoming automatons, we can clearly see how women, more so than men, were trained to accept their instrumentalization with a sense of obligation rather than resentment.

And yet, *The Mysteries of London* does not endorse the mechanization of women, for the narrator's omniscient point of view illuminates the extent to which Eliza's gratitude is misplaced in Stephens. As the two depart from the house to sign the fraudulent documents:

> Mr. Stephens did not allow his companion a single moment for calm and dispassionate refection. He continued to expatiate upon the happiness which was within her reach amidst the rural scenery of Switzerland:—he conjured up before her mental vision the most ravishing and delightful pictures of domestic tranquillity, so congenial to her tastes:—he fed her imagination with all those fairy visions which were calculated to attract and dazzle a mind tinged with a romantic shade;—and then he skillfully introduced those specious arguments which blinded her as to the real nature of the deceit in which she was so prominent an agent. He thus sustained an artificial state of excitement, bordering upon enthusiasm, in the bosom of that confiding and generous-hearted woman; and not for one moment during that long ride did she repent the step she had taken. In fact, such an influence did the reasoning of Stephens exercise upon her mind, that she ceased to think of the possibility of either incurring danger or doing wrong—she knew not how serious might be the consequences of detection;—she believed that she was combating the chicanery of the law with a similar weapon, the use of which was justified and rendered legitimate by the peculiar circumstances of the case. (221)

This paragraph is worth referencing in full because it is uncharacteristically long for Reynolds's style. It presents a torrent of sentences, which syntactically convey the ways in which Stephens is

a maleficent “conjurer” who “ravishes” Eliza with “fairy visions.” Despite the sensuous quality of these mental pictures, which thoroughly dissipate the “confiding and generous-hearted woman’s” sense of dread, Stephens himself is described in dispassionate terms. He “skillfully” presents “specious arguments” that are “calculated” to dismantle Eliza’s defenses. The language suggests that Stephens is a wicked engineer and Eliza is his unwitting instrument, or “weapon” to fight the supposed “chicanery of the law.” It is no surprise, then, that she “received the documents *mechanically* as it were and murmured a few words of thanks and gratitude” (emphasis added, 225).

The reader is made to pity rather than condemn this mechanized woman in men’s clothes by the narrator’s entrance into her thoughts during the climax of deception. While the papers are read aloud, “[t]he disguised lady had now time for reflection” (224). Without Stephens’s relentless stimulation, Eliza is able to observe the other parties in the transaction and consider the action she is taking. As a result, “[s]he suddenly felt as if her eyes were opened to a fearful conspiracy, in which she was playing a conspicuous part:—she trembled, as if she were standing upon the edge of a precipice;—and yet she knew not how to act. She was bewildered: but the uppermost idea in her mind was that she had gone too far to retreat” (224). Here Eliza’s dread viscerally awakens, and her uncertainty is at once a sign of her naivete and a generator of pity. By choosing to sign the documents, she is not altogether innocent, but she is not contemptible either.

In melodramatic fashion, the narrative quickly confirms this judgment on Eliza: the police barge in on the proceedings and Eliza, Stephens, and their lawyer, Mac Chizzle, are taken to court. Once in custody, Eliza falls full “prey to the most dreadful apprehensions and painful remorse” (227). These are feelings that neither Stephens nor Chizzle expresses. By contrast,

Eliza's experience of dread enables a critical realization of how she has been emplotted in a larger system of machinations. At last, she does not try to evade the dreadful: she embraces it as she "threw herself on her knees, clasped her hands together in an agony of grief, and exclaimed, 'It is true! I am not what I seem! I have been guilty of a fearful deception—a horrible cheat'" (229). This genuine outburst prompts a quintessentially Smithean reaction: "a universal sentiment of deep sympathy with the female prisoner, throughout the court" (229). This moment of shared feeling for Eliza marks a significant change, for she is transformed from a dehumanized tool into a human being worthy of compassion. Consequently, she is given a comparably light sentence: two years in Newgate, while Stephens and Chizzle are transported. The judge especially condemns Stephens for "convert[ing] [Eliza] into the instrument of [his] guilty designs" (250). Thus, *The Mysteries of London* censures men who render women tools in their schemes and also penalizes women who allow themselves to become mere automatons. To be sure, the judge does not view Eliza's gender as an excuse for poor decision-making: "Still, you had arrived, when you first assumed a masculine disguise, at the years of discretion, which should have taught you to reflect that no deceit can be designed for a good purpose" (251). The assumption here is that age rather than gender determines one's ethical reasoning capacities.

The Mysteries of London certainly affirms women's ability to moderate their emotions, think logically, and consequently act in accordance with measured feelings and ideas. In one scene of affective education, a sixteen-year-old daughter of a country gentleman, Mary-Anne Gordon, dismays at her lack of "great moral courage," a characteristic that she values in her friend, the princess Isabella (though she is yet unaware of Isabella's royal birth). "I am a weak and fragile plant," Mary-Anne confesses to her friend, "that bends to the lightest gale. How, then, can I resist the terrible tempest?" (1025). Isabella, who the narrator has extolled for the past

hundred chapters, resolutely answers: "By exerting that fortitude with which every mind is more or less endowed, but which cannot be developed without an effort" (1025). As Isabella plainly puts it, *every* person—regardless of gender—is capable of strengthening their mind in order to cultivate firmness of purpose.

Such affective pedagogy is present in both Reynolds's fiction and non-fiction prose. Assuredly, Reynolds's confidence in women's ethical reasoning capacities and, by extension, their political agency is evidenced in his "Letters to the Industrious Classes." Two of these epistles specifically address female audiences: needlewomen and governesses. Both letters logically articulate the problems facing women workers (thereby assuming that female readers comprehend rational discourse) and call upon women to "make a resolute stand, and show the country that the cupidity of [their] Employers takes from [them] too large a share of the profits obtained by them for the goods [the women] render fit and ready for sale."[552] Active females thus play a critical role in both Reynolds's fictional plots and his vision for real-world democratic reform.

In *The Mysteries of London*, dread is a particularly important feeling that accompanies female affective-cognitive development. For Eliza's part, redemption is attained by gravely enduring the "dread abode" of Newgate (381). The reader is not shown how Eliza comports herself within the prison's walls, but this is likely because there is nothing interesting to see and *The Mysteries of London* is a plot-based narrative. Eliza's time in Newgate is not stimulating like her previous proceedings orchestrated by Stephens at the villa. Instead, the "dread abode" is a

[552] John Plain, "Letters to the Industrious Classes. Letter III. To the Needlewomen of the United Kingdom," ed. George W. M. Reynolds, *Reynolds's Miscellany* 1, no. 16 (February 20, 1847): 251. Se also, "J. T. S.," "Letters to the Industrious Classes. Letter VI. To the Governesses of the United Kingdom," ed. George W. M. Reynolds, *Reynolds's Miscellany* 1, no. 23 (April 10, 1847).

place of solemn, deep reflection that purifies the penitent convict. For this reason, when we are reintroduced to Eliza one year after her release, we discover:

> Her mind was at ease, because she was pure in heart and virtuous in intention,—because she knew that she had erred innocently when she lent herself to the fraud for which she had suffered,—because she possessed a competency that secured her against care for the present and fear for the future,—and because she dwelt in that strict solitude and retirement which she loved, and which was congenial to a soul that had seen enough of the world to learn to dread its cruel artifices and deceptive ways. (382)

Eliza has finally learned to embrace rather than evade feelings of dread to beneficial effect. All of the good fortune that subsequently befalls her—the patronage of the Earl of Warrington, the sisterly friendship of Diana Arlington, and marriage to the Grand Duke of Castelcicala—can be seen as a reward for learning this affective lesson.

On the one hand, dread functions to protect Eliza from becoming an instrument in another man's iniquitous scheme. On the other hand, dread motivates her to take action in order to thwart the "intrigues and machinations" of the story's primary villain, George Montague Greenwood (387). Greenwood attempts to assault Eliza sexually twice in the narrative; she saves herself the first time by pulling a dagger on him, and the second time she is rescued by Stephens. Once she is safe from his perilous "lustful cravings" in Castelcicala, Eliza hires an Italian man named Filippo to enter into Greenwood's service and "counteract all his vile schemes to the utmost of [his] power" (390, 786). Eliza is evidently motivated by a sense of benevolence for other people's sake rather than personal vengeance, for Filippo avers: "I mean Mr. Greenwood no harm—I shall do him none: all I aim at is the prevention of harm springing from his machinations in regard to others" (786). Above all, Eliza learns to dread Greenwood's maleficent

contrivances, which the narrator corroborates by laying bare how "[e]verything he did was the result of calculation, and had an aim: every word he spoke, however rapid the utterance, was duly weighed and measured" (389). While Stephens is the master engineer behind one deceptive plot, Greenwood is the perpetrator of a greater "system" of manipulation and injustice (389). This system is comprised of numerous immoral acts: inducing others to commit forgery, adultery, and bank robbery; perpetrating sexual violence; hiring highwaymen to steal documents; offering loans at extortionate interest rates; and misrepresenting his constituency in Parliament.

Unlike Eliza, Greenwood is explicitly devoid of dread. The narrator describes him carrying out one of his intrigues "with the calmness of a man who had never entertained a fear of being ultimately enabled to carry his point" (398). It is similarly the case that when Greenwood awaits hired thieves to return with important documents: "He was not anxious, nor a prey to suspense, as other men would have been; he felt certain that his wishes would be accomplished, and he was therefore as composed as if he had already been assured of their success" (415). These frequent descriptions of Greenwood's fearless attitude toward the future render him exceptional, but not in an admirable way. Quite the opposite, his certainty is yoked with villainous "machinations" (426). His aplomb makes him like a machine, as he systematically turns those around him into self-serving implements. For example, when Greenwood plots his second sexual attack on Eliza, he extorts Stephens to assist him: "I must possess Eliza Sydney—and you must be the instrument" (407). At another point, Greenwood bribes Lady Cecilia Harborough into entering extramarital relations with him, until the woman realizes that "she had been made the instrument of a heartless libertine's pleasures" (812). Assuredly, Greenwood is aware of his dehumanizing practices when he reflects on his treatment of a criminal hireling,

whom he deems "one of the necessary implements which men of the world must make use of at times, to carve out their way to fortune" (1037).

While Greenwood is certainly the master contriver in *The Mysteries of London*, a whole minor cast of villains are also responsible for rendering other characters "instruments" and "tools" to fatal ends. The frequency of these terms and the variety of situations to which they apply are quite striking. Sir Rupert Harborough and his crony Arthur Chichester turn a poor engraver, whom they rename Augustus Talbot, into a "tool" to create forged bank notes for them (326). These three then make Richard Markham into an unwitting "instrument" in their counterfeiting scheme when they slip him a false bank note (369). In a separate narrative arc, a middle-class girl, Ellen Monroe, falls upon hard times with her father, and is approached by a sinister older woman who offers her work opportunities as a nude model. The narrator sympathetically declares: "[Ellen's] necessity […] became an instrument in the old hag's hands to model the young maiden to her purposes" (488). Such purposes unsurprisingly end in the sale of Ellen's virginity. In yet another narrative trajectory, a nameless coal-whipper passionately critiques his miserable profession, where the workers are made into a "publican's tool and instrument" (564). He (erroneously) claims that the inhumane treatment of coal-whippers exceeds that of "Negro slavery" (564). These constitute the most prominent of numerous examples spanning *The Mysteries of London*, which critically demonstrate the problematic ubiquity of human instrumentalization across class lines.

Beyond the metaphoric mechanization of human beings, the novel also fixates upon two dread-inspiring machines. The first is the Black Chamber in the Post Office: "an immense system of *espionnage*, which was extended to every class of society, and had its ramifications through every department of the state" (617). Within this secret office, private correspondences

are opened, read, reported on, and re-sealed using a variety of apparatuses. The process, the narrator describes, "seemed purely of a mechanical kind: indeed, automaton could not have shewn less passion or excitement [than the clerks at work]" (209). The inhuman emotionlessness of the tool-wielding administrators is immediately juxtaposed to the narrator's vociferous exclamation: "Base and diabolical outrage—perpetrated by the commands of the Minister of the Sovereign!" (209). Feelings of extreme indignation, conveyed by the forceful word choice and punctuation, are meant, in accordance with the conventions of melodrama, to signify both the narrator's humanity and his alignment with justice.

Moreover, the narrator is patently disturbed by the melding of machine and human, an imbrication that varyingly renders the human artificial and animal:

> Truly, this was a mighty engine in the hands of those who swayed the destinies of the British Empire;—but the secret springs of that fearfully complicated machine were all set in motion and controlled by that white-headed and aged man who now sat in the Black Chamber!
>
> Need we wonder if he felt proud of his strange position? can [*sic*] we be astonished if he gloated, like the boa-constrictor over the victim that it retains in its deadly folds, over the mighty secrets stored in his memory? (617)

While the clerks are described as affectless cogs in this vast machine, the chief Examiner is the controlling engineer who "gloats" in his position of power. Although the narrator does not dehumanize the Examiner by rendering him part of the machine, the narrator figuratively effaces this character's humanity by likening him to a lethal serpent.

Unlike *Sweeney Todd*, *The Mysteries of London* does not propose that this machine should be fought with another instrument that is strategically wielded by a working-class human.

Instead, the Black Chamber is brought down by the eloquent appeal of the Earl of Warrington in Parliament. The earl, like Eliza Sydney, proactively "dread[s] cruel artifices and deceptive ways," an affective capacity that prompts him to notice that Eliza's letter to Diana Arlington was suspiciously re-sealed with a different wax (382, 794). He takes this information to the home secretary, with whom he is familiar, and realizes the extent of the Post Office's surveillance system. "As a nobleman devoted to my country," the earl declares to the home secretary, "I abhor and detest all underhand means of obtaining information which serves as a guide for diplomatic intrigue" (809). He moreover promises to "speak more warmly—far more warmly still in Parliament" in order to "proclaim to the whole nation—nay, to the entire world—the disgraceful fact, that England, the land of vaunted freedom, possesses an institution where the most sacred ties of honour are basely violated and trampled under foot" (810, 809). Thus, it is human language and passion—spoken and felt by an aristocratic member of government—that eradicates this dread-inspiring engine of espionage.

Reynolds certainly recognized the power of a warm speech to generate political change, which is why he personally rose to the podium in Trafalgar Square on March 6, 1848 in order to champion working-class rights during the so-called Charing-Cross Revolution, a protest against the new income tax in England. *The Times* reported on Reynolds's address to a crowd of 15,000 people, in which he endorsed the recent overthrow of King Louis Phillipe of France.[553] Reynolds also drew parallels between the rights of labor in France and England before concluding with a

[553] "The Open-Air Meeting in Trafalgar Square," *Times*, no. 8 (March 7, 1848): 8. Reynolds quoted from the *London Telegraph*'s report on his speech in the fourth volume of the second series of *The Mysteries of London*. See George W. M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, second series, vol. 4 (London: John Dicks, 1849), 199-202. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/osu.32435079866075

round condemnation of the English income tax. Despite the radical quality of these remarks, Reynolds explicitly eschewed violence in his public appeal:

> Let [the listeners] show by their cheers that they were opposed to all oppressive taxation. But let them be peaceable. Let there be no disturbance. Let them show the police and the Government-spies in plain clothes, that the working-classes of England could conduct themselves in a quiet orderly manner when met to discuss their wrongs.[554]

Although he is unable to address Parliament directly, like his fictional Earl of Warrington, Reynolds is keenly aware that the government is watching him. Though such surveillance is normally viewed as negative, Reynolds innovatively aspires to turn government "spying" to his advantage. He hopes that his passionate words—ones that nevertheless inspire peaceful actions—will gain recognition by MPs and induce them to support the "industrious millions."

In *The Mysteries of London*, fervent speechifying sufficiently puts an end to the espionage machinations of the Post Office. Still, rhetorical emotional appeals by the middle and lower classes also play a significant role in critiquing the second apparatus that appears frequently throughout the *Mysteries*: the treadmill or "stepper." This dread-inspiring device is first introduced in the narrative when Richard Markham is imprisoned for attending a gambling den (he was induced to go there in the first place by Sir Rupert and Chichester). Upon demonstrating his ample means to the guards, Richard is invited to spend the night in the main room with the officers. He subsequently witnesses all of the other unfortunates who are brought in on different charges. Among them is "a poor ragged, half-starved, and emaciated lad, without shoes and stockings" who is apprehended on the grounds of being "a rogue and a vagabond" because, as the constable says, "he's wandering about and hasn't nowhere to go to, and no

[554] Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, 202.

friends to refer to; and I saw him begging" (94). Richard is aghast to hear that the boy will get "[t]hree months on the stepper—the treadmill, to be sure" (95).

Through Richard's perspective, the reader comes to see the stepper as a cruel punishment for the unjustly incarcerated poor. The narrative compounds this critique by alternately presenting a conversation between the home secretary and the new magistrate of Marlborough Street Police Court, Mr. Teynham: "I need scarcely inform you," the minister says, "that the treadmill is *not* for the aristocracy" (805). He further maintains: "If a low person chooses to divert himself with aristocratic amusements [he means childish disturbances of the peace, such as wrenching off knockers, pulling down bells, and other pranks], punish him—do not spare him—send him to the treadmill. In the same way that game is preserved for the sport of the upper classes, so must the knockers and the bells be saved from spoliation by the lower orders" (805). The treadmill thus becomes a potent symbol of legal disparity between the rich and poor, which *The Mysteries of London* so scathingly condemns well before Henry Mayhew and John Binney's reform-minded sociological account, *The Criminal Prisons of London, and Scenes of Prison Life* (1862). Assuredly, Reynolds's narrative stands as a significant, early touchstone in a long history of English prison reform that would not see the abolishment of the treadmill as a method of punishment until the Prisons Act of 1898.[555]

The climax of Reynolds's penal critique appears in Anthony "Tony" Tidkins's autobiography. When we are first introduced to this character, he is a ruthless, fearsome criminal

[555] As Henry Mayhew and John Binney report, the treadmill was first set up at Brixton (the Surrey House of Correction) in 1817. By the 1860s, this machine was standard in correctional prisons. Henry Mayhew and John Binny, *The Criminal Prisons of London, and Scenes of Prison Life* (London: Charles Griffin and Company, 1862), 174. As a result of such meticulous reports and other pressures for reform, the first Prisons Act of 1865 sought to improve the superintendence of correctional facilities and, by extension, prison discipline. It also attempted to define and regulate hard labor. The following 1877 Prisons Act built on this legislation by further centralizing the running of British correctional facilities. Finally, the 1898 Prisons Act put an end to the treadmill and indefinite solitary confinement as forms of punishment. This legislation also stipulated that hard labor must be constructive.

known as the Resurrection Man. Yet halfway through the series, we learn from Tony that he initially resisted a life of crime with great perseverance. Although his father was a smuggler, young Tony sought to earn honest employment. Still, due to his father's incarceration, not even the humblest merchant would hire the earnest lad because of his supposed bad blood. Tony therefore was compelled to take up smuggling and grave robbing in order to support himself and his parents. Yet after a prison stint at the hulks, shipwreck, and devastating heartbreak, Tony set off on the road to leave that life behind him. On the brink of starvation, he ate a turnip from someone's land, for which he was arrested as a "rogue and a vagabond" (543). He was thus committed for one month on the treadmill. Tony's explanation of this punishment and its effects mirrors the rhetorical agility with which Reynolds supports his own radical political ideology. For this reason, Tony's account is worth reproducing in full:

> The treadmill is a horrible punishment: it is too bad even for those that are really rogues and vagabonds. The weak and the strong take the same turn, without any distinction; and I have seen men fall down fainting upon the platform, with the risk of having their legs or arms smashed by the wheel, through sheer exhaustion. Then the miserable fare that one receives in prison renders him more fit for an hospital than for the violent labour of the treadmill.
>
> I had been two years at the hulks, and was not hardened: I had been a smuggler and a body-snatcher, and was not hardened:—but this one month's imprisonment and spell at the treadmill did harden me—and hardened me completely! I could not see any advantage in being good. I could not find out any inducement to be honest. As for a desire to lead an honourable life, that was absurd. I now laughed the idea to scorn; and I swore within myself that whenever I did commence a course of crime, I would be an

> unsparing demon at my work. Oh! how I then detested the very name of virtue. "The rich look upon the poor as degraded reptiles that are born in infamy and that cannot possibly possess a good instinct," I reasoned within myself. "Let a rich man accuse a poor man before a justice, a jury, or a judge, and see how quick the poor wretch is condemned! The aristocracy hold the lower classes in horror and abhorrence. The legislature thinks that if it does not make the most grinding laws to keep down the poor, the poor will rise up and commit the most unheard-of atrocities. In fact the rich are prepared to believe any infamy which is imputed to the poor." It was thus that I reasoned; and I looked forward to the day of my release with a burning—maddening—drunken joy! (543)

It is quite striking how Tony indicts his month on the treadmill as the single experience responsible for "hardening" him into an unrepentant criminal. He suggests that this instrument is uniquely unjust in its application of punishment, for "the weak and the strong take the same turn, without any distinction." Tony, like Reynolds, suggests that blunt equality is not the foundation of a just society, for individual circumstances must be taken into account. This principle does not only apply to punishment, as Tony observes. In his nonfiction, Reynolds similarly affirms the fairness of inequality regarding wages. In the first of his "Letters to the Industrious Classes" Reynolds asserts:

> I do not say that you should equally share the profits of your employer: I admit that *he* must be adequately recompensed for his outlay of capital, the interest on that capital, the risk he incurs, the bad debts that may deteriorate his profits, and the anxiety of mind invariably attendant on the spirit of speculation. These reasons will show why *his* gains, my friends, should in justice be larger than your's [*sic*].[556]

[556] George W. M. Reynolds, "Letters to the Industrious Classes," *Reynolds's Miscellany* 1, no. 13 (January 30, 1847): 200.

Remarkably, Reynolds places economic value on the painful affective state, the "anxiety of mind," that accompanies speculation. His sense of justice is clearly a subjective one, which takes into consideration a variety of material and psychological components.

Accordingly, just as Tony bristles at the inhumane levelling of the treadmill's punishment, he also implicitly supports the individualized sentence of laboring on the docks, where each person works according to his own capacity. Whereas the hulks did not erase his desire to pursue honest employment, the treadmill utterly annihilates his virtuous aspirations. Above all, the mechanized punishment inspires Tony with an inflaming affect of resistance: he anticipates his release "with a burning—maddening—drunken joy!" The unfeeling machine thus inspires an intemperate emotional response that foreshadows future violence.

Tony ends his tale by explaining how he rapturously embraces a life of crime. First, he broke into the house of the justice who arrested him for eating the turnip, then ate his fill of the fine food and stole the plate. Upon leaving the justice's home, he passed the magistrate's barn: "I owed him a recompense for my month at the treadmill," proclaims Tony, "and I thought I might as well add *Incendiary* to my other titles of *Rogue* and *Vagabond*. Besides, I longed for mischief—the world had persecuted me quite long enough, the hour of retaliation had arrived" (545). His vengeance takes a spectacular form: setting fire to the magistrate's barn, then relishing the sight of the conflagration from a nearby hill, as illustrated in Figure 4. "Happy! this is not the word! I was mad—intoxicated—delirious with joy. I literally danced as I saw the barn burning," he exclaims (545). It is likely that Tony's

Fig. 4: Tony's barn burning

unmitigated enthusiasm would have caused upper-class readers to dread their own safety. For the pyromaniac concludes: "And the upper classes wonder that there are so many incendiary fires: my only surprise is, that there are so few! Ah! the Lucifer-match is a fearful weapon in the hands of the man whom the laws, the aristocracy, and the present state of society have ground down to the very dust" (545).

While giving space to the excitement attendant upon these incendiary acts in a compelling interpolated tale, *The Mysteries of London* nonetheless condemns Tony's actions.

Fig. 5: murder scheme

Although the first-person account generates sympathy, the third-person narration of his behavior throughout the rest of the story conveys his terrifying brutality. As the working-class double of Greenwood, Tony too constructs his own "machinations" to suit his selfish interests, thereby treating those around him as mere economic units (873). The most disturbing of these is the "reg'lar system," illustrated in Figure 5, that Tony and his cronies engineer in order to efficiently murder passersby in their neighborhood (the aptly named Bird-cage Walk) and sell their fresh corpses to surgeons. They have a "[t]ub of water all ready on the floor—hooks and cords to hold the chaps' feet up to the ceiling; and then, my eye! There they hangs, head downwards, jest for all the world like the carcasses in the butchers' shops, if they hadn't got their clothes on" (341). Though Tony was initially outraged by his mechanical

subjugation to the treadmill, experience henceforth shows him the personal gain that can be had by systematically taking advantage of others. Any admiration felt for this Robin Hood-esque criminal after his unfair persecution in youth is thoroughly eradicated by the inhuman horror of his subsequent crimes.

For this reason, the upper classes had nothing to dread from working-class perusal of this impressive work of fiction. *The Mysteries of London* in no way excites revolutionary action with feelings of "burning—maddening—drunken joy!" (543). Quite the opposite, the characters with whom we are led to sympathize and admire are those who effectively experience temperate, reflective dread and apply future-oriented fears to regulate their own conduct and alleviate the potential suffering of others.

Reynolds explicitly addresses this issue of misplaced upper-class dread in his first epistle of "Letters to the Industrious Classes." He begins by remarking on the upper class's preemptive "fear that education will open [the working class's] eyes to the true nature of their condition," which the rich assume will incite violent revolution.[557] But Reynolds insists that such concerns are unfounded, for "the cultivated mind will readily perceive that rights must be obtained by *moral agitation*, and not by *physical force.*"[558] Fiction such as his *Mysteries of London*, Reynolds maintains, is meant to "entertain and instruct," so that readers may unite in "sympathising with the sufferings of the poor."[559] He therefore offers his audience a threefold education in literary analysis, emotional intelligence, and political action. The followers of *Reynolds's Miscellany* are designed to become empowered readers who are able to bear compassionate witness to the

[557] Reynolds, "Letters to the Industrious Classes," 199.

[558] Reynolds, 199.

[559] Reynolds, 199.

dreadful misfortunes of others. These capacities are subsequently meant to galvanize them to support peaceful political measures for "ameliorating the conditions of the industrious millions."[560] In the words of his noble-hearted hero, Richard Markham: "[I]f the world were more anxious than it is to substitute sympathy for vituperation, society would not be the compound of selfishness, slander, envy, and malignity, that it now is" (1036).

In a similar vein, Mary Shannon has astutely articulated the ways in which Reynolds's "1848 speeches attempted to connect imagined readers of urban fiction to real protesters on London streets, by linking the printed page of urban fiction to oratory within urban space."[561] Yet she draws the conclusion that Reynolds "does not suggest that he will move his audience to political action, only to sympathy, sentiment, and the sensation of having been entertained."[562] Still, I am not so sure that Reynolds saw political action and sympathy as altogether separate capacities. For Reynolds concludes his seventh and final letter to the industrious classes with the following proclamation:

> Lower the barrier which separate the richest from the poorest classes, by making the former a little less rich and the latter's a great deal less poor;—kindle the warmth of the social affections, and let no heart become obdurate or callous through ignorance, oppression, penury, or neglect. To the achievement of these aims, I do direct the attention of the Government, the aristocracy, the wealthy classes generally, and the landowners especially. You, my friends—to whom this Letter is addressed—will show yourselves to

[560] Reynolds, "Letters to the Industrious Classes," 200.

[561] Mary Shannon, "Spoken Word and Printed Page: G. W. M. Reynolds and 'The Charing-Cross Revolution', 1848," *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, no. 18 (May 9, 2014): 1.

[562] Shannon, 10.

> be deserving of all the interest which may be manifested on your behalf, *and which you have a right to claim*.[563]

Here Reynolds yokes the political and economic act of wealth redistribution with the cultivation of sympathy. Syntactically, these ideas are held together with a semicolon and em-dash instead of a period, which would have had the effect of decisively splitting the two ideas apart. For Reynolds, reform can only be brought about by stimulating the "social affections." He therefore seeks to enrich the sympathizing capacity of his readers not just among one another—that is, among the laboring classes—but with the wealthy. He challenges the "industrious millions" to imagine themselves through the eyes of the rich and to comport themselves in such a way that would earn their respect. Reynolds forcefully acknowledges in italics that the working classes "*have a right*" to claim improved conditions, yet he also emphasizes that in order to bring these changes about, the laborers must prove themselves to be "deserving" of upper-class "interest." Thus, Reynolds conveys the twofold importance of cultivating sympathizing capacities and sympathetic qualities in order to sway political opinion.

Dread, in particular, plays a critical role in Reynolds's affective project within both his fiction and oration. The final volume in the second series of *The Mysteries of London*, for example, records Reynolds's recent Charing-Cross speech, and rhetorically attempts to instill future-oriented fears in readers (who may or may not have attended the real-world event) by presenting a cascade of exacerbating problems:

> But the financial ignorance and the wanton extravagance of the Whigs have plunged the country into serious pecuniary embarrassments, from which nothing but the sweeping reform of a purely democratic Ministry can relieve it. With a tremendous national debt,—

[563] George W. M. Reynolds, "Letters to the Industrious Classes. Letter VII. To the Agricultural Labourers of the United Kingdom," *Reynolds's Miscellany* 2, no. 28 (May 15, 1847): 14.

> with no possibility of levying another tax,—with Ireland to care for and almost support,—with a vast amount of absolute penury and positive destitution in the country,—with an aristocracy clinging to old abuses, and with the land in the possession of a contemptibly small oligarchy,—with the industrious classes starving on pitiable wages,—with a pension-list which is a curse and a shame,—with a cumbrous and costly Monarchy,—with a Church grasping at all it can possibly lay hands on,—with a Bench of Bishops in inveterate and banded hostility to all enlightening opinions and popular interests,—and with a franchise so limited that nine-tenths of the people are altogether unrepresented,—with all these, and a thousand other evils which might be readily enumerated, we repeat our assertion that England is in an awful state; and we must add that great, important, and radical changes must be speedily effected.[564]

While asyndeton accelerates the tempo of this enormous sentence, diacope ("with a") creates a repetitive heaviness, wherein problems are stacked upon problems. These rhetorical techniques thus convey a sense of infinite proliferation: "a thousand other evils" just waiting to be identified. Yet after saturating and inducing the reader to linger in these fearful anticipations, Reynolds then harnesses the affective, rhetorical energy of these lines to urge productive reform: "great, important, and radical changes must be speedily effected." Slow-paced dread therefore functions as the necessary fuel to promulgate swift action.

Reynolds, in fact, is explicit about what kind of action should take place. He is not merely relying on sentiment and a general desire for "changes" but concludes his emotive appeal with a footnote that actually lays out a plan for solving some of these urgent issues. Specifically, Reynolds advocates for a National Pension Fund, which would become available to each citizen

[564] Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, 200.

at the age of 56, so long as their annual income had been less than £32 a year. It is remarkable that Reynolds delineates this plan in a footnote, for his formal decision suggests an underlying theory of affect. We must assume that Reynolds wanted his readers to peruse the footnote, because therein lies a solution he so earnestly seeks to enact. But footnotes run the risk of being overlooked, since they do not occupy a premium position in the formal space of the narrative. Reynolds, however, seems to be confident that readers will browse this secondary content, perhaps because they have become affectively charged by the primary speech. In other words, they may be so steeped in dread upon reading the successive and formidable list of problems facing Britain that they do not want to merely continue on with the narrative. They are therefore willing to follow the digressive, solution-minded thread. Moreover, *The Mysteries of London* has heretofore shown its readers the benefits of dreading well; that is, of slowly reflecting upon potential future troubles. A reader attuned to this affective education would thus be more likely to suspend the pleasure of regaining the narrative in order to pursue a tangential note on policy reform.

Above all, Reynolds's implicit stirring of dread is meant to entreat working-class readers to resist their mindless instrumentalization in oppressive systems. For this reason, Reynolds proclaims in *The Mysteries of London*: "Let the English Sons of Toil—oppressed, ground down by taxation, half-starved, and deprived of their electoral rights as they are,—let the Industrious Classes of the British Islands, trampled upon and made tools of by the wealthy few as we know them to be,—let them do honour, at least by words to the working men of France who have dared to expel a demon-hearted tyrant and his bravo-hirelings."[565] Similarly, in his seventh "Letters to the Industrious Classes," this one directed at agricultural laborers, Reynolds asserts: "[Y]ou are

[565] Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, 199.

treated as mere machines by whom the land has to be turned up, sown, and reaped; and it does not appear to enter the heads of your employers (taking them as a whole—of course there are honourable exceptions) that you might be rendered an intellectual class. The aim should be to encourage amongst you provident habits and independence, as well as industry."[566] It is important to place these two appeals in juxtaposition to each other in order to demonstrate the peaceful qualities of dread as they pertain to working-class instrumentalization. The laboring men of Britain are only meant to "do honour" to the revolutionaries of France "by words." Contrary to the violent overthrow across the channel, Reynolds affirms that the British working-class will gain their human rights—and be impervious to instrumentalization—by developing intellectual and self-regulating capacities.

In this way, *The Mysteries of London* presents an alternate approach to *Sweeney Todd*'s resistance to mechanized oppression. Reynolds's narrative is far more skeptical of tools and suggests we should eschew artificial devices for humanistic methods (which were, perhaps, obsolete and unrealistic even then). Nevertheless, these two urban mystery stories cohere in their democratic projects by championing social solidarity. As Reynolds vigorously declares:

> The time has come when all true Reformers must band together for the public weal. Let there be union,—union of all sects and parties who are in favour of progress, no matter what their denomination may be,—whether Republicans, Radicals, Chartists, or Democrats. "Union is strength," says the proverb; and the truth thereof maybe fully justified and borne out in the present age, and in the grand work of moral agitation for the People's Rights.[567]

[566] Reynolds, "Letters to the Industrious Classes. Letter VII. To the Agricultural Labourers of the United Kingdom," 12.

[567] Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, 201-02.

Reynolds formally models this unification by writing an "Encyclopedia of Tales," which brings together an extreme variety of characters, locales, and styles. As Anne Humphreys has cogently argued: "The massive text is pulled together by one generic pattern, that of gothic melodrama, a combination of the horror of the gothic and the moral binaries of melodrama, which control the potential chaos introduced by the multiplication of genres and plot."[568] In a similar mode, *Sweeney Todd* also conveys the value of cooperation across class and gender lines through the apprehension of its villain by a cast of public officials, star-crossed lovers, and an abused apprentice boy.

Although violence generates compelling plotlines within these tales, neither of their conclusions glorify bloodshed. In this sense, both *The Mysteries of London* and *Sweeney Todd* correspond to Hadley's conception of the melodramatic mode as "act[ing] in the name of conservation and modest reform, not radicalization and revolution."[569] As I have attempted to show here, the formal and affective power of these enormously popular stories exists in their melodramatic enactment of ethical dread. Rymer's dread-driven romance thwarting Sweeney Todd the villainous barber models democratic community in the name of resisting unwilling participation within a cannibalistic capitalism that threatens, one pie after another, to gobble everybody up. Reynolds takes this critique one step further, exhorting readers to become sympathetic, intellectual participants in economic and political affairs, rather than complicit automatons. In the late 1840s, Reynolds and Lloyd both saw these affective-cognitive steps as

[568] Anne Humpherys, "An Introduction to G.W.M. Reynolds's 'Encyclopedia of Tales,'" in *G.W.M. Reynolds Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Politics, and the Press*, ed. Anne Humpherys and Louis James (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 131.

[569] Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics*, 23.

absolutely essential to the "progress" of the nation.[570] In the following chapter, we will see how this democratic progress narrative morphs in dictatorial ways as Britain's empire expands and new genres consequently arise.

[570] Reynolds, for instance, references George Richardson Porter's seminal work *The Progress of the Nation in its Various Social and Economical Relations, From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Present Time* (1836, 1846, 1851), which takes the British legislature to task for not educating the lower classes, and therefore causing crime to proliferate. See Reynolds, "Letters to the Industrious Classes. Letter VII. To the Agricultural Labourers of the United Kingdom," 13. Similarly, an article published in *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper* sounds a clarion call for "faith in human progress" based on an individualized "faith in ourselves." The author, "G. A. W.," decries the "mechanical age" in which he lives, which necessitates "[t]his eternal leaning upon others—this fearfulness to go on, if we have not crowds on our side." The solution he posits is to "act conscientiously before God and man" and vote in the upcoming election. See "To the People of England," *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, no. 231 (April 25, 1847): 5.

Chapter 5
Dread and Spread:
Affective Disruptions of Empire in *The War of the Worlds*, *Dracula*, and "Penny Dreadfuls"

The year 1897 saw the literary incarnation of two monsters that became icons of fear and have remained entrenched in our cultural consciousness for well over a century: H. G. Wells's Martians in *The War of the Worlds* and Bram Stoker's vampire in the eponymous *Dracula*. Although these extraordinary creatures could not appear more different, the narrative apparatuses around them are quite similar. The extraterrestrials, we are told by the nameless first-person narrator, are constituted by

> … huge round bodies—or, rather, heads—about four feet in diameter, each body having in front of it a face. This face had no nostrils—indeed, the Martians do not seem to have had any sense of smell, but it had a pair of very large dark-coloured eyes, and just beneath this a kind of fleshy beak. In the back of this head or body,—I scarcely know how to speak of it—was the single tight tympanic surface, since known to be anatomically an ear, though it must have been almost useless in our dense air. In a group round the mouth were sixteen slender, almost whiplike tentacles, arranged in two bunches of eight each.[571]

The dispassionate anatomical language indicates the narrator's status as a "a professed and recognised writer on philosophical themes"; however, the repeated em-dashes interrupt his

[571] H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*, ed. Darryl Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 111. Subsequent page numbers will be marked in parentheses in the body of the chapter. It is worth noting that the narrator's description of the "tight tympanic surface" of the ear resonates with the pioneering aural anatomy work of William Wilde several decades earlier, thereby affiliating the narrator with renowned scientific authority. Dr. Wilde's *Practical Observations on Aural Surgery and the Nature and Treatment of Diseases of the Ear* (1853) "mark[ed] the period of transition in medicine from empiricism and from 'being in the hands of the most uneducated quacks and charlatans' to a modern approach based on careful observation and experimental science." Anthony Seaton, "Wilde Thoughts," *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine* 105, no. 11 (2012): 1137.

factual report with personal, emotive modifiers that undermine the certainty of his knowledge (139). These alien octopuses bear no resemblance whatsoever to the Transylvanian client that *Dracula*'s protagonist, Jonathan Harker, meets at the outset of the novel, yet the London solicitor describes the would-be vampire in a like manner:

> His face was a strong—a very strong—aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor.[572]

Like the narrator of *The War of the Worlds*, Jonathan meticulously details the racially inflected physiognomy of Count Dracula, though affective modifiers also burst out from between the em-dash, as well as in the subjective description of the "cruel-looking" mouth and intensifiers such as "peculiarly," "astonishing," and "extraordinary." Ultimately, the work of both narrators is to report on these creatures to implied readers in their fictional worlds. The scientific journalist seeks to set the record straight for the English populace after the Martian invasion of the country has been vanquished. Jonathan, by contrast, begins by recounting his arrival and entrapment in Dracula's Transylvanian castle through a private journal, though his frequent expostulations to

[572] Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 23-24. Page numbers will be marked in parentheses in the body of the second part of the chapter.

Mina Murray, his fiancée, suggest that she is the implied reader of the text, which she does, in fact, peruse upon her betrothed's escape.

Despite the similarities in narration and tone between these novels, scholars have largely focused on their differences and upheld the two as paradigms of distinctive genres. Given the speculative nature of Wells's plot set in the near future of England 1899, its foregrounding of advanced (and imaginary) technology, and its matter-of-fact style of narration by a scientifically inclined journalist, scholars have classified *The War of the Worlds* as a foundational work of science fiction, if not the founding story of the genre.[573] *Dracula*, by comparison, is set in the late-Victorian present and the action takes its protagonists between London and Transylvania. The novel is an edited collection by Mina, who transcribes a range of emotionally charged first-person accounts regarding the identification, pursuit, and demise of the vampire, all of which she collates in triplicate typewritten manuscripts. *Dracula* is conventionally considered a Gothic novel due to the supernatural powers of its villain and thematic infatuation with dark forces of the ancestral past disturbing the ultra-modern present.[574]

Notwithstanding these overt differences, both novels are clearly invasion narratives, which, as Stephen Arata has eminently articulated, express anxieties about reverse colonization given the insecurities attending Britain's over-expanding empire.[575] Moreover, the two are similarly interpolated with newspaper reports and governed by metaphors of writing

[573] For the original iteration of this argument, see Judith Wilt, "The Imperial Mouth: Imperialism, the Gothic and Science Fiction," *Journal of Popular Culture* 14, no. 4 (Spring 1981): 618–28.

[574] In addition to Wilt's differentiation of science and Gothic fiction by way of *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula*, Fred Botting makes a similar distinction in "'Monsters of the Imagination': Gothic, Science, Fiction," in *A Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. David Seed (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 111–26.

[575] Stephen D. Arata, "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," *Victorian Studies* 33, no. 4 (1990): 621–45.

technologies, as this chapter will explore.[576] These varying resonances are sutured together by a prevailing affect: dread of the uncertain but ominous imperial future. Instead of generically differentiating *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula*, this chapter reveals how comparably they harness a sense of dread that percolated fin-de-siècle culture, especially in regard to the imperial metropolitan capital and contested spaces of empire. Beyond simply exploiting this affect to attract readers, the "intimate scripts" of these novels intervene in the historical process of imperialism by training their readers' attention on future possibilities by way of affective speculation.[577] Ultimately, I argue that these narratives manifest the benefits of experiencing dread in order to influence the coming times.

The imperial capital was a place near and dear to the hearts of these two authors, whose cultural and professional backgrounds uniquely poised them to think deeply about the future of the nation. Wells was a lower middle-class Kentish biology student whose excellent examination scores earned him a newly funded government scholarship to study under T. H. Huxley at the Normal School of Science in South Kensington. He arrived at the capital in September 1884. Stoker, too, came from humble means. Born and raised in Dublin, he realized his adolescent aspiration, like Wells, to relocate to the English capital through a fortuitous and irregular opportunity: the invitation of his friendly acquaintance, the tragedian Henry Irving, to manage

[576] For more on communication technologies in *The War of the Worlds* see Aaron Worth, "Imperial Transmissions: H. G. Wells, 1897-1901," *Victorian Studies* 53, no. 1 (2010): 65–89. On writing in *Dracula* see Jennifer Wicke, "Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and Its Media," *ELH* 59, no. 2 (1992): 467. No scholar has compared the similarly metaphoric treatment of writing between these two texts.

[577] The phrase "intimate scripts," coined by Sarah McNamer, refers to emotive writing that "aspire[s] to performative efficacy." *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 12. Similarly, the phrase "emotion scripts" is used widely in the history of emotions, psychology, cultural studies, and anthropology as a term for the emotive social forces or discourse that participates in the creation and evolution of "emotional communities." Silvan S. Tomkins originated this critical discussion in "Script Theory: Differential Magnification of Affects," *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* 26 (1978): 201–36. For more on "emotional communities" see Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

his newly acquired Lyceum Theatre. Stoker moved to London in June 1878 and began work immediately, quickly rising to prominence as an energetic and highly competent righthand man. He maintained a lifelong friendship and working relationship with the eminent actor. Despite the fact that Wells and Stoker were employed in different disciplines, these London transplants came to share a number of significant intersections, ones that have gone unremarked in modern scholarship. To begin with, both were members of the Society of Authors, founded in 1884. Further, they both contributed articles on the theatre to major London periodicals. Wells was the drama critic of the *Pall Mall Gazette* from 1894 to 1895, while Stoker published articles in the *Fortnightly Review*, the *Nineteenth Century*, and the *Graphic* between 1885 and 1891. Moreover, both were in close contact with the upcoming Socialist dramatist, George Bernard Shaw, and well-established Liberal Prime Minister, W. E. Gladstone.[578]

Given these social and cultural influences, it is not surprising that both men vigilantly regarded the future with skepticism, questioning the widely held belief that the conditions of the nation, its empire, and the world at large would necessarily progress for the better. Like the narrator of *The War of the Worlds*, they opposed the "infinite complacency" with which "men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter" (9). Condescension toward "belief in the necessity of progress" suffuses Wells's corpus.[579] Reflecting on this final decade of the nineteenth century in his *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934), for instance, he scoffs at "[t]he self-complacency of the Wonderful

[578] Even before Wells moved to London, he was, coincidentally, acquainted with Henry Irving and the beautiful woman who would become his most famous co-starring actress, Ellen Terry. The eleven-year-old Wells was utterly smitten with Terry when he met her during his summer holiday in Clewer near Windsor, where Terry was studying for a role. Michael Sherborne, *H. G. Wells: Another Kind of Life* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2010), 33.

[579] H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (since 1866)* (Philadelphia; New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1967), 214.

Century."[580] Stoker, for his part, was less concerned with the spirit of the age, though he certainly discerned the precarious state of national (English and Irish) futures and the hard work that was required to bring about positive change, as he saw it, in the form of Irish Home Rule. Thus he writes sympathetically of his November 1890 interaction with Gladstone, who was facing a series of severe setbacks to his Second Home Rule Bill: "The hopes which he had built through the slow progress of years for the happy settlement of centuries-old Irish troubles had been suddenly almost shattered by a bolt from the blue, and his great intellect and enormous powers of work and concentration had been for many days strained to the utmost to keep the road of the future clear from the possibility of permanent destruction following one temporary embarrassment."[581]

The future of Britain was a question that Wells and Stoker thought a great deal about in the 1890s while they were writing their most famous fiction, in addition to non-fiction essays and speeches. At the forefront for Wells was the matter of violent, industrialized expansionism, evident in the 1880s "scramble for Africa." Wells understood this situation on a personal level, for his older brother Fred emigrated to Johannesburg in search of better economic opportunities as a draper in the mid-1890s. Not only did Wells worry that South Africa would be a site of conflict between Britain and Germany, imperiling his brother, but he also expressed dismay at the warmongering antics of Cecil Rhodes, the Prime Minister of Britain's Cape Colony. Rhodes's aggression toward the Boers was meant to incite migrants like Fred to rebellion.[582] Alternately, for the six-foot tall, red-bearded Irishman, the issue of Home Rule was a central

[580] Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*, 214.

[581] Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, 2nd ed. (London: W. Heinemann, 1908), 262.

[582] Sherborne, *H.G. Wells,* 111.

personal concern. Both Wells and Stoker perceived that the trajectory of these concurrent colonial histories were leading toward political catastrophe. Wells, for his part, witnessed how the ruthless imperial ambitions and rivalries in the land grab for Africa resulted in the First World War and extermination of indigenous peoples. By comparison, Stoker, who died in 1912, did not live to see the violence of the Easter 1916 rebellion and Irish War of Independence (1919-1921). Wells's and Stoker's respective fictions do not predict these events, yet they are deftly attuned to and interpose their historical processes by creating and manipulating atmospheres of dread. By examining discrete emotive scenes in their two novels in relation to each other and to contemporary periodical articles, my discussion discloses how their fictional manifestations and evocations of dread and the dreadful operate to critique and offer affect-based solutions to aggressive expansionism, colonial hegemony, and indefatigable Progress.

To this end, the first two sections concentrate on *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula*, respectively, and examine how these feelings operate narratologically and aesthetically to undermine various logics under the umbrella of British settler colonialism. While affective scenarios in *The War of the Worlds* indict technologically driven British expansionism, representations of dread in *Dracula* challenge the way monolithic Progress was harnessed against Irish supporters of Home Rule. Feelings of dread vitally stimulate the plots of these novels and motivate their characters' behavior, which, I assert, present emotion scripts for the ethical evolution of Britain in relation to its imperial aspirations and colonial subjects. The points of convergence that I identify between these novels illuminate how the genres of both science and Gothic fiction, despite their different conventions, are broadly interested in questions of "moral intent and culpability."[583] Above all, these novels are meant to unsettle their readers'

[583] Sian MacArthur, *Gothic Science Fiction: 1818 to the Present*, Palgrave Gothic Series (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 3.

complacent attitude toward the future of the nation and its role in the world. The third section thus examines the extent to which these affectively bolstered speculative narratives integrated Wells's and Stoker's political activities and non-fiction writing in the 1890s. Their works demonstrate the reciprocal engagement between the emotional worlds that these fictions engender and material political conditions of possibility. Rounding out this historical context, the final section examines the relationship between these dread-filled stories and the contemporaneous enthusiasm for and censure of "penny dreadful" fiction. For Victorians, the popular penny dreadful was a far more obvious place to scrutinize the "dreadful" than Wells's or Stoker's more serious-minded novels. However, reviewers in 1897 nonetheless perceived the dread-inspiring powers of the latter works, while actively separating them from the vulgar dreadfuls. I therefore conclude by comparing reviews of *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula* with periodical debates on this economical popular literature in order to clarify the varying class, moral, religious, and aesthetic inflections of "dread" and "dreadful" at this period that marked the apogee of Empire, one which implicated certain kinds of readers in an imperialist mindset.

Dread, Spread, and Critique of Expansionism in *The War of the Worlds*

The War of the Worlds is largely understood as a "castigation of the expansionist tendencies of the New Imperialism," an unprecedented enlargement of empire enabled by technology that exploited the people and resources of conquered territories.[584] Britain, in competition with other European powers, began to pursue such policies more forcefully at the close of the nineteenth century. Although several scholars have discerned a level of ambivalence

[584] Steven McLean, "The Descent of Mars: Evolution and Ethics in *The War of the Worlds*," in *The Early Fiction of H.G. Wells: Fantasies of Science* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 90. For similar stances on Wells's imperial critique, see Keith Williams, "Alien Gaze: Postcolonial Vision in *The War of the Worlds*," in *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Steven McLean (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008) and Frank D. McConnell, "Realist of the Fantastic: *The Invisible Man* and *The War of the Worlds*," in *The Science Fiction of H. G. Wells*, Science Fiction Writers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

in Wells's colonial critique, the idea that the novel vehemently condemns expansionism remains unchallenged.[585] Indeed, the opening chapter of *The War of the Worlds* is quite clear in comparing the Martian invasion to colonial violence: "before we judge of [the Martians] too harshly," the narrator warns his reader, "we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals… but upon its own inferior races" (10). The speciesist and racial hierarchies presented here are striking, not least because the declaration appears as an expression of bigotry to a present-day reader. Nevertheless, the contiguity of non-human animals and racial Others was sometimes applied in more progressive discourse contemporary to Wells. For instance, the inimitable anti-vivisectionist, Frances Power Cobbe—an Irish writer, social reformer, and prominent women's suffrage campaigner—condemned the 1876 Cruelty to Animals Act (which legalized animal vivisection) on the grounds that experimentation on animals cleared an insidious path for the "torture of the Negro, the idiot, the infant, the ignorant peasant, the feeble woman, or, perchance, the man who has not the good fortune to be a great modern philosopher."[586] Similar to Cobbe, the narrator of *The War of the Worlds* perceives a continuum between anthropogenic non-human animal extinction and racially based subjugation. It is appropriate to read the "inferior races" in his statement as ironic, just as the "ignorant peasant" is ironic in Cobbe's assertion. The crux of this irony, for the narrator, resides in the contingency of the valuation that some races might rank as "inferior." Just moments prior to describing the Tasmanians as one of the "inferior races," which Europeans "entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination," the narrator explains how the

[585] See Bed Paudyal, "Trauma, Sublime, and the Ambivalence of Imperialist Imagination in H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*," *Extrapolation: A Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy* 50, no. 1 (2009); John Rieder, "Science Fiction, Colonialism, and the Plot of Invasion," *Extrapolation* 46 (2005); and John Huntington, *The Logic of Fantasy: H. G. Wells and Science Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

[586] Frances Power Cobbe, "Cruelty to Animals," *Examiner*, no. 3342 (January 17, 1874): 54.

Martians viewed Earth as "crowded only with what they regard as inferior animals" (10).[587] This characterization of humankind primes the reader to bristle at the valuational adjective, and therefore realize the subjective and deeply erroneous nature of its claim.[588] In this vein, I. F. Clarke reads *The War of the Worlds* as "a retort on behalf of the Tasmanians."[589]

Following this moral-philosophical frame, the narrator recounts the arrival of cylinders from Mars in Woking, a quiet spot in the country southwest of London.[590] These vessels soon transform from objects of curiosity into objects of fear as they are revealed to contain an alien species. The Martians, who at first appear physically disabled, assemble terrifying tripods and advanced weaponry. Before long, they decimate the English countryside and ultimately vanquish the capital. This destructive event concludes part one of the novel. In the second part, we follow the narrator's cycles of flight and entrapment between villages as he attempts to reunite with his

[587] Wells himself called the "discovery of Tasmania by the Europeans… a very frightful disaster for the native Tasmanians!" indicating his personal sense of sympathy for their plight. See quotation and explanation in Bernard Bergonzi, *The Early H. G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 24.

[588] John Rieder similarly argues that the purpose of this parallelism is to invoke the reader's "indignation," an affective stance that is at the heart of Wells's critique of "colonial arrogance." "Science Fiction, Colonialism, and the Plot of Invasion," 380.

[589] I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 84.

[590] Mars was very much present in the British, European, and American imagination in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Red Planet was favorably aligned with the Earth's rotation in 1864, 1877, and 1894, and new technology enabled minute observation of the planet's geography for the first time in history. Not only were Mars's two moons first detected in 1877 (one of which was named "Deimos" or *Dread*), but channels were observed on the planet's surface, prompting speculation about their being natural or artificial (and if the latter, who made them?). Between 1892 and 1895 a series of periodical reports on both sides of the Atlantic recounted observations of flashes of light emitted from Mars, with consequent speculation about the supposed inhabitants of that planet attempting to communicate with "Terrestrials." Wells, as a scientist, was certainly aware of the *Nature* article "A Strange Light on Mars" from August 2, 1894 and was working within this established speculative tradition of eagerness and dread for more information about the Red Planet. In fact, he was not the first English writer to imagine a Martian invasion. A very short story titled "The Year of Grace 2081" published in radical politician Henry Labouchère's *Truth* on September 22, 1881 first explored this theme. Two years later, Wladyslaw Lach Szyrma, a Devonshire vicar of Polish heritage, published *Aleriel, or, A Voyage to Other Worlds* about an English curate who encounters a Venusian travelling incognito through the solar system. This extraterrestrial voyager informs him of the people and customs of his home planet, as well as those of Mars (characterized as a reformed people after a bellicose and sinful history), Jupiter, and Saturn.

wife (whom he deposited in the nearby town of Leatherhead at the start of the invasion to keep her safe). Just when the future of humankind seems utterly doomed, the Martians are abruptly annihilated by Earth's microbes, which their alien immune systems were unprepared to resist, a fate no doubt influenced by Wells's studies at the Normal School of Science: the premier institution for research on the new science of bacteriology.

An atmosphere of dread, as this summary suggests, permeates the first half of the narrative when the Martians themselves are regarded with uncertainty and the outcome of their invasion is yet unknown. The following section examines how this feeling prevails in two key incidents in the exposition: the Martians' use of the Black Smoke as they advance toward London, as well as the first sighting of the alien body. Judith Wilt has rightly asserted that the Black Smoke is "the most dread-producing and alien weapon," a point that I will presently develop by explicating the overlapping aesthetics of what I will call spread and dread: an intersection that is crucial in discerning Wells's critique of space-biased imperial technologies.[591] Moreover, the affective consequences of invasion are coupled with a description of the Martian body, which generates a particularly strong sense of dread in the narrator. Instead of indicating concrete terror of the alien form, "dread," in particular, opens up an expansive fear of possibilities superimposed on the foreign body. These future-oriented fears serve to interrogate and, ultimately, censure the British imperial project qua Martian conquest. Upon examining these two sources of dread, we see that this feeling induces critical movement in the narrative,

[591] Wilt, "The Imperial Mouth," 611. Numerous scholars have analyzed the role of technology, especially media technologies, as crucial tools of imperial growth and maintenance in real-world projects and Wells's fictional corollaries. Aaron Worth represents a broad consensus amongst scholars who read *The War of the Wars* as a part of a Wellsean collection of "monitory parables that link near-infinite imperial expansion with the threat of imperial extinction" "Imperial Transmission," 69. As he argues, it is not the ruthlessness but the relentlessness of the Martian's expansion, largely predicated on what Harold Innis termed "space-biased technologies," that Wells critiques so vigorously. See Worth's extended treatment of this issue on pages 75-76. See also Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

one that, I argue, has implications for activating a kind of ethical action beyond the fictional world. Wells's envisioned alternative to expansionistic imperialism is not futuristic in the sense that it presents an innovative solution. Instead, his novel revives a distinctly eighteenth-century conception of sympathy, as explained in Chapter 1, predicated on witnessing and striving to eliminate that which is considered "dreadful."

Black Smoke Dread

From the imaginary vantage point of "a balloon in the blazing blue above London," a reporter, who is a fictional extension of the narrator, describes the Martians' devastating use of noxious black smoke to expand toward London from the rural south (93). The effects of this biological warfare are rendered through poignant cartographic imagery:

> Directly below him the balloonist would have seen the network of streets far and wide, houses, churches, squares, crescents, gardens--already derelict--spread out like a huge map, and in the southward *blotted*. Over Ealing, Richmond, Wimbledon, it would have seemed as if some monstrous pen had flung ink upon the chart. Steadily, incessantly, each black splash grew and spread, shooting out ramifications this way and that, now banking itself against rising ground, now pouring swiftly over a crest into a new-found valley, exactly as a gout of ink would spread itself upon blotting paper.
>
> And beyond, over the blue hills that rise southward of the river, the glittering Martians went to and fro, calmly and methodically spreading their poison cloud over this patch of country and then over that, laying it again with their steam jets when it had served its purpose, and taking possession of the conquered country. (93)

Parallel to a presentist terror of the Martians' superior weaponry and mechanistic rationality is an anticipatory fear of the toxic plumes steadily spreading toward the heart of the imperial

metropolis. Syntactically, these sentences perform the prolongation, hesitation, and back-and-forth movement that constitute the aesthetics of dread that this dissertation has traced from the early Gothic romances. A lengthening effect is achieved by the listing of spaces and the compound-complex sentence structures. Nevertheless, within these sprawling (yet quite musical) lines, appositive phrases operate like caesuras and garner dramatic suspension when set aside in double dashes or commas. Finally, the crisscrossing imagery of the Martians going "this way and that" and "to and fro" over the streets "far and wide" is complemented by a kind of repetition with modification in the narrator's compounding of adjacent descriptive words such as "[s]teadily, incessantly" and "grew and spread." The descriptive style of this unremitting invasion therefore formally performs the aesthetics of dread while simultaneously eliciting this feeling through the nature of its content. The result of this aestheticized expansionism is an atmosphere of fearful anticipation that remains until the total conquest of London.

The eerie slowness of the Black Smoke is rendered more acute in juxtaposition to the Martians' initial armament: the Heat-Ray. The first, surprising act of aggression occurs when a group of men, innocuously bearing a white flag, approach the Martian pit with the intention of communicating with the beings who "in spite of their repulsive forms" appeared, at least, to be "intelligent creatures" (25). As soon as the small group approaches the perimeter: "Forthwith flashes of actual flame, a bright glare leaping from one to another, sprang from the scattered group of men. It was as if some invisible jet impinged upon them and flashed into white flame. It was as if each man were suddenly and momentarily turned to fire" (25-26). Practically every word in this account conveys instantaneity, intensity, and rapid motion: "flashes" and "flashed," "leaping," "sprang," "scattered," "jet," "suddenly," and "momentarily." The narrator can hardly process what he is witnessing, as indicated by his repeated use of the subjunctive phrase, "It was

as if," to introduce combustion metaphors. Although this technology is beyond his ken, the scene is not ineffable in a conventional Gothic sense where it is too transgressive to be captured by language. Instead, these striking hypotheticals signal a kind of thoughtlessness due to the swiftness of the strike and the requisite course of action (hasty flight). There is no time to cogitate on this initial act of war, but only react to the alarming stimulus.

In contrast to such immediate terror, the slow pacing of the subsequent subjugation by the Black Smoke establishes an atmosphere of anticipatory fear. Significantly, the Martians do not use the expeditiously obliterating Heat-Ray to destroy the posh suburbs of Richmond, Kingston, and Wimbledon, but, according to an interpolated newspaper report, they "are advancing *slowly* towards London" discharging their poison clouds (emphasis added, 74). In a manner that could not be more dissimilar from the Heat-Ray, the Black Smoke is repeatedly described as sedated: the substance is "heavy," it "spread itself slowly," it flows "sluggishly down the slope of the land and driving reluctantly before the wind, and very slowly it combined with the mist and moisture of the air, and sank to the earth in the form of dust" (78-79). And through this torpid substance the Martians "slowly waded, and turned their hissing steam-jets this way and that" (80). The narrator makes it abundantly clear: "they were in no hurry" (61). This pacing has formal consequences for the novel: nine whole chapters are dedicated to different, but quite redundant, perspectives on the Martians' progress toward the capital while wielding this weapon. Both style and content collude as the reader and narrator together must wait for more information "… cut off by the Black Smoke from the rest of the world. We," the narrator says of himself and his companion, "could do nothing but wait in aching inactivity" (103).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, critical studies of this invasion consistently emphasize the panic that erupts when the aliens reach the capital. Steven McLean, for instance, analyzes the violent

and chaotic reactions of the Londoners, which in his view disclose Wells's critique of "the latent bestiality underlying the civilized individual [that] occurs as 'People were fighting savagely for standing-room in the carriages even at two o'clock. By three, people were being trampled and crushed […] revolvers were fired, [and] people stabbed' (331)."[592] Assuredly, the affective tone of this chapter, "The Exodus from London," expresses frenzied terror as "the stream of flight rising swiftly to a torrent, lashing in a foaming tumult round the railway-stations, banked up into a horrible struggle about the shipping in the Thames" (82). Still, when we examine the protracted nature of the Martians' expansion from Woking to London, which takes up much more narrative space, the emotional atmosphere proves to be less acute and frenetic and more diffusely frightening in its anticipation.

This feeling-tone—that is, the diffuse emotional atmosphere—of dread generates ideas of identification that equivocally open up and toggle between multiple prongs in Wells's critique of the British Empire. I do not mean to suggest that Wells intended any one of these possible identifications as the correct one for his implied reader. Instead, the ambiguity of dread allows for and encourages a range of potential associations that can shift depending on the individual reader's politics. Therein lies the widespread relevance and sustained infatuation with this novel from the close of the nineteenth century to the present day. With these points in mind, I wish to concentrate on a chain of dread-invoking, possible identifications pertinent to Wells's contemporary readers. First, by eliciting dread of London's demise, the novel simulates, for the British subject, the affective experience of colonial invasion and cartographic erasure (literalized by the image of spilt ink on blotting paper). John Rieder has argued that this speculative emotional experience is meant to garner sympathy for people who have been subjugated through

[592] McLean, "The Descent of Mars," 98.

British colonial rule.[593] If the novel succeeds in kindling such feeling for British readers, it then reflexively induces them to identify with the Martians, and there lies a new source of dread: becoming a species of "mere selfish intelligence, without any of the emotional substratum of the human being" (114). Nevertheless, this unfeeling species ultimately fails, despite their seemingly irrevocable hegemony. The conclusion thus invites speculation on when the British, like their Martian counterparts, will meet their fatal end. Dread thus operates as an affective portal into several frightening possible British futures at the fin-de-siècle that range from abject displacement to ruthless evolution.

It is no coincidence that the adjective "dreadful" appears when the narrative deals with the abject displacement of England in the near future. As Bernard Bergonzi has argued, England's subjection to "national defeat and humiliation at the hands of a foreign enemy – usually either the French or Germans" was frequently discussed in contemporary pamphlets and books commenting on Britain's flagging military numbers.[594] The novel certainly dramatizes this fear in representing the army's ineffectual stand against the Martian wielding a Heat-Ray at Weybridge and Shepperton. Although they are able to take down one fighting machine by a "happy chance," the subsequent headlines bawled by Fleet Street newspaper boys couch hollow optimism between a very bad disaster and anticipated peril: "Dreadful catastrophe! […] Fighting at Weybridge! Full description! Repulse of the Martians! London said to be in danger!" (69). The inability of the British forces to protect the local populace—and, ultimately, its capital—from these "vast spider-like machines […] capable of the speed of an express train, and able to shoot

[593] See John Rieder, "Science Fiction, Colonialism, and the Plot of Invasion," 381-82. Rieder goes on to argue, however, that this critique is undermined by the Darwinian explanation for the Martian's invasion. By declaring this invasion is necessary for their species' survival, the narrator upholds a social-Darwinist logic that maintains the British Empire's right to expand its borders.

[594] Bergonzi, *The Early H. G. Wells*, 135.

out a beam of intense heat" results in a "Dreadful catastrophe!" indeed: "Never before in the history of warfare had destruction been so indiscriminate and so universal" (51).

"Dreadful," as I have explained in Chapter 1, does not share the slow-paced aesthetics of dread, which is why the exclamatory phrase is aptly applied to the instantaneously lethal Heat-Ray. To be sure, "dreadful" has a long history of use in the periodical press as a sympathetic modifier of natural disaster, formerly the only event as ruinous as this technologically capacitated invasion. The narrator refers to this newspaper tradition when anticipating the Martian conquest of London to be "as sudden, dreadful and destructive" as "the earthquake that destroyed Lisbon a century ago" (61). Indeed, there are 361 characterizations of the Lisbon earthquake as "dreadful" in the British Periodicals Archive of publications dating between 1755 and 1900. For instance, *A particular Account of the late dreadful Earthquake at Lisbon* was a well-reviewed pamphlet published in 1755 from "a Gentleman of undoubted Veracity, residing in *Lisbon*, to a Merchant in *London*, who publishes this early Account from a principle of Benevolence, to satisfy the Curiosity of the Public."[595] Such reports represent the dreadful in order to exact sympathetic concern from readers, an act of feeling, one not necessarily tied to action, that was meant to cultivate the reader's morality and self-approbation while satisfying curiosity, as this title makes explicit. Over a century later, Wells harnessed this convention for a political purpose: to garner sympathy for colonized people who have experienced violence by Britain's superior technology.

The position of the British military in *The War of the Worlds* is reversed, for in the speculative future of 1899 they find themselves on the receiving end of stupendously advanced weaponry. The terrifying contingency of war technology is underscored by the pessimistic words

[595] "Pamphlets on the Late Earthquake at Lisbon," *Monthly Review* 13 (December 1755): 473.

of an artilleryman to the narrator: "It's bows and arrows against the lightning" (55). Though the British troops, in fact, are using their most state-of-the-art equipment, likening these tools to "bows and arrows" directly aligns the armed forces with guerilla opposition in the empire and American Indian resistance in the United States. At one point in time, however, archery was a superior military technology, which the British subject would recall from the history of the Battle of Hastings (October 14, 1066).[596] Norman archers vastly outnumbered the Saxons, and they ultimately won the battle when King Harold Godswinson, reputedly, was shot through the eye with an arrow. This fatal end was immortalized in a scene of the *Bayeux Tapestry* and featured in English historiographies from 1743 onward.[597] The fictional artilleryman's reference to "bows and arrows" thus summons an unsettling sense of historical relativism. The emotional implications of reading about this "Dreadful catastrophe!" could therefore function in at least two contrasting ways, depending on the reader's politics. On the one hand, this scene might generate sympathy for actual colonial subjects who were brutally vanquished by the technologically superior British forces. On the other hand, it might evoke a more self-interested fear of a future where Britain becomes colonized as a consequence of its sprawling empire and inadequate military power.[598]

Martian Body Dread

Layered within these trepidations of imperial displacement, the narrator's dread of the Martian body reveals an alternative fear: a future wherein humans evolve into these unfeeling

[596] Wells also alludes to the Battle of Hastings in his earlier fiction, *The Time Machine* (1895).

[597] Shirley Ann Brown, *The Bayeux Tapestry: History and Bibliography* (Woodbridge; Wolfeboro: Boydell Press, 1988), 47.

[598] This analysis corroborates Arata's general argument that fin-de-siècle narratives of reverse colonization express "both fear and guilt." As a result, "these narratives provide an opportunity to atone for imperial sins, since reverse colonization is often represented as deserved punishment." "The Occidental Tourist," 623.

conquerors. The alignment of human and Martian is most clearly conveyed in the narrator's first description of the alien form, which, despite its foreignness, still leads him to suppose "it is quite credible that the Martians may be descended from beings not unlike ourselves" (113). He scrupulously chronicles these bodies, combining scientific reportage with poetic language and style:

> The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedge-like lower lip, the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement, due to the greater gravitational energy of the earth—above all, the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes—culminated in an effect akin to nausea. There was something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of their tedious movements unspeakably terrible. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I was overcome with disgust and dread. (22)

As Colin Manlove points out, "the Martians themselves are physically almost helpless," "wholly tied to prosthetic support" while inhabiting "the most gross and fleshly of forms."[599] The Martian body is indeed "gross"—and I will soon discuss the affect of disgust—but it is also rendered pitiable: the mouth is "quivering," the breath is "tumultuous," and the tentacles are "clumsy." Far from potent and threatening, as we see in the "astonishing vitality" of Count Dracula, the Martians initially appear infantile in their discombobulation, or diseased in their laborious respiration.[600] It is important to note where this description appears in the narrative: it is the very

[599] Colin Manlove, "Charles Kingsley, H. G. Wells, and the Machine in Victorian Fiction," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 48, no. 2 (1993): 234-35.

[600] Stoker, *Dracula*, 23.

first sighting after the creatures have emerged from their cylinder. It would be remiss to color this scene with hindsight, knowing that the Martians are, in fact, technologically superior to humans and will soon wreak fatal havoc. Such foreknowledge prompts the reader to search for nascent signs of terror in the alien body. Yet, far from terrifying, these bodies are actually represented as "terrible"—in the sense of extremely incompetent—and revolting.

The narrator's overriding affect of disgust indicates the human observer's original sense of superiority to the Martians. Disgust, as Sarah Ahmed explains, "operates as a contact zone."[601] Border objects are disgusting, and policing borders is necessarily an assertion of power: "disgust at 'that which is below' functions to maintain the power relations between above and below."[602] While feeling disgust is a way of asserting one's "aboveness," this feeling is "maintained only at the cost of a certain vulnerability… as an openness to being affected by those who are felt to be below."[603] Thus, the narrator's intense feelings of disgust at the Martian body manifest his sense of superiority: *he* belongs on this planet, where he breathes with ease and moves so fluidly that he can ride a bicycle.[604] The Martians are disgusting because they have crossed planetary borders, and their oily, fungoid flesh is disgusting in its potential to serve as the physical point of contact between Martian and human.

It is this potential contact, or, rather, what such contact could signify, that the narrator dreads. As Silvan Tomkins first articulated, and many critics have since reiterated: "Anything

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[601] Sara Ahmed, "The Performativity of Disgust," in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 87.

[602] Ahmed, 89.

[603] Ahmed, 89.

[604] The narrator frequently refers to his cycling exploits, reflecting Wells's own enthusiasm for the activity. In fact, the author developed the plot of his novel during a series of bicycle tours around Woking and the surrounding area, charting the exact route the Martians would take and reveling in the imagined destruction of the area. See Sherborne, *H. G. Wells*, 109-10.

which has had contact with disgusting things itself becomes disgusting."[605] The narrator dreads becoming disgusting. He does not dread Martian violence, for their feeble bodies and steaming, dirt-covered craft pose no threat. They are invariably "below" him, and yet also like him. The narrator ultimately fixates on "the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes" of these beings and declares that this feature "above all" instills his queasiness (22). It is not physiological difference—tentacles and a V-shaped mouth—but this uncannily homologous lineament that distresses the narrator. The transgressive combination of humanity and monstrosity in the Martian gaze evokes his nausea, his disgust, because it breaks down the separation between the human and non-human body and the moral claims associated with each. Implicitly recognizing the human embedded in the monstrous is tantamount to recognizing the latent monstrousness within humankind. The Martians, then, are less alien, and more aptly conceived as a posthuman species, the type that Elaine Després theorizes as a blend of "the Self and the Other."[606] It is not the Martian's Otherness that makes them disgusting, but their very familiarity.[607]

In his 1893 essay "The Man of the Year Million," Wells hypothesized that humans would evolve to "have a larger brain, and a slighter body than present," thus prompting him to ask:

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[605] Silvan Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness: Volume II: The Negative Affects* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 1963), 131.

[606] Elaine Després, "Describing (Post)Human Species: Between Cognition and Estrangement," in *The Ethics and Poetics of Alterity: New Perspectives on Genre Literature*, ed. Maylis Rospide and Sandrine Sorlin (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), 142.

[607] In this argument, I go against the conventional reading of Suvin Darko (most recently developed by Károly Pintér) that the Martian bodies are "described in Goebbelsian terms if repugnantly slimy and horrible 'racial' alienness and given the sole function of bloodthirsty predators" which "allows the reader to observe them only from the outside, as a terrifying object-lesson of the Social-Darwinist 'survival of the fittest.'" *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 78. Or, in Pintér's words, "the Martians remain the inscrutable Other, the mysterious and horrifying abject, the harbinger of the ever-present threat of the collapse of human civilization." "The Analogical Alien: Constructing and Construing Extraterrestrial Invasion in Wells's *The War of the Worlds*," *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 18, no. 1–2 (2012): 146.

"Why then should not the stomach be ultimately superannuated altogether?"[608] As many scholars have pointed out, this is exactly what transpires in Martian physiology: "They were heads, merely heads. Entrails they had none. They did not eat, much less digest" (112). We can understand the Martians then as a posthuman species that "stand[s] for a projection of humans, an attempt at a reflection on who (or what) they might become, but also on who they are."[609] In this vein, Darryl Jones perceives an alignment between the fates of Martians and humans: "Like the Martians', the far human future is as a round, tentacular head on a blasted world."[610] There is a significant connection—indeed, a cause and effect relationship—between the expanding brain tentacles and the decimated planet. As Aaron Worth elegantly articulates: "the Martians are early literalizations of the cliché of the expansionist […] octopus, a trope closely associated not only with military aggression but with sprawling webs of communication, with cables conceptualized as tentacles, grasping extensions of imperial power. The horrible bodies of the Martians, in other words, suggest a kind of cautionary just-so story for an imperial race: over time we become our technologies."[611]

This monitory parable is not simply dependent on the striking imagery that Jones and Worth have examined. Beyond describing these tentacular creatures, the narrator tells us how he *feels* about them (and, by extension, how *we* should feel about them). This is because feeling, which originates in a human body, is at the center of Wells's vision for a better future. More than a basic reflex, "disgust and dread" at the Martian body operate together as an emotional prophylactic against becoming Martian. The narrator's explicit feelings and affective behavior

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[608] H. G. Wells, "The Man of the Year Million. A Scientific Forecast," *Pall Mall Gazette* (November 6, 1983): 3.

[609] Després, "Describing (Post)Human Species," 142.

[610] Darryl Jones, "Introduction," in *The War of the Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xxvi.

[611] Worth, "Imperial Transmissions," 72.

offer a kind of intimate script to the reader that serves as an antidote to Martian emotionlessness. If the text can make readers intensely dread this possible or similar evolutions, then it succeeds in undermining these potential futures. Dread, in other words, activates a kind of ethos that is resistant to ruthless and unrelenting expansionistic imperialism.

Activating Dread and Sympathy for a Better Future

We cannot know how actual readers felt, of course, but it is immediately possible to witness the activating power of dread in the fictional world as the narrator "turned and, running madly, made for the first group of trees" (23). Yet he runs "slantingly and stumbling" because he "could not avert [his] face from these things" (23). Although feelings of dread precipitate self-preserving motion, a fascination with the dread-inducing object remains. The ensuing narrative is entirely generated by the narrator's anticipatory fear regarding what spaces are protected or perilous, which drives a plot of vigorous movement charting Martian activity. The narrator flits from one hideout to another to evade, but nonetheless observe, the alien forces. He describes his emotional state as a "grotesque pace between eagerness and […] dread": an eagerness for "that horrible privilege of sight" of the Martians, and dread of his potential discovery and uncertain demise (117). Will he be evaporated by the Heat-Ray, poisoned by the Black Smoke, phlebotomized for Martian food, or meet some other unknown and terrible end?

Although eagerness and dread are on opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of pleasure, they operate very similarly when it comes to activation. Unlike horror, which according to Ann Radcliffe's famous dictum, "contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates" dread is actuating.[612] The feeling of dread is necessarily anticipatory. It entails imagined encounters with future scenarios that consequently initiate action. This is true even when the narrator is physically trapped in a

[612] Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry," *New Monthly Magazine* 16, no. 1 (1826): 149.

ruined house—a very Gothic setting, to say the least—with a Martian planted outside. His eagerness and dread prompt him to "race across the kitchen" and engage in a "bitter struggle" with a fellow refugee so that he can be the one to see and "not[e] each strange detail of [the Martians'] form" (117). Dread and that other familiar Gothic feeling, curiosity, are thus intimately intertwined. While contemplating the unknown future and its manifold possibilities, fear inevitably arises, but so too does a desire to know more in order to better inform one's actions. Dread, essentially, is this richly contemplative combination of expectant fear and the activating spirit of inquiry.

That which is perceived as "dreadful" has a similarly actuating effect in the narrative, yet instead of inspiring fear, discerning the dreadful exacts sympathetic concern. When, for example, the astronomer Ogilvy, who is the first to visit the alien cylinder after its landing, perceives the top slowly twisting, "[t]he thought of the confined creature was so dreadful to him that he forgot the heat, and went forward to the cylinder to help turn" (15). Here "dreadful" signals an immense feeling of sympathy for the unknown creature, one that is so intense that Ogilvy neglects the physical stimulus in front of him and risks bodily harm to lend aid. "But luckily," the narrator informs us, "the dull radiation arrested him before he could burn his hands on the still glowing metal" (15-16). Ogilvy's hands are not protected by an intentional act, but from being "arrested" by the object itself. The point bears repetition: apprehending the dreadful causes such a profound sense of sympathy that Ogilvy loses his agency in a reflexive act of ethicality. When physical stimuli thwart him, though, "he stood irresolute for a moment, then turned, scrambled out of the pit, and set off running wildly into Woking" (16). That instant of hesitation marks a shift from passivity to activity, as Ogilvy pursues the second-best course of action to help the trapped creature: seek assistance from the townsfolk.

Co-operation, rather than individual heroism, thus appears as the more effective option, an ethos that resonates with T. H. Huxley's ideas in *Evolution and Ethics* (1893) and Wells's own essay "Ancient Experiments in Co-Operation" (1892). For Huxley, ethical action displaces "ruthless self-assertion" with "self-restraint," and "in place of thrusting aside, or treading down, all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help his fellows."[613] Similarly, Wells highlights the role of sympathy in his utopic conception of the village commune: "One ambition will sway the commune, a perfect fusion of interest there will be, and a perfect sympathy of feeling."[614] These traits all cohere in Ogilvy's treatment of the cylinder: deeply sympathetic to the point of self-negation, Ogilvy strives to aid those who are in peril.

Yet there is a significant caveat to Ogilvy's sympathy inspired by perceiving a dreadful situation. He acts under the impression that the trapped creature is a *man*: "'Good heavens!' said Ogilvy. 'There's a man in it—men in it! Half roasted to death! Trying to escape!'" (15). This assumption is strange, however, given that just paragraphs prior to this moment Ogilvy has connected the cylinder to the celestial explosions observed from Mars and declared: "The chances against anything man-like on Mars are a million to one" (13). Why is Ogilvy so quick to override his scientific thesis? The alteration is not rational, but emotional. Regardless of what he "knows" to be true about Mars, he feels intense sympathy for the dreadful plight of those inside the cylinder. This feeling creates an implicit and instantaneous leap: the occupants must be

[613] T. H. Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics [the Romanes Lectures]," in *Collected Essays By T. H. Huxley*, vol. 9 (London: Macmillan, 1903), 82.

[614] H. G. Wells, "Ancient Experiments in Co-Operation," in *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, ed. Robert Philmus and David Y. Hughes (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 191-92.

"men" in order to arouse such sympathy. Trapped men are a dreadful thing, whereas heaving aliens are something to dread.

Herein lies not only the crux of Wells's critique of expansionism, but an implied solution to destructive imperial competition. The emotion script of *The War of the Worlds* suggests that we need to dread the future in order to exorcize its negative probabilities. The affective goal of this parable is to identify individuals' plights as dreadful, thereby recognizing a common humanity through shared feeling. Wells thus recalls an eighteenth-century model of sympathy that is premised on witnessing and attempting to alleviate the dreadful. Although later in *Anticipations* (1901) Wells would extol language as "an instrument of world unification," as Armand Mattelart aptly puts it, *The War of the Worlds* reveals the central role of feeling in constructing these narratives of co-operation.[615]

The power of collective feeling to unify diverse populations is epitomized during the exodus from London, when the imaginary balloonist describes how "every northward and eastward road running out of the infinite tangle of streets would have seemed stippled black with the streaming fugitives, each dot a human agony of terror and physical distress" (93). As if to say this image and its generic affective markers are not enough, the narrator continues: "I have set forth at length in the last chapter my brother's account… in order that my readers may realize how that swarming of black dots appeared to one of those concerned" (93). Sympathy, it seems, does not arise from an undifferentiated image of suffering, but by experiencing the feelings of an individual from his perspective (an assertion that resonates with Adam Smith's 1759 *Theory of Moral Sentiments*). Yet from this individualistic affective understanding comes a greater apprehension of the collective's state of feeling. "Never before," continues the narrator, "in the

[615] Armand Mattelart, *The Invention of Communication*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 192.

history of the world had such a mass of human beings moved and suffered together" (93). While the first-person narration of the brother's experience offers insight into his emotional condition, this awareness is then meant to be applied to the "stampede gigantic and terrible" of "six million people, unarmed and unprovisioned, driving headlong" (93). Although these six million people are ostensibly Englishmen, the narrator compares them to "[t]he legendary hosts of the Goths and Huns, the hugest armies Asia has ever seen" (93). With this metaphoric ambivalence of nationality and ethnicity in addition to the vastness of the number, the exodus from London is made to represent a collective human fate: "It was the beginning of the rout of civilization, of the massacre of mankind" (93). Perceiving the collective dreadfulness of this fictional demise and dreading its coming-to-be in reality generates a sympathetic conscientiousness of the collective human species.

This sympathetic conscientiousness is only made possible by a detached fictionalized extension of an already fictional narrator who directs this emotion script at an implied reader, someone who is necessarily outside the diegesis. As the brother's first-person narration previously revealed, the "swarming black dots" of people within the action treat each other brutally: stealing, extorting, and violently laying hands on one another to pursue selfish escape. McLean reads this "savage struggle to escape London" as a satire on Herbert Spencer's "insistence that the competition apparent in the natural world translates into an appropriate framework for human ethical conduct."[616] Although, as McLean asserts, the narrator's brother demonstrates a cooperative ethos in line with Huxley's notion of ethical evolution, I maintain that the dynamic style of narration and direct appeal to the reader also operate, on a formal level, to promote this cooperative ethos. The characters within the diegesis cannot feel dread, for the

[616] McLean, "The Descent of Mars," 98.

chaotic, fast-paced exodus does not facilitate this reflective mood. However, the narrator, writing after the event, can overlay the factual report of pandemonium with a fictional gloss ("a balloon in the blazing blue above London") that literally and figuratively offers a new perspective, thereby making an entwined feeling of sympathy and dread possible. Such estrangement is not only foundational to the genre of science fiction, as Darko Suvin first asserted, but also to the experience of sympathy, as Adam Smith understood it through the figure of the "impartial spectator."[617] Wells's narrative technique thus reveals the power of storytelling to translate a self-absorbed experience of panic and havoc into a globally meaningful event that advances a planetary consciousness. Not only language, but also elaborate narratological structures are crucial to the affective project that Wells upholds. In other words, Wells does not simply portray "the *shape* of things to come" in this representation of London's conquest. Beyond imagistic depiction, he robustly endows these episodes with feeling, especially dread, in order to challenge any sense of complacency the reader might have about the future.

To this end, *The War of the Worlds* ends on a distinct note of spatial dread: "We have learned now that we cannot regard this planet as being fenced in and a secure abiding-place for Man; we can never anticipate the unseen good or evil that may come upon us suddenly out of space" (158). And yet, the narrator maintains, this dreadful experience with the Martians "has done much to promote the conception of the commonweal of mankind" (158). The Martians taught humankind that they are united, not biologically, but emotionally, as equally affected

[617] Darko defines SF as the "*literature of cognitive estrangement*," which is characterized by its "interest in a strange newness, a *novum*" where "the possibility of other strange, covariant coordinate systems and semantic fields is assumed." *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, 4-5. Two centuries earlier, Smith similarly postulated: "We can never survey our own sentiments and motives, we can never form any judgment concerning them, unless we remove ourselves, as it were, from our own natural station, and endeavor to view them as at a certain distance from us. But we can do this in no other way than by endeavoring to view them with the eyes of other people, or as other people are likely to view them." *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley, (New York: Penguin Classics, 2010), 133.

bodies in the "Dreadful catastrophe!" of extraterrestrial invasion (69). Moreover, the narrator muses: "It may be this invasion from Mars is not without its ultimate benefit for men; it has robbed us of that serene confidence in the future which is the most fruitful source of decadence" (158). Dread is thus positioned as productive in opposition to complacent and degenerative decadence.

The "abiding sense of doubt and insecurity" left in the narrator's mind at the end of the story is not only generative—resulting in the narrative itself—but also prosocial. For in this affected state, he explains: "I sit in my study writing [*The War of the Worlds*] by lamplight" (159). He continues writing until the startling memories of the Martian invasion prompt him to go into the street and witness "a butcher-boy in a cart, a cabful of visitors, a workman on a bicycle, children going to school" (159). In the final image, the narrator holds hands with his wife as they reflect on their past speculations: "strangest of all is […] to think I have counted her, and that she has counted me, among the dead" (160). Industry, technology, and institutions (education and marriage) are all upheld in the novel's conclusion, even while the narrator dreads the unforeseeable future impact that the Martian invasion may have on these touchstones of civilization. A critic for the *Saturday Review* evidently shared this dread to such an extent that he challenged the ending: "We are afraid, moreover, that when this country is crushed beneath the tentacles of the Martians there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage; and that those who have wives already will be as those who have none."[618] Part enthralled by Wells's fiction and part indulgent in rhetorical flourish, this commentary anticipates a real-life invasion of Earth that utterly disrupts the most sacred of Victorian institutions. In this case at least, Wells has achieved his goal: to upset complacency about the future by eliciting a multi-layered dread of

[618] "Rev. of *The War of the Worlds*," *Saturday Review* 85, no. 2205 (January 29, 1898): 147.

invasion and usurpation. The political stakes of this affective imagination will be unraveled in the third section, after we have examined how Stoker harnesses dread in *Dracula* to unsettle mainstream notions of Britain's Progress and control over Ireland.

Temporal Dread and the Critique of Progress in *Dracula*

Like *The War of the Worlds*, *Dracula* is a reverse colonization narrative that manifests intense concern for the future of the British nation, and exhibits the benefits of cooperation through dread-inspired sympathy. Although the vampire's invasion is not set in the future like that of the Martians, the characters of *Dracula* are constantly imagining and recalibrating their personal and national futures in relation to the eponymous villain's actions. Their resultant feelings of dread are both a reaction and an affective mode of resistance to Dracula's assurance of a future that is fixed, irrevocable, and designed for his consumption. Instead of providing concrete images of what the coming times might look like, as we see in science fiction novels, the protagonists of this complexly pieced-together narrative— including a middle-class English couple (Jonathan and Mina Harker), a London-based aristocrat (Arthur Holmwood) and his fiancée (Lucy Westenra), an English psychologist (John Seward), a polymathic Dutch doctor (Abraham Van Helsing), and a wealthy American adventurer (Quincey Morris)—relate vague conceptions of possible futures through emotionally charged and temporally inflected metaphors, which resonate more familiarly with the Gothic mode.

Unlike its early Gothic predecessors, however, *Dracula* is not a found manuscript with medieval European origins, but rather, like *The War of the Worlds*, presents itself as an ultra-modern, factual report, prepared by an educated, middle-class Englishperson. Like the scientific journalist who compiles and recounts the particulars of a Martian invasion from various perspectives, Mina Harker, née Murray, is the persistent secretary who collects, edits, and types

the documents that constitute the vampire story. The preface informs us that the narrative is comprised of "exactly contemporary" statements "given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them," which "have been placed in sequence" so that "[a]ll needless matters have been eliminated" (5). As we can immediately tell, these prefatory remarks establish a meta-commentary on the act of writing and editing, which is sustained throughout the intricately plotted narrative. It begins with a journal entry by Mina's then-fiancé, the London solicitor Jonathan Harker, as he travels by train from Budapest to Klausenburgh (now Cluj-napoca, a city in northwestern Romania). Jonathan's destination is Count Dracula's castle in Transylvania, at which he arrives after foreboding encounters with superstitious peasants who "all made the sign of a cross and pointed two fingers" to guard against the evil eye, a spooky coachman with "very red lips and sharp-looking teeth," and menacing wolves whose similarly "white teeth and lolling red tongues" precipitate a "paralysis of fear" in the beset traveler (14, 17, 20). Though the dutiful employee's sole job was to assist the Count with his purchase of an estate in the English metropolis, the client is rather more demanding of his "friend Harker Jonathan" (28). His expectations for English lessons and companionship are soon dispelled as a ruse when Jonathan realizes he is a prisoner in the Gothic fortress. The Count's preternatural capacities become increasingly clear: Jonathan spies him "crawl down the castle wall… *face down*, with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings" (39). When the terrified solicitor is salaciously preyed upon by a trio of vampiresses—"I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat"—he finally dares to escape the castle (43).

The narrative then shifts back to England with an epistolary exchange between Mina and Lucy, her upper-class friend. Just as Jonathan's travel narrative shifts into the terrifying Gothic

mode, so too does this Austenian marriage plot (relating Lucy's receipt of three proposals and decision to accept the aristocratic Arthur Holmwood) become ever more ominous as Lucy's somnambulist rambles induce physical illness and nervous agitation: "she is paler than is her wont," Mina worries in her diary, "and there is a drawn, haggard look under her eyes which I do not like. I fear she is fretting about something" (91). The male suitors—Arthur, in addition to Dr. Seward, a psychologist in charge of a local insane asylum, and the visiting Texan, Quincey Morris—strive to assist her, under the direction of Seward's mentor from Amsterdam, the illustrious Dr. Van Helsing. It is Van Helsing who perceives "she was bitten by the vampire when she was in a trance, sleep-walking," though his efforts to save her fail, and she transforms into the bloodthirsty Bloofer Lady, preying upon East End children (179). With Jonathan's return to England assisted by Mina, whom he has married, his diary confirms the maleficent supernatural entity that Lucy has become, and Van Helsing consequently instructs Arthur to "take this stake in your left hand, ready to place the point over the heart, and the hammer in your right" to put an end to his undead lover's existence before the male witnesses, who subsequently assist in "cut[ing] off the head and fill[ing] the mouth with garlic" (191, 193).

The company—which Christopher Craft has influentially referred to as the "Crew of Light"—accordingly commit to destroying Dracula, who they know from Jonathan has arrived in England with fifty boxes of Transylvanian dirt that he requires to retain his vitality.[619] Their mission to eliminate the vampire's ancestral soil from the metropolis proceeds more or less triumphantly, with the indefatigable Mina not only compiling their respective accounts in a triplicate typewritten master document, but also performing several other administrative duties, like reviewing train schedules, in order to track Dracula's movements. This esteemed member of

[619] Christopher Craft, "'Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Representations* 8 (1984): 107–33.

the team, however, is attacked by the vampire who places "his reeking lips upon [her] throat" and forces her to "swallow some of the ——" flowing from an open vein on his breast, thus condemning her to vampirization if he is not swiftly destroyed (251, 252). The Count, pursued by the company more vigorously than ever, flees back to Transylvania, where he is ultimately vanquished and Quincey, too, meets his fatal end in battle. Mina is thus restored to uncontaminated, exemplary womanhood and able to fulfill her Victorian female destiny of bearing children with Jonathan. Their son's "bundle of names" is not disclosed in Jonathan's epilogue, but the nostalgic father informs us that his moniker "links all our little band of men together," though they call him "Quincey" in honor of their fallen comrade (326).

The impossibility of shortening this plot summary is a testament to the ways in which the novel is a meticulous and self-aware act of writing, as we learn from the preface, "a history" that is "almost at variance with the possibilities of later-day belief," but nevertheless, "stand[s] forth as simple fact" (5). Historiography and belief, from the outset, are the story's chief concerns. Although "simple" might not be an altogether correct characterization, the structural layout of facts corresponds to the scientific method—where one step cannot be skipped—in order to procure belief in the events, despite the supernatural presence.[620] This novel therefore is essentially a bureaucratic exercise in reporting empirical truths from a multitude of administrative authorities, though its affective register is far from impersonal. From the late-nineteenth century to the present day, *Dracula* has held readers in its sway with its intense

[620] The *Daily Telegraph*, the *Speaker*, the *Academy*, and the *Saturday Review* all applauded the realistic effect that Stoker achieved by assaulting the technologically modern present with supernatural powers from the past. Meanwhile, *Punch,* the *Illustrated London News*, the *Spectator*, and the *Athenæum* critiqued a lack of "awful remoteness" in the setting, which they perceived as necessary for Dracula's paranormal powers. "Rev. of *Dracula*," *Athenæum*, no. 3635 (June 26, 1897): 835. For an extended discussion of these reviews and the question of verisimilitude see Gustavo Generani, "Bram Stoker's Dracula: Breaking the Imperial-Anthropological Time," *Horror Studies* 9, no. 1 (April 1, 2018): 121.

emotionality, from the "oozing horror and eroticism" of the sexualized act of vampirizing to the "creepy terror" elicited by "the hellish operations of Dracula."[621]

In addition to "horror" and "terror," an affective aesthetics of "spread and dread" span this narrative, as the villain repeatedly assumes a miasmal form that is strikingly similar to the Martians' Black Smoke. As Mina observes from the window one evening:

> Not a thing seemed to be stirring, but all to be grim and fixed as death or fate; so that a thin streak of white mist, that crept with almost imperceptible slowness across the grass towards the house, seemed to have a sentience and a vitality of its own… The mist was spreading, and was now close up to the house, so that I could see it lying thick against the wall, as though it were stealing up to the windows. (226)

Like the Martians' biological weapon, Dracula's essence travels with a slowness that is exceedingly terrifying, as it indicates a cunning and hostile "sentience" that presages inevitable contamination that no "wall" can withstand.

By attending to such metaphors of contagion, modern scholars have extensively examined the ways in which *Dracula* imbricates fears pertaining to the etiology of disease; the passing of illness between gendered, classed, and racial bodies; and the impact of imperial climates on vulnerable Western immune systems. As Ross G. Forman aptly surmises: "Since the late 1980s and Elaine Showalter's influential *Sexual Anarchy*, it has become axiomatic to read Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* as a text that responds to anxieties of degeneration through metaphors of infection."[622] Martin Willis, for instance, illuminates the ways in which the

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[621] Botting, "'Monsters of the Imagination,'" 117. "Rev. of *Dracula*," *Daily Mail* (June 1, 1897).

[622] Ross G. Forman, "A Parasite for Sore Eyes: Rereading Infection Metaphors in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 44, no. 4 (2016): 925.

vampire functions "as a symbol of Victorian anxieties of impurity and corruption arising from illness and disease" by embodying three competing theories on the source and spread of illness: contagion, miasma, and germ theory.[623] While contagionists stigmatized infected individuals as the propagators of illness and applied socially restrictive protocols, such as quarantine, to control the spread of disease, miasmists located the origins of sickness in unclean environments and therefore encouraged public sanitation practices that largely benefitted poorer neighborhoods. Willis thus makes clear how these medical theories informed both conservative and liberal agendas, and politicized perceptions of classed and gendered individuals who became infected. He concludes that Lucy Westenra's vampirization as a result of her transgressive sexuality—"Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her…?" she writes to Mina (60)—"is the novel's finest example of how infection, once it has entered the world of social and cultural value, can have profound effects on individual identity."[624]

Forman builds upon Willis's work by concentrating on the novel's representation of parasitic infection, which he contends is informed by new knowledge in the 1890s on malaria (and, to lesser extents, tuberculosis and syphilis) as a disease transmitted by blood. Forman is astutely attuned to the temporal dynamics of illness in *Dracula*, especially the relationship between parasitism and futurity:

> Parasitism highlights a mode of contagion that not only integrated itself into the bodies of its victims and the body politic as a whole, but also enabled a seemingly permanent bodily transformation and a seemingly endless process of replication that was all the

[623] Martin Willis, "'The Invisible Giant,' *Dracula*, and Disease," *Studies in the Novel* 39, no. 3 (2007): 302.

[624] Willis, 315.

> more threatening – and all the more exciting – to readers because it did not necessarily involve finality.[625]

Forman thus elucidates how the vampire is a cynosure for a sense of the future that is immutable and infinitely spreading forward. By developing Forman's temporal understanding of the vampire's parasitism, I examine how the Crew of Light repeatedly dreads this type of fixed and predictive future that Dracula both embodies and enunciates. The following analysis, which extends beyond the context of disease, considers the ways in which perpetuation and consumption, metaphorized in Dracula's immortal body, participates in a mode that I will call parasitic historiography. By this I mean that the vampire inscribes himself into what might be styled a host narrative of history—one that includes all of time past, present, and future—only to transform and dominate it for the benefit of his infinite appetite. To consider such voracious consumption in *Dracula* immediately invokes the work of Franco Moretti, who follows Karl Marx's memorable assertion that "Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks."[626] On this basis, Moretti has influentially interpreted Dracula's limitless intake as a signifier of monopoly capitalism.[627] My exploration of parasitic historiography connects Moretti's shrewd understanding of the novel's political footing to its affective, imperial, and pathological economies by revealing how the vampiric logic of British settler-colonialism, especially in relation to Ireland, depends upon consuming all temporality into a sickening, if not dread-inducing, host narrative. In addition, however, I contend that *Dracula*'s protagonists present an affective mode of resistance to such

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[625] Forman, "A Parasite for Sore Eyes," 925.

[626] Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes, Reprint ed. (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), 342.

[627] Franco Moretti, "A Capital *Dracula*," in *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*, eds. Susan Fischer, David Forgacs, and David Miller (London; New York: Verso, 1988), 90–104.

parasitic historiography, by harnessing the feeling of dread to unify their team and actuate their mission against the vampire.

An atmosphere of dread necessarily accompanies and develops the novel's thematic tensions between varying types of related attitudes toward the historical process and religious beliefs. On the one hand, *Dracula* represents opposing pressures of Christianity, secularism, and paganism. On the other hand, it depicts clashing encounters between Western technology and the archaic relics of non-Classical Eastern European culture. These two conflicts are generally reduced in modern scholarship to a battle between the past and the present, wherein the East and paganism align with the former while the West, Christianity, and secularism correspond to the latter. Yet, from its prefatory frame, we might discern that *Dracula* is not simply about documenting—with the equipment and sensibilities of a modern, cosmopolitan, Western subject—what has occurred. Rather, it is a story about writing *history*, which is a project that looks forward to future readers and their relationship with the recorded events as much as it looks backward to what actually happened. Mina and the Crew of Light's attitude toward the future is frequently recorded and remarkably distinguished from Dracula's, as the following discussion reveals. Their prospective conflict hinges on two questions: To what extent can we or should we believe that future events are guaranteed to transpire? How do our belief systems and knowledge of the past contribute to our ability to know, control, or change the future? Religious faith and historiography thus crucially overlap in *Dracula*'s treatment of inevitability, a concept represented in the immortal figure of the vampire, whose self-appointed destiny is to replicate himself unendingly.

The Count, as an undying being, embodies a kind of authority over all temporalities, which he dramatically performs for Jonathan on their third evening in the castle together. Despite

Jonathan's previous outburst of "wild feeling" upon perceiving himself a prisoner, his "long talk with the Count that night" reveals a striking sympathy between the two on the topic of history (32, 33). The Englishman is "most fascinated" by his host's recitation of what seems like "the whole history of the country" and especially "the story of his race," which Dracula articulates "like a king speaking" (33). Although Jonathan explicitly attributes this monarchical impression to Dracula's use of the plural "we" to refer to the exploits of his house, we might also perceive that Dracula's magisterial bearing is informed by his seemingly impossible presence in the historical past. As Jonathan records with a tone of awe: "In his speaking of things and people [of Transylvanian history], and especially of battles, he spoke as if he had been present at them all" (33).

Both Dracula and Jonathan are consumers of history and perceive power in possessing intimate knowledge of bygone times. As a vampire, Dracula literally consumes history, archiving the lifeforce of historical figures *in sanguis* within him. This approach to history is plainly an elite one, where timelines can be traced by a continuous, aristocratic bloodline. He boasts, more accurately than Jonathan realizes: "What devil or what witch was ever so great as Attila, whose blood is in these veins?" (34). The Count thus appears as a figure of transhistoric *and* transnational power, as he is endowed with an illustrious Asiatic heritage in addition to "the blood of many brave races" of Europeans (33). Dracula is a repository of individual histories, subsuming these discrete units into a totalizing, transhistoric corporeality. The vampire is not a roughly hewn composite, like Victor Frankenstein's monster, but a masterful biological assimilator endowed with power by his *longue durée*.

While Dracula literally imbibes history, the Englishman figuratively consumes the past as he avidly listens to Dracula's narration of the "glory" of his house (33). Jonathan is motivated to

"turn the conversation that way" so that he may "find out all [he] can about Count Dracula" and consequently acquire information that might help him escape (33). The logic of this plan implies the platitude that knowledge of history reveals solutions for the future. Yet despite his rational intention, Jonathan is soon enthralled by the "fascinating" account for its own sake, thereby exhibiting a quintessentially Victorian infatuation with historiography (33).

The Victorian obsession with the past is frequently discussed in modern scholarship. As Richard D. Altick asserted in his seminal *Victorian People* and *Ideas* (1973): "For all their pride in the present, they had an ineradicable feeling—the word 'nostalgia' does not do it justice—for the past."[628] In the process of explaining this attitude toward history in relation to contemporary scientific discoveries, Daniel Lord Smail contends that historiography became an increasingly important project for the Victorians to maintain their sense of singularity and superiority as humans in response to the "time revolution" of the 1860s.[629] Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830, 1833), Charles Darwin's *On the Origins of Species* (1859), and John Lubbock's *Pre-Historic Times, As Illustrated by Ancient Remains, and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages* (1865) all brought about dramatic shifts in attitudes toward the age of the earth and its inhabitants. Lyell's explanation of the formation of the Earth's crust, Darwin's theory of natural selection, and Lubbock's archeological and proto-sociocultural anthropological account compellingly, though terrifyingly, presented a conception of "deep history" (as termed by present-day scholars), that extended many thousands of years into the past and was untraceable through the inherited memory of human generations.[630] As a consequence of contemplating this

[628] Richard D. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (New York: Norton, 1973), 101.

[629] Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

[630] A century before Darwin, Kant's *Universal Natural History* (1755) and George Louis Lecler, Comte de Buffon's *Epochs of Nature* (1778) discredited the Biblical notion of a six-thousand-year universe, popularized in 1658 by

"dark abyss of time," historians, following Lubbock, hermetically sealed off the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras as "prehistory."[631] The postlithic age, by contrast, was secured as the temporal territory for civilized humans, who could be distinguished from their humanoid forbears by their capacity to write and therefore narrate the past.

While historiography was certainly not a Victorian invention, these nineteenth century chronicles more prominently exude a sense of progressivism that assured the present civilization's superiority. Thus, the eminent historian, poet, and Whig politician, Thomas Babington Macaulay, would write in the first chapter of the first volume to his widely acclaimed *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (1848): "Those who compare the age in which their lot has fallen with a golden age which exists only in imagination, may talk of degeneracy and decay; but no man who is correctly informed as to the past, will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present."[632]

Moreover, in thinking of themselves as historically situated subjects, Victorians frequently pondered how they would figure in future periods of time. As Altick contends: "The Victorians were very much aware that they were performing in the limelight of history, and one of their great ambitions was to do so with credit."[633] Dracula, I argue, refracts the underlying desire of this project: to exert dominance over the past in order to ascertain future progress. Among recent scholars, however, the discussion of Stoker's novel in this forward-looking sense has largely been overlooked. To be sure, it is a critical commonplace to explore how Dracula's

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Archbishop James Ussher's *The Annals of the World Deduced from the Origin of Time*. Still, Smail maintains that nineteenth-century thinkers mainstreamed the idea of "deep history."

[631] Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain*, 42.

[632] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England*, ed. Hugh Trevor-Roper (London: Penguin Classics, 1979), 52.

[633] Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, 74.

"peculiarly inhuman mode of temporality" represents Victorian anxieties about the dark ages of the past disrupting the enlightened, modern present.[634] All the same, by concentrating on the ways in which Dracula evokes future-oriented dread rather than presentist or backward-looking fear, we can perceive how the vampire embodies a mode of historiography that aims at projecting supremacy into the distant future. Dracula, by virtue of his vampire status, casts himself forward through rapacious parasitism that depends upon infinitely replicating predation in order to maintain his power. For this reason, we may view him as an object of critique about prevailing attitudes surrounding Britain's sustained hegemony over its colonies and territories, a hegemony that involved metaphorically sucking the lifeblood out of its colonized people.

Beyond possessing superhuman knowledge of history, Dracula's access to the infinite future is also assured through his immortality. His vampirizing operates as a metaphor for consuming the future and rendering the historical narrative predictive. Thus, after preying upon Mina and eluding capture, he dramatically prophesies: "My revenge is just begun! I spread it over centuries, and time is on my side. Your girls that you all love are mine already. And through them you and others shall yet be mine, my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed. Bah!" (267). Notably, the terror of the Count's plan does not rely on dreadful images of a dystopic vampire world. His assertion that Englishmen of subsequent centuries will be his "jackals" is metaphoric; they will not literally turn into these ferocious

[634] Schmitt, "Mother Dracula," 139. For more on Dracula's temporality, see Generani, "Bram Stoker's Dracula"; Ertuğrul Koç and Yağmur Demir, "Vampire versus the Empire: Bram Stoker's Reproach of Fin-de-Siècle Britain in *Dracula*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 46, no. 2 (2018); Stephanie Green, "Time and the Vampire: The Idea of the Past in *Carmilla* and *Dracula*," in *Hospitality, Rape and Consent in Vampire Popular Culture: Letting the Wrong One In*, ed. David Baker et al. (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Alana Fletcher, "No Clocks in His Castle: The Threat of the Durée in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Victorian Review* 39, no. 1 (2013); and Adam Barrows, "At the Limits of Imperial Time; or, Dracula Must Die!," in *The Cosmic Time of Empire: Modern Britain and World Literature* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010). These publication dates indicate that temporality is the latest trend in *Dracula* scholarship, which has seen many waves: psychoanalytic and feminist readings in the 1980s, Irish/postcolonial interpretations in the 1990s, and Marxist/postcolonial readings in the early-2000s.

canines. Thus, the reader is not provided with a striking portrait of a degenerative humanoid, as one finds in Wells's depictions of the Beast People in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) or Robert Louis Stevenson's vivid detailing of the villain in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).[635] The Count's threat is more nuanced: he evocatively suggests that future-men will become bestial servants to his endless appetite. His choice to call them "jackals" underscores the gender of these minions. Large, predatory dogs decisively signaled masculinity to the Victorians, who were infatuated with canine breeding and companionship in the latter half of the century.[636] By contrast, another animal that figured widely in literature and art was the hyena, which looks similar to a jackal although it is, in fact, of the feline order. As Alan Bewell explains, these wild cats were coded as "the transsexuals of the animal world," "queering both gender and sexuality."[637] Dracula's choice of animal in his metaphoric threat thus menaces the Victorian men not with gender instability, but evacuation: a loss of agency that is absolutely central to their masculine identity.

This prophesied future of subordinate masculinity and contaminated femininity is rendered all the more terrifying by Dracula's domineering attitude toward the entire temporal spectrum. By declaring the women are "mine *already*" and "others shall *yet* be mine," he

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[635] "Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice." Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Other Tales*, ed. Roger Luckhurst (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 19. Another example from Wells's corpus: "An ugly-looking man, a hunch-backed human savage to all appearance, squatting in the aperture of one of the dens, would stretch his arms and yawn, showing with startling suddenness scissor-edged incisors and sabre-like canines, keen and brilliant as knives. Or in some narrow pathway, glancing with a transitory daring into the eyes of some lithe, white-swathed female figure, I would suddenly see (with a spasmodic revulsion) that she had slit-like pupils, or glancing down note the curving nail with which she held her shapeless wrap about her." H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, ed. Patrick Parrinder (London: Penguin, 2005), 84.

[636] See Michael Worboys, Julie-Marie Strange, and Neil Pemberton, *The Invention of the Modern Dog: Breed and Blood in Victorian Britain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 1-20.

[637] Alan Bewell, "Hyena Trouble," *Studies in Romanticism* 53, no. 3 (2014): 372.

rhetorically invokes mastery over the past as well as the future. The adverbial markers of time acquire grammatical prominence by dint of their adjacency, whereas the possessive pronoun, though emphatically repeated, is not endowed with syntactical power through parallelism. It is therefore this grammar of temporality, rather than the position of the speaking subject, that is so utterly terrifying. For we realize in this economy that the future is always anterior.[638] Dracula's is a future that is inscribed by a past that he already possesses. The vampire thus renders the coming times at once inevitable, in the antiquated way of prophecy, and consumable, for the fulfillment of his immortal appetite. As a consequence of his model of consumption, the future is evermore ready to be consumed: the women are comestible, while the men are commodified pets. This vision is even more frightening due to its unfathomable distance from the mortal lifespan of the human characters, as it serves as a revenge (one invoking metaphors of contagion) "spread… over centuries." In response, Van Helsing aptly declares to the group: "Time is now to be dreaded" (273). Although the Dutchman is specifically concerned here with the Count's ability to "live for centuries," his statement more broadly conveys fear of the whole temporal continuum: Dracula's domination of the past, present, and future.

By contrast, Van Helsing discerns how he and his companions have a very different relationship with the future, for their experience is marked by frustrating uncertainty. After a thwarted mission to Dracula's London estate, he declares: "We have been blind somewhat; blind after the manner of men, since when we can look back we see what we might have seen looking forward if we had been able to see what we might have seen! Alas, but that sentence is a puddle; is it not?" (273). The "blind… manner of men" is utterly unlike the discernment of the immortal

[638] As Jacques Lacan memorably described the future anterior: "What is realised in my history is not the past definite of what was, since it is no more, or even the present perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming." Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 247.

vampire. Van Helsing's "puddle" of stilted English grammatically manifests the inaccuracy of human speculation. We are frustratingly "blind" to the future. Yet when we look back on a chain of events, they not only appear related, but the result also *seems* inevitable, and we wonder how we failed to apprehend it coming. There is an embedded longing in this utterance to look forward—reinforced with all the insight that only retrospection offers—and ascertain what the future holds. To conceive of the future in this way is to view it as fixed and "holding" something that has yet to occur.

Van Helsing's desire for accurate, predictive prospection is a more tenuous version of the desire undergirding late-Victorian notions of Progress. According to the Irish historian and classical scholar John Bagnell Bury (who was, incidentally, Stoker's classmate at Trinity College), "Progress" referred to the idea that "civilisation has moved, is moving, and will move in a desirable direction."[639] Clarity is absolutely essential to this project: "But in order to judge that we are moving in a desirable direction we should have to know precisely what the destination is."[640] Progress, in this proper noun form, is necessarily teleological, and the telos is not only intelligible but also considered attainable. There is no ambiguity or doubt in this dogmatic conception. Although numerous thinkers and artists questioned the conflation of progress with process, or perceived alternate forms of movement in nature and civilization (such as ebb and flow or cyclical systems) the mainstream remained largely committed to this idea of inevitable, linear, forward development.[641] As the writer of a monthly feature titled "The Progress of the World" put it in May 1897 (just three weeks before *Dracula*'s publication), he

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[639] J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Origin and Growth* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), 2.

[640] Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, 2.

[641] See Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, 107-13.

and his readers held "the deeply grounded belief that the affairs of this world progress even when they seem to retrogress."[642] Now *that* is certainty, indeed.

In *Dracula*, it is the Count, not the Crew of Light, who manifests such unflagging assurances regarding times yet to come, and for this reason I argue we should read the vampire as embodying mainstream English notions of Progress.[643] Dracula is the monstrous incarnation of Britain's desire to consume its own history, exhibit singularity, and project its hegemony into a guaranteed future. The colonial stakes of this parasitic historiography will be explored in the next section in relation to Irish nationalism, a movement antithetical to the supposedly certain future of Ireland's subservience to England. Before examining the ways in which we might read *Dracula* as a national allegory, it is worth concentrating exclusively on the novel itself to demonstrate how the Crew of Light harness feelings of dread to contest and resist the Count's authoritarian mode of envisioning the future.

Although Van Helsing expresses his desire for foresight, he fully admits in his "puddle" of a sentence that such prospection is impossible. Elsewhere, he perspicuously censures the idea of determinism when he discerns that Lucy has been bitten by a vampire. He exclaims to God, then addresses Seward: "Is there fate amongst us still, sent down from the pagan world of old, that such things must be, and in such way?" (123-24). This question is rhetorical, and, accordingly, Seward does not answer. His silence acquiesces with Van Helsing's suggestion that, *no*, the future is not predetermined as the ancients believed. Van Helsing, in fact, immediately posits the opposite idea, that the future is malleable and can be managed with active Christian

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[642] "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews* (May 1897): 413.

[643] I am not the first to align Dracula with the British rather than the Eastern Other. Carol A. Senf famously argued that Dracula is "the unseen face" in Jonathan's mirror. "*Dracula*: The Unseen Face in the Mirror," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 9, no. 3 (1979). Most recently, Generani has argued that the vampire is a manifestation of the British imperial political unconscious, for the British Empire is "unable to admit its vampiric policies hidden under the mask of philanthropy, civilization and progress." "Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," 124.

fortitude: “come, we must see and act. Devils or no devils, or all the devils at once, it matters not; we fight him all the same” (124). Since he aligns fate with suffering in the pre-Christian past, Van Helsing rejects this notion of inevitability by initiating a violent crusade against the villainous icon of determinism.

The Crew of Light do not passively submit to divine diktat, but energetically exert themselves to be “ministers of God’s own wish” (278). Such volitional activity is exhibited in Mina’s decision to compile the collective account of their battle with Dracula:

> Whilst they are resting, I shall go over all carefully, and perhaps I may arrive at some conclusion. I shall try to follow the Professor’s example, and think without prejudice on the facts before me...
>
> I do believe that under God’s providence I have made a discovery. I shall get the maps and look over them... (304)

Although Mina attributes her insight to God’s providence, this recognition of fate is bookended by two industrious and meticulous acts of individual will, which are emphasized by the repeated use of first-person verbal clauses and the judicial language of “without prejudice.” Despite Mina’s musings to Jonathan “that perhaps we are the instruments of ultimate good” and “we are in the hands of God,” there is nothing passive about this energetic fellowship’s pursuit of the “ultimate good,” nor is this telos even considered certain, as Mina tempers it with a “perhaps” (281, 315).

There is but one moment when Mina conceives of the future as irrevocably fixed; however, this thinking is also marked by a signifier of ancient Greece, and the structure of the plot censures her impression. For Mina is beset by the vampire immediately after writing: “[I]t all seems like a horrible tragedy, with fate pressing on relentlessly to some destined end.

Everything that one does seems, no matter how right it may be, to bring on the very thing which is most to be deplored" (226). The tight order of events suggests an axiological relationship between her succumbing to the despair of inevitability and her psycho-physical vulnerability to the vampire. Promptly, Mina loses the capacity to control her body and mind: "I was powerless to act; my feet, and my hands, and my brain were weighted, so that nothing could proceed at the usual pace… some leaden lethargy seemed to chain my limbs and even my will" (227). Believing in the inexorability of their tragic story thus makes Mina susceptible to a physical and mental evacuation of agency perpetrated by the domineering vampire.

The concept of inevitability, then, is associated with both Dracula and pagan belief systems, a combination that the novel presents as insidious and flawed. By refusing to submit to destiny, the Crew of Light represent a moderate, broadly Christian perception of the coming times, which manifests faith in God's goodness, but demands active vigilance and intentional action to shape the impending events in a positive way. As a result of this solemn contemplation of the capacious future and the "dreadful task" before them, the Crew of Light is both tempered and actuated by dread, an affective mode of resistance to the historical inevitability that Dracula embodies (198). As Van Helsing says at the commencement of their fellowship following Lucy's demise: "And then begins our great quest. But first I shall have much to say, so that you may know what is to do and to dread" (193). The methodical and thoughtful restraint exhibited by Van Helsing pairs with the slow-paced nature of dread, an affect opposite to the hastiness of alarm, as Chapter 3 explains. Importantly, though, this feeling does not perpetually subdue the group, but rather serves as the motivating affect for their transcontinental quest against the force of evil.

As the Crew of Light track Dracula back to Transylvania, "a whole world of dark and dreadful things" awaits, from inclement weather, to menacing wolves, and violent gypsies (310). Yet, the most affecting scene of all occurs when they are not immediately threatened by any force whatsoever. Within the borders of the East, but unafflicted by any danger, Mina impels the group to ruminate on the potential of her death and therefore stew in a state of dread by preemptively reading the Burial Service before her. As Seward narrates:

> How can I—how could any one—tell of that strange scene, its solemnity, its gloom, its sadness, its horror; and, withal, its sweetness. Even a sceptic, who can see nothing but a travesty of bitter truth in anything holy or emotional, would have been melted to the heart had he seen that little group of loving and devoted friends kneeling round that stricken and sorrowing lady; or heard the tender passion of her husband's voice, as in tones so broken with emotion that often he had to pause, he read the simple and beautiful service from the Burial of the Dead. I—I cannot go on—words—and—v-voice—f-fail m-me! (288)

This incredibly powerful moment, conveyed through Seward's moving words and dramatic punctuation, is rendered sacrosanct through the explicit language of "holy" and implicit reference to the ineffable. What makes this pathetic scene of a deeply tethered, quasi-religious community feasible is a united feeling of dread, a feeling intentionally provoked by considering a possible future without Mina Harker. Nevertheless, cogitating and honoring this communal sense of dread yields a productive affective transformation, as Seward explains:

> Strange as it all was, bizarre as it may hereafter seem even to us who felt its potent influence at the time, it comforted us much; and the silence, which showed Mrs. Harker's

coming relapse from her freedom of soul, did not seem so full of despair to any of us as we had dreaded. (288-89)

By intentionally mounting dread to its highest pitch, the group actually experiences relief from the negative emotions that generally accompany this state of mind. Such catharsis, I argue, results from their collective realization of the future's capaciousness. Rather than trenchantly insisting that their success is inevitable and Mina's vampiric blight *will* or *must* be reversed, they concede to the unknowability of the coming events. Solemnly and protractedly, they consider what else *might* happen, and act accordingly: honoring the woman they all admire while she is able to appreciate the service. Far more powerfully than collective denial, this shared sense of vulnerability and humility before the unknowable, unpredictable future cements their fellowship before the final confrontation against the vampire.

Historical Inevitability, Dread, and the Irish Question

Why are these attitudes toward the future so urgent for *Dracula*'s critique of parasitic historiography? Given that Stoker began working on the novel in 1890 during Gladstone's campaign as Prime Minister for the Second Home Rule Bill, and that upon finishing the novel in 1897 he sent his retired friend a presentation copy, the Irish cause must have been on the author's mind. Stoker was a lifelong, though reserved, Home Ruler, who retained his "rich Irish tongue" until the end of his life, despite thirty-four years of residence in London.[644] He surely sympathized with the movement, even if he was not an overt activist. For these reasons, *Dracula* has been read as an Irish nationalist allegory by a number of modern scholars, although they have reached divergent conclusions about who the vampire represents. For instance, Seamus Deane asserts that "Dracula's dwindling soil and his vampiric appetites consort well enough with

[644] Hall Caine, "Bram Stoker: The Story of a Great Friendship. By Hall Caine," *Daily Telegraph* (April 24, 1912): 16.

the image of the Irish landlord current in the nineteenth century."[645] Bruce Stewart, by contrast, argues that "Count Dracula is obviously a Fenian 'head center,' while the tribe of 'Szgady' who assist him are patently his Land League henchmen."[646] Alternatively, Michael Valdez Moses aligns Dracula with the first leader of the Home Rule Movement, Charles Stewart Parnell, thus characterizing "the vampire as [a] national liberator" with "a protean capability to assume whatever shape or image his audience found most deeply (and even illicitly) appealing."[647] In reflecting upon the novel's vast interpretive potential, David Glover declares: "*Dracula*'s horror ultimately eludes the deftness of allegory, spilling out in too many directions."[648] Assuredly, the modern critical discussion of Stoker's novel is teeming with exhilarating and inspiring analyses that speak not only to colonial politics, but also to contemporary concerns pertaining to capitalism, gender, race, disease, religion, sexuality, technology, and psychology. My examination of parasitic historiography attempts to embrace and imbricate all of these issues through the affective economy of dread, and therefore offer a vital new perspective on *Dracula*'s

[645] Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 89. Terry Eagleton presents a similar reading of Dracula as an Ascendancy landlord in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1996), 215-16.

[646] Bruce Stewart, "Bram Stoker's *Dracula*: Possessed by the Spirit of the Nation?," *Irish University Review* 29, no. 2 (1999): 242-43. The Fenian Brotherhood was founded by John O'Mahony and Michael Doheny in the United States in 1858 to establish an independent Ireland, largely through armed revolution. The Irish Republican Brotherhood was the subsequent Irish counterpart to this organization. "Fenianism" was a catch-all, derogatory term in England for any supporter of Irish nationalism and implied violent sedition. See M. J. Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916*, Irish Historical Monographs Series 4 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006). The Irish National Land League was an Irish political organization founded in 1878 for the benefit of poor tenant farmers. The movement aimed at abolishing landlordism and therefore enabling the farmers to purchase the land they cultivated. Approximately one-third of the advocates were Catholic priests, and this movement stoked the hostile bifurcation of rural Catholic nationalists and urban Protestant unionists. See R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 405-421.

[647] Michael Valdez, "*Dracula*, Parnell, and the Troubled Dreams of Nationhood," *Journal X: A Journal in Culture and Criticism* 2, no. 1 (1997): 68.

[648] David Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 41.

engagement with Irish Home Rule as a related, not isolated, component of this fin-de-siècle affective zeitgeist.

Neither the Irish nor the English had a premium on appearing like vampires in imperial caricatures. It is no accident that both Irish nationalists and English unionists were portrayed as bloodthirsty bats in the 1880s when Home Rule was on the ascendant. The first to appear was Sir John Tenniel's "The Irish 'Vampire'" in *Punch* on October 24, 1885 (Figure 6). Hibernia sleeps in "troubled drowse molest," according to the accompanying poem, "Sad semi-sleep by visions dire affrighted; / Pallid prostration not akin to rest."[649] Hovering above "Poor Erin! Ghoul-beset and harpy-haunted" is a giant bat of "Succubus stealth and vampire greed united," which has the face of Charles Stewart Parnell and the words "National League" inscribed on its wings.[650] The poet concludes by bidding the languishing woman: "Rouse, Erin, rouse from this dread dream's dull anguish, / And bid the Vampire fly!"[651] In addition to exhibiting conservative dismay at the perceived enervating quality of Irish nationalism, the poet also reveals how "dread" possesses an entirely negative connotation to these readers. A "dread dream" is one to banish aggressively, not one to contemplate steadily in the manner of the Crew of Light.

Not long after, a supplement to the Dublin journal, *Pilot*, published Richard Barratt's response with "The English Vampire" on November 7, 1885 (Figure 7). A sword-wielding female warrior bears a shield emblazoned with a Celtic harp and the words "National League" against a giant bat with "British Rule" across its abdomen. When viewed together, these two cartoons exhibit the fundamental way in which both sides of the political spectrum conceived of

[649] "The Irish 'Vampire,'" *Punch* 89 (October 24, 1885): 193.

[650] "The Irish 'Vampire.'"

[651] "The Irish 'Vampire.'"

the other as predatory. Remarkably, however, the English cartoon does not suggest that the Irish nationalist cause threatens to drain the vital force of *England*. Rather, the cartoon represents a vulnerable, odalisque-like figure of Ireland as the impending victim of the National League's vampirism. Barratt's cartoon consequently responds with an image of female strength (a prototype for Mina Harker, perhaps). With long, streaming hair, a dainty crown, and billowing skirts, the figure is clearly marked as female. Yet her weapons and fierce expression correspond to a traditionally masculine role: that of a powerful protector. Like Mina, with her admirable "man's brain" and "woman's heart," which "[t]he good God fashioned… for a purpose," Lady Ireland blends feminine and masculine characteristics to nobly defend herself from the bloodsucking policies of the imperial power (207). Also, like Mina, whose femininity is ultimately given supremacy by her childbearing, Ireland's femininity is similarly emphasized in

Fig. 6: "The Irish 'Vampire'"

Fig. 7: "The English Vampire"

this cartoon by the fact that she brandishes the shield (rather than the sword) to the vampire. Like a good, watchful mother, she defensively guards, rather than aggressively attacks, the predator.

In the years following these visual commentaries on Irish nationalism, English conservatives continued to perpetuate arguments about Ireland's susceptibility and incompetence in order to support their claims for continued rule over the nation. This rationale clearly informs a speech "On the Progress of Ireland" reported in the London *Standard* on April 8, 1896. The orator is Lord Londonderry, who supposedly "possessed the advantage of intimate knowledge of [Ireland] derived from his experience of a practical, political, and official character."[652] He begins by toasting "Prosperity to Ireland," whose flourishing he wholly attributes to English government intervention.[653] He "pointed out the unsatisfactory condition of certain parts of Ireland [in 1836], in which crime and outrage stalked abroad unpunished, because it was undetected."[654] Fortunately, from the marquess's point of view, "the [English] Government fully realized the dangers of the situation, and would do their utmost to effect a change and prove worthy of the confidence reposed in them."[655] As a result, he assured his audience, there was a "restoration of law and order," as well as prosperity.[656] His sole evidence of Ireland's progress resides in Savings Bank statistics, "as they were the banks of the poorer classes, and most in touch with the advance and retrogression of Ireland."[657] He triumphantly explains, with vociferous audience engagement, that Savings Bank deposits increased every year until they "fell

[652] "Lord Londonderry on the Progress of Ireland," *Standard*, no. 22393 (April 8, 1896): 3.

[653] "Lord Londonderry on the Progress of Ireland," 3.

[654] "Lord Londonderry on the Progress of Ireland," 3.

[655] "Lord Londonderry on the Progress of Ireland," 3.

[656] "Lord Londonderry on the Progress of Ireland," 3.

[657] "Lord Londonderry on the Progress of Ireland," 3.

off 160.000£ on the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill (laughter). What did this prove—that, when Home Rule was on the political horizon, the prosperity of Ireland disappeared (hear, hear), and when Home Rule was no longer there Irish prosperity returned (applause)."[658]

Just as Dracula asserts historical dominance over the Crew of Light by dictating the future, so too did these conservative articles sound the clarion call of "Progress" to counteract Irish political reform. In the words of a *Saturday Review* article from 1896, the Irishman should be "devoting more attention to Progress and less to Politics" in order for the nation to experience the "most marked and gratifying results."[659] Although the definition of "progress" denotes forward motion, the "Progress" of late-Victorian discourse implied retrograde complicity. It supposed the future would necessarily move forward in a positive way if only the populace would let those in power continue doing their jobs. This idea of Progress was a paradox, held together by an insistence on inevitable success, with a veneer of advancement undergirded by strict adherence to the status quo. As the writer of "Her Majesty the Queen" triumphantly declared: "with high hope and good courage may we confront the future, feeling sure that if we are but faithful to our trust, even the glories of the Victorian reign will be but as the foil and shadow to the exceeding brightness of the times which are to come."[660] *Dracula*, like *The War of the Worlds*, undermines such passive faith in certain advancement. Their dread-based narratives powerfully disclose that the future is not guaranteed to move forward in a positive way.[661]

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[658] "Lord Londonderry on the Progress of Ireland," 3.

[659] "Politics and Progress in Ireland," *Saturday Review* (August 29, 1896): 211.

[660] "Her Majesty the Queen," *Review of Reviews* (June 1897): 545.

[661] Elsewhere, Stoker suggests that "progress" is not even necessarily positive. For instance, in his speech on Abraham Lincoln first presented in the UK on December 6, 1886 at the London Institution (and later in the US on November 25, 1887 at Chickering Hall, New York), he articulates how the institution of slavery, which he found heinous, "aimed at a progressive power, which, if carried into existence, would have changed the purposes and destinies of nations." As cited in Robert J. Havlik, "Bram Stoker's Lecture on Abraham Lincoln," *Irish Studies*

Like Wells, Stoker wrote extensively in his fiction and essays about the modern age and thought deeply about its progression.[662] While Wells was influenced by his mentor T. H. Huxley's ethical-scientific debates with Herbert Spencer, Stoker's thinking was inflected by his Irish heritage, managing Irving's Lyceum Theater in London, and his early employment in the Civil Service (this bureaucratic training certainly informed the administrative methods in *Dracula*). As Glover has best discerned, Stoker personally had much to reconcile "between his own local Protestant Irish origins and his desire for a more formal imperial-metropolitan ideal of citizenship," one based on rational choice rather than ancestry.[663] As a result, his fiction and non-fiction writing from the 1890s and beyond was predominated by questions of national belonging, the permeability of borders, and the extent to which various political and scientific criteria authorize one's membership in a community.

Dracula presents an attempt at solving this vexed issue of national identity. For all its blood-sucking motifs, the vampire novel actually undermines the potency of bloodlines.[664] Instead of heritage, it is affect that solidifies the transnational community committed to the common good. The Crew of Light's collective sense of dread at Mina's demise bands them together in a manner so much stronger than shared blood, for when the men were literally united by blood in giving transfusions to the ailing Lucy, their mission failed. In contrast, when they

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Review 10, no. 1 (April 1, 2002): 10. The "indefinite expansion" that this practice sought, according to Stoker, was "shameful," "dangerous," and "fraught with such misery and danger to civilization." Havlik, 11.

[662] In the early twentieth century, Stoker was particularly invested in reporting on the progress of Ireland, as represented by the Great Exhibition held in Dublin in 1907. Even while championing Ireland's advancement, brought about by "strenuous, industrious spirit" he did not champion a teleological or monolithic idea of Progress for the nation, as evidenced by his capacious assertion: "Patrick's problem is fast finding its solution in divers ways." Bram Stoker, "The Great White Fair in Dublin," *World's Work* 9, no. 54 (May 1907): 571.

[663] See Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals*, 23.

[664] Schmitt cogently dilates on the significance of the blood motif in "Mother Dracula," 140. Joseph Valente does so as well, in an immaculately meticulous way, in the final two-thirds of *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

dread communally, the intensity of their shared feeling is beyond Seward's words and their undertaking concludes triumphantly. Dread is thus upheld as the affective glue between these nationally, professionally, and economically disparate individuals. The emotional community that feels dread is victorious, while the parasitic individual who remains statically self-assured is eliminated.

In stark contrast to parasitic historiography that operates vertically, subsuming temporal power into the exclusive and domineering individual, the collective account that comprises *Dracula* represents a (dread-full) historiography that functions laterally in a manner conducive to—if not necessitating—sociability and cooperation in the face of the radically uncertain future. Rather than a vampiric prophecy that substantiates a Carlylean Great Man myth, the dread-full historiography is exemplified in Anna Parnell's approach to her unpublished memoir of the Land War: "I avoid personalities as much as possible, as I consider the actions of particular individuals are unimportant in history, while the actions of groups, classes, etc. of persons are most important."[665]

In *Dracula*, at least, dread is a critical feeling informing this democratic approach to narrating the "history" of the Crew of Light's quest against the vampire (5). It is remarkable that Stoker uses affect at all to counteract the dominion of colonial Progress, given that exuberant

[665] As Thomas Carlyle begins his first lecture in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (given on May 5, 1840): "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these." Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, 5th ed. (London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1906), 1-2. Anna Catherine Parnell was Charles Stewart Parnell's sister, though he never supported her political organization, the Ladies' Land League, and generally "doubted her political acumen." She was an intelligent and impressive female activist, however, who earned her degree from the Metropolitan School of Art, then became a leader in a famine relief fund in 1879 before turning her energy to the Irish nationalist cause. See Foster, *Modern Ireland,* 400. Parnell's memoir is also quoted on Foster, 400.

emotions had long been vilified (at least since the French Revolution) as the instigator of dangerous political unrest. In Stoker's time, strong feeling was particularly disparaged in the case of the "facetious temper" of the Irish agitators for Home Rule.[666] Nevertheless, dread is unlike the stronger affects "terror" and "enthusiasm"—two conventionally negative emotion-words used to critique revolutionary discourse—due to its significantly longer and specifically religious history, which signals its greater longevity. Chapter 1 explains how the medieval Catholic sense of dread remained strongly intact in the English Protestant tradition through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a broadly Christian feeling then, dread affectively bridges Catholic and Anglican values. Thus, by having the Crew of Light triumph over Dracula qua Progress following their collective stimulation of dread, the resolution of *Dracula* not only offers hope for an Irish nation by presenting the future's malleability, but also posits a solution to the Catholic/Protestant divide in Ireland itself.[667] Capacious, actuating, unifying, and tempering, dread is the affect that "begins [the] great quest" to banish the dictatorial imperial future and provides an emotional roadmap to cooperative nation-building that would culminate, though Stoker would not live to see it, with the Irish Free State in 1922 (193).

This dread-based outlook is indicative of Stoker's maturity writing *Dracula* in 1897 after witnessing a decade of severe setbacks for Irish Home Rule, including the death of Charles Stewart Parnell in 1891, the splitting of the Liberal party over the issue of Home Rule, the subsequent defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill by the House of Lords in 1893, and the Liberal Home Rulers' loss of the 1895 General Election owing to the Liberal Unionists allying with Lord

[666] "Politics and Progress in Ireland," 210.

[667] Stoker himself was very tolerant of different religious and political views, as seen through his lifelong friendship with Valentine Blake Dillon, a Roman Catholic and Parnellite politician who served as Lord Mayor of Dublin from 1894-95. It is clear from Stoker's correspondence that, for Ireland, he hoped to see "reconciliatory scenarios in which idealistic solutions triumphed over the sordid realities of division and violence, and economic development revitalised a stale and underdeveloped economy." Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 151.

Salisbury's Conservatives. Back in 1872, the idealistic twenty-five-year-old Trinity student gave a speech with a very different affective register to the college's Historical Society:

> … the Ireland of the future is a subject for ambitious dreams. But the new order must be based on no sectarian feuds. The old animosities must be forgotten, and all the dead past left to rest in peace… We can choose whether we shall live for the future or follow the past; and it needs little effort to see the nobler choice… We are young enough to hope– we are old enough to act–and in hope and action lies the future of ourselves, our country, and our race.[668]

These youthful aspirations plainly inform the narrative of *Dracula*, where "no sectarian feuds" disrupt the Crew of Light and "the dead past" is ultimately "left to rest in peace." The difference, however, is that ambiguous dread, not radiant hope, actuates the vampire narrative. Nevertheless, in dread there is also hope, because this emotion is predicated on the future's radical openness and alterability.[669] In fearing for the worse, but believing that this unwanted future is amenable, the characters are motivated to strive for the best, and *they do so together*. A great deal of critical attention has been given to "the power of exciting stories to move people" and consequently create "a sense of purpose, agency, empowerment."[670] As Patrick Joyce has argued, such stories were the touchstone of nineteenth-century popular Liberalism, a movement with which Bram Stoker was personally affiliated.[671] Yet *Dracula*, in a quintessentially Gothic way, represents

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[668] "Trinity College Historical Society," *Freeman's Journal* (November 14, 1872): 6.

[669] This point, which is derived strictly from the novel's representation of dread, corresponds with present-day cognitive science, which affirms that "besides wish (or goal) plus belief of possibility, uncertainty […] is needed in hope." Maria Miceli and Cristiano Castelfranchi, "Hope: The Power of Wish and Possibility," *Theory & Psychology* 20, no. 2 (April 2010): 257.

[670] Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 156.

[671] Joyce, 156.

how the unpleasant feeling of dread, more so than the sensational feelings of "excitement" or triumph, creates an ineffably powerful fellowship that works industriously and cooperatively to bring about a different future than the one that Dracula portrays as historically inevitable.

Gothic Science Fiction: Cooperative Futures Through Dread

Wells's and Stoker's respective novels crucially overlap in representing the beneficial and productive consequences of feeling dread and suggesting that this affect should be cultivated in order to gain insight or resilience in the face of the vastly uncertain imperial future. As different as the Gothic and science fiction are in terms of *how* they depict the future itself, they share this affective origin: dread that arises from the infinite capaciousness of times yet to come, a feeling that energizes their vigorous narratives.

Despite their different influences, both Wells and Stoker wrote novels in 1897 whose fundamental ethos is sympathetic cooperation premised on collective experiences of dread or witnessing the dreadful, which create in turn futures markedly different from the impending one of imperial competition, exploitation, and violence. While John S. Partington and W. Warren Wagar have done much to elucidate Wells's contributions to cosmopolitanism and future studies, and David Glover, above all, has illuminated Stoker's engagement with Irish nationalism, no one has examined the political projects of these impressive men in tandem. Superficially at least, the Fabian-inclined biology student and prodigious theatre manager do not seem to have much in common in the 1880s when both of them arrived in the capital. Yet they ran in similar circles in the 1890s, notably on intimate terms with George Bernard Shaw (though the relationship was positive for Wells and tense for Stoker) and, of course, W. E. Gladstone.[672] The two were also

[672] See Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula,* 236, 248-50.

members of the Society of Authors, and though there is no record of their interaction in its proceedings, it is likely that they stood on opposite sides of a debate in 1907 regarding the *Time*s Book Club, which sold new books at a heavily discounted price to the public. Stoker, siding with publishers, was staunchly opposed to this practice, while Wells likely aligned with Shaw who argued eloquently in favor of the club.[673] Regardless of relatively minor and speculative differences, these transplanted individuals thought intensely about national futures and the roles of England and Ireland on a global scale. The preceding sections have shown the significant role that feelings of dread play in their respective novels to unify and activate various characters who act for a common good. This section will demonstrate the ways in which fictional feeling reciprocally informed and was informed by political action in the context of Stoker's and Wells's distinct participation in international and cosmopolitan projects. [674]

Stoker's internationalist outlook developed through two mediums while he was writing *Dracula*: first, his role in founding the Irish Literary Society in London, and secondly, his tours of America, about which he spoke extensively back in England and Ireland to propound "a widespread and accurate knowledge of [that] country."[675] The Irish Literary Society held its inaugural meeting on July 24, 1892, and the *Evening Herald*, a middle-class Dublin newspaper, hailed Stoker as one of the "prominent countrymen of ours in London" who attended.[676] The Society's founding premise was simple: "to develop a taste for the treasures of Irish literature,

[673] See Murray, 136.

[674] As John S. Partington clarifies: "internationalist" refers to someone who advocates for the common interests of all nations, while retaining an emphasis on national individuality; whereas, "cosmopolitan" is a world citizen without national identity. *Building Cosmopolis: The Political Thought of H.G. Wells* (Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 21.

[675] "Mr. Bram Stoker's Impressions of America," *Daily News* (December 29, 1885): 3.

[676] "Ireland in London," *Evening Herald* (July 25, 1892): 2.

which were so little known in comparison with their great merits."[677] Irish national politics were not up for discussion, and the attendants consisted of both Home Rulers and Unionists. Yet the society was not apolitical per se. In his opening speech, T. W. Rolleston "enlarged upon the benefits which the society, with its branches all over England, Ireland, America, and the colonies, might do in making known Irish literature."[678] By declaring that the dissemination of Irish literature would have "benefits" in nations across the globe, he suggests an internationalist ideal that these multiple nations might share a common interest (in Irish writing) and reap a common benefit. Moreover, the way of gaining these benefits is through cooperation: people who were ethnically Irish, but residing in various nations, must collaborate to popularize Irish literature among themselves and their compatriots. Stoker, who embarked on eights tours (amounting to more than four years) with the Lyceum Theatre in the United States and made many connections with Irish expatriates, was an exemplary practitioner of this internationalist cultural mission.

The kinetic and open-ended nature of the Irish Literary Society's vision is evident in Rolleston's hope that the Society might serve as an impetus "to a new Irish literature which would have great and far-reaching effects upon the welfare of the race and the future destinies of our country."[679] Rather than expressing a monolithic notion of Progress, Rolleston ambiguously imagines avant-garde Irish literature impacting a plurality of "future destinies" in unforeseeably positive ways. He does not dictate *the* future, but hopes for a better, though unknown, future that is made possible by Irish literary dispersion. The implications of this statement, especially its

[677] "Ireland in London," 2.

[678] "Ireland in London," 2.

[679] "Ireland in London," 2.

pliable treatment of the future, later resound in *Dracula*'s eschewing of indomitable and teleological Progress for dread-inspired belief in the future's capaciousness. *Dracula* is, perhaps, just the new kind of Irish literature for which the Society hoped.

The power of Irish literature to enact such beneficial change was located, in Rolleston's estimation, in the unique affective qualities of its authors: "the moral sentiments, the generous impulses, the religious feelings still survived in the Irish race, and they gave assurance that in the mystic clime on the verge of the western ocean where the more debasing currents of European civilization only visit it at high tide, there is a place for a great experiment for humanity."[680] In other words, "the genius and imagination of the Celtic people" had heretofore resisted the supposedly degenerative influence of the Western world, but, with the formation of the Society and the spread of Irish literature, Rolleston anticipates the transmission of the moral and ethical feelings of the Irish outward to the world in a reverse current.[681] Thus, although he begins with a notion of Irish exceptionalism, he ends with a broad hope for the betterment of humankind at large through reading affectively inspired literature. Rolleston's vision is not one of imperial domination enacted by warfare, but gradual cultural influence precipitated through emotionally charged fiction, verse, and drama.

This internationalist literary vision was not viewed favorably by trenchant nationalists. In general, the Society was criticized for failing "to inspire […] a common intellectual Irish consciousness" and mold "any definite Irish purpose."[682] It seems the open-ended, non-dogmatic future that Rolleston suggested did not hold much credence with the anonymous reporter for the

[680] "Ireland in London," 2.

[681] "Ireland in London," 2.

[682] "Literary London," *Freeman's Journal* (October 19, 1900): 5.

Freeman's Journal, a leading Dublin newspaper. Within these broad critiques of the Society's equivocalness, Stoker in particular was indicted for being insufficiently Irish. The first of these attacks appeared in the *Morning Advertiser*, a longstanding London newspaper, in 1892, and challenged Stoker's place in the Irish literary tradition: "Nor do we remember the particular contribution to Irish literature of Mr. Bram Stoker."[683] Apparently, *The Snake's Pass* (1890), Stoker's novel set in Western Ireland, was not considered a worthwhile contribution to the nation's literary output. The second personal assault appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* in 1900, which deemed Stoker a sell-out to the mainstream English audiences of the Lyceum Theatre: "Mr. Bram Stoker gives to Sir Henry Irving's managerial affairs what was meant for the English-speaking portion of mankind."[684] Even so, there is no record that Stoker was fazed by these criticisms, and, to his credit, he remained active in the Society during the 1890s and through the turn of the century, despite the rapid decline of the Lyceum, which took a grave toll on his finances and health.[685]

Stoker's consistent participation in this international literary movement suggests his belief in the capacity of literature, and, specifically, the fictional representation of feeling, to positively impact the future through cultural shifts rather than armed conflict. Later in life, he would explicitly connect fiction with the ethical instruction of Jesus Christ: "Fiction is perhaps the most powerful form of teaching available. It can be most potent for good."[686] He firmly believed in the potential of storytelling to "win hearts through the force of the imagination" and

[683] As quoted on Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 130.

[684] "Literary London," 5.

[685] See Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 130.

[686] Bram Stoker, "The Censorship of Fiction," *The Nineteenth Century and After* (September 1908): 484.

understood the moral stakes of fiction as a "racial, all-embracing, human" matter that transcends "civic or national" concerns.[687]

Stoker's ideals regarding creative cultural production and international cooperation climactically coalesce in his article on the International Exhibition held at Dublin a decade after the publication of *Dracula*. Although the report conveys an eagerness to showcase the "revivifying influence" spreading "so rapidly" over Ireland, it ultimately merges nationalist rhetoric with an internationalist ethos.[688] For, "the functions of such an Exhibition," Stoker writes, "are to make known the whole [of the hosting country] to each of its parts, with the added opportunity of studying by comparison the conditions, resources and progression of other countries, and of making the country and its work known to other peoples."[689] The national diversity of the participants is clearly important to Stoker. He does not look to one nation as a model of Progress but is, instead, interested in comparing the various ways that other countries harness their individual assets. Above all, the purpose of the Exhibition is to *communicate*—to make "work known"—and not to *compete* to see whose work is best. Such diverse interactions are valued not only in a national sense but a socio-economic one as well. Stoker writes approvingly of "persons of all classes" coming together to view displays of "learning, science and art," which, in his estimation, advances the "national and international good."[690] Although Stoker does not elaborate on what this "good" might be exactly, he remains an unequivocal

[687] Stoker, "The Censorship of Fiction," 484.

[688] Stoker, "The Great White Fair in Dublin," 571.

[689] Stoker, 573.

[690] Stoker, 574.

proponent of viewing "works of art of all nations," and is delighted by the mutually beneficial presence of Irish culture on the world stage.[691]

There is a great deal of overlap during this span of years between Stoker's internationalist activities and Wells's burgeoning cosmopolitan philosophy. In the same year that Stoker helped found the Irish Literary Society, Wells was also contemplating the benefits of collaboration in his essay "Ancient Experiments in Co-operation," published in *Gentleman's Magazine*, which adamantly argues that "individual competition is over-accentuated in current thought."[692] By explaining the "harmony of disposition and desire" between a number of organisms—from ant colonies to coral polyps, fungi and green algae symbiosis, to the makeup of the human body—Wells ultimately concludes that "the co-operative union of individuals to form higher unities, underlies the whole living creation as it appears to our unaided eyes."[693] These biological observations acquire significant political stakes in the conclusion of the essay when Wells speculates on "the future of further developments of the co-operative principle" in human populations.[694] Blending his scientific training and nascent socialist ideals, Wells imagines:

> The village commune of the future will be an organism; it will rejoice and sorrow like a man. Men will be limbs–even nowadays in our public organisations men are but members. One ambition will sway the commune, a perfect fusion of interests there will be, and a perfect sympathy of feeling. Not only will there be "forty feeding like one," but

[691] Stoker, "The Great White Fair in Dublin," 575.

[692] Wells, "Ancient Experiments in Co-Operation," 188.

[693] Wells, 188, 191.

[694] Wells, 191.

> forty writhing like one, because of toothache in its carpenter or rheumatics in its agriculturalists.[695]

Similar to the ways in which *Dracula* conveys the Crew of Light's deepest unification around an intensely painful feeling of dread, "Ancient Experiments in Co-operation" highlights the shared experience of physical discomfort in the model collective. These works show an alternative way, a Gothic way, of conceiving sympathy. The community's unity of feeling is not displayed through shared sentimental affection or sensational excitement, but rather in a joint perception of discomfort. The aim, then, is not to strive for mutual love, but to eliminate group pain. The feeling of dread—anticipating suffering—implicitly undergirds this ethos.

The essay concludes with a particularly dread-evoking suggestion: "It is as much beyond dispute that the possibility of the utter extinction of humanity, or its extensive modification into even such strange forms as we have hinted at […] is as imperatively admissible in science as it is repugnant to the imagination."[696] Wells thus envisions a vast range of possibilities for the future from "utter extinction" of the human species to its dramatic evolution into an unrecognizable organism (this gamut of possibilities later appears in *The War of the Worlds* in the narrator's contemplation of the Martian body). These possibilities may be "repugnant," yet he asks his reader not to be the "very ignorant and dull person" who rejects such futures as impossible.[697] Instead, he applauds the "very imaginative person" who channels these disturbing anticipations to influence present thought.[698] The consequence, in Wells's estimation, would be a "very

[695] Wells, "Ancient Experiments in Co-Operation," 191-92.

[696] Wells, 192.

[697] Wells, 192.

[698] Wells, 192.

considerable modification of our conceptions of individuality."[699] Wells hopes to see the human species evolve into a "'colonial' grouping," wherein individuals coalesce into a higher unity while still retaining a level of individual specificity, like the marine invertebrate species of Ascidiacea.[700] In this language, Wells radically challenges the notion of a "colony" as a place of subjugation to a colonial power. Without referencing the British Empire at all, this essay instead uses biological terminology to reimagine Nature's "colony" as a perfectly sympathetic conglomerate whose purpose is to promote the welfare of all by anticipating and striving to eliminate suffering in each of its members.

This vision only became more pointed and earnest in the succeeding years leading up to the publication of *The War of the Worlds*. Besides imagining how a Martian invasion would do "much to promote a conception of the commonweal of mankind," Wells more realistically considered how socialism might facilitate "an ultra-civilised conception of universal human brotherhood" beyond the Christianity of the present "militant civilization."[701] The final sentence of "On Morals and Civilisation"—which was published in the *Fortnightly Review* less than a year before the serialization of *The War of the Worlds*—clearly expresses Wells's "dream of an informal, unselfish, unauthorised body of workers, a real and conscious apparatus of education and moral celebration, held together by a common faith and a common sentiment, and shaping the minds and acts and destinies of men."[702] Consistent with the rest of his writing, Wells posits

[699] Wells, "Ancient Experiments in Co-Operation," 193.

[700] Wells, 192.

[701] Wells, *The War of the Worlds,* 158. H. G. Wells, "On Morals and Civilisation," in *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, ed. Robert Philmus and David Y. Hughes (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 228.

[702] Wells, 228.

sympathy as the mechanism of societal evolution, transforming Britain from a "militant civilized state" to a "non-militant cosmopolitan civilization in the future."[703]

Though both Wells and Stoker eschewed violence and put a premium on "a common faith and a common sentiment" in their politically charged activities of the 1890s, neither viewed sentimentality—that is, pleasurable emotions—as the impetus to beneficial development. A level of discomfort and challenging effort is required in both of their visions of the future. In Stoker's words, "Success or failure awaits us according to how we work."[704] Above all, representations of dread and the dreadful in *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula* are meant to reach beyond their fictional worlds in order to unsettle the reader's complacent faith in future progress. This disruption represents an analogous project that extends to Wells's and Stoker's larger corpuses of fiction and non-fiction writing. As Wells famously declared in "The Extinction of Man" (1894):

> … man's complacent assumption of the future is too confident. We think, because things have been easy for mankind as a whole for a generation or so, we are going on to perfect comfort and security in the future. We think that we shall always go to work at ten and leave off at four, and have dinner at seven for ever and ever.[705]

In a similarly vigilant, though more moralized manner, an earnest Stoker proclaimed in 1908: "But if progress be a good […], the powers of evil, natural as well as arbitrary, must be combated all along the line."[706] Stoker, in this case, was concerned about the moral future of the nation, which he thought was threatened by the growth of the salacious fiction market in the early twentieth century. Wells, for his part, was addressing the tenuous biological future of the

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[703] Wells, "On Morals and Civilisation," 222.

[704] "Trinity College Historical Society," 6.

[705] H. G. Wells, "The Extinction of Man," *Pall Mall Gazette* (September 25, 1894): 3.

[706] Stoker, "The Censorship of Fiction," 481-82.

human species. Fundamentally, however, these two articles attempt to instill uncertainty in their readers regarding the coming times, and therefore precipitate new courses of action to dispel the unwanted futures they apprehended.

Both Wells and Stoker doggedly looked forward, but rather than demonstrating brazen optimism, they showed prudent skepticism with an affective stance of productive "fear and trembling." While this religious phrase might seem inappropriately applied to Wells, an avowed atheist, his dread-invoking rhetoric resonates quite strongly with the evangelical Christian messages that informed Stoker's childhood education and reappeared in his late-life addresses.[707] For example, Wells warns in "The Extinction of Man": "Even now, for all we can tell, the coming terror may be crouching for its spring and the fall of humanity be at hand."[708] Wells is thinking of "the coming terror" not as Satan, of course, but as some kind of material innovation in a disregarded inferior species (like crustaceans or ants) that would allow them to displace humanity from the top of the food chain. Accordingly, Wells advocates watchfulness, with a healthy dose of fear, of the uncertain evolutionary future.

In this message, Wells has much in common with contemporary preachers who urged vigilance against sin in order to ensure salvation. For instance, the Rev. A. W. Thorold, Lord Bishop of Winchester warns in his sermon "Who Can Understand His Errors?" (1891) against "sins of ignorance and infirmity unconsciously, unintentionally done through lack of […] jealous vigilance against the deceits of the world and the snares of Satan."[709] To thwart sin, Thorold exhorts his parishioners to maintain "a continuous and strenuous effort to overcome it," while

[707] See Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 27.

[708] Wells, "The Extinction of Man," 3.

[709] A. W. Thorold, "Questions of the Christian Life," *Good Words* 32 (January 1891): 209.

simultaneously avoiding "a sort of complacency in our humbleness."[710] Like Wells, Thorold cautions against passive satisfaction and demands active watchfulness to protect the world from "snares" that could result in moral devastation while, analogously, Wells is concerned with biological annihilation.

Uncertainty plays a crucial role in both the Wellsean and Christian ethos. Whereas Wells wonders if mutant octopuses will supplant humankind, the bishop considers the possibility of the devil overcoming susceptible men and women. Still, uncertainty, in both cases, is a productive feeling that motivates action to impact the future positively. Anticipating this "coming terror" provokes Wells to become a "poor story-writing man [who] ventures to figure this sober probability in a tale."[711] Wells uses storytelling in an attempt to edify and activate the public in order to grapple with these future problems, yet the happy ten-to-four workers of London's mainstream refuse to relinquish their complacency: "not a reviewer in London but will tell him his theme is utterly impossible."[712] The churchgoer, in contrast, is very willing to accept the uncertain moral future. As the anonymous writer of "The Grace of God" in the *Cork Examiner* declared: "No one can say with absolute certainty that he is in a state of grace… God wisely conceals this knowledge from us to keep us humble and that we may work out our salvation with 'fear and trembling.'"[713] For both Wells and this anonymous Irishman, future salvation is attained not by assuming its inevitability, but by fearing its failure to come to fruition—by "dread of sinning in the future"—and thus actively striving to bring about the desired end.[714]

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[710] Thorold, "Questions of the Christian Life," 210.

[711] Wells, "The Extinction of Man," 3.

[712] Wells, 3.

[713] "The Grace of God," *Cork Examiner* (March 24, 1894): 11.

[714] "The Grace of God," 11.

The standard critical narrative of nineteenth-century religion is predominantly one that involves a "crisis of faith," one that manifests itself in a steadily secularizing culture. Recently, however, many historians as well as literary critics working on Victorian devotional poetry and periodicals have contested this just-so story.[715] The present examination of Wells's scientific dread supports these revisionist claims by demonstrating how this feeling, even in a secular context, remained powerfully endowed with its original religious function: to inspire ethical action that would secure future salvation. Tracing this affect from its distinctly religious affiliations in the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century thus allows us to see how Christianity did not simply wane in the late years of Victoria's reign, but blended into new epistemologies of the future, ones visible in both *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula*.

Dracula, especially, mingles religion and science in a way that unsettles the binary between devotion and secularization. Stoker's novel presents a compromise between belief in the supernatural and the modern ethos of scientific materialism in ways that correspond with Charles Taylor's influential idea of a "third way" between orthodox faith and secularism, as Elizabeth Sanders has cogently argued.[716] Sanders as well as Stephen Purcell elucidate how religious artifacts and rituals (such as the crucifix, rosary, and communion wafer) are instrumentalized in *Dracula*, thereby losing their sense of total "enchantment" in order to become, in Sanders' words, articles of "practical enchantment"; that is, they become supernaturally infused tools that

[715] See Timothy Larsen, *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009); and Frank M. Turner, "The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith That Was Lost," in *Victorian Faith in Crisis: Essays on Continuity and Change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Belief*, ed. Richard J. Helmstadter and Bernard Lightman (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1990), 9–38.

[716] Elizabeth Sanders, "An Up-to-Date Religion: The Challenges and Constructions of Belief in *Dracula*," *Religion and Literature* 47, no. 3 (2015): 178–79. See also Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

can, nevertheless, be known and wielded by humans.[717] While Sanders maintains that such use of religious objects represents an "up-to-date religion," Purcell more damningly concludes: "This hollow sacramentality, which acknowledges only actions and consequences, does not bind the vampire hunters to any ideological or moral system."[718]

This refutation of a guiding ethical system in *Dracula* strikes me as having some limitations. Assuredly, Purcell and Sanders focus welcome attention on the material practices of the Crew of Light's faith. Still, they do not engage with the vampire hunters' emotional attitudes, which, I contend, certainly do correspond with a broadly Christian affective posture of "fear and trembling" in regard to future salvation. From the very start of Van Helsing and Seward's investigation into the Bloofer Lady—which will prove the existence of vampires—this humble affect prevails over empiricism as an epistemology and ethos. Though, at first, it is the scientific method that appears to motivate their inquest, for Van Helsing proposes to his former student: "first, that we go off now and see that child in the hospital. Dr. Vincent, of the North Hospital, where the papers say the child is, […] will let two scientists see his case […]" (174). As they set off to analyze the observable data, reason reigns: "[t]he logic is simple," Van Helsing declares (174). Feeling, however, quickly interposes on this course of action: "If [Lucy's vampiric transformation] be not true, then proof will be relief; at worst it will not harm. If it be true! Ah, there is the dread; yet very dread should help my cause, for in it is some need of belief" (174). Although "proof" attained by "two scientists" might decisively refute the hypothesis, it is the feeling of "dread," rather than the tangible "proof," that can secure a kernel of *belief* in the supernatural thesis.

[717] Sanders, "An Up-to-Date Religion," 81.

[718] Stephen Purcell, "Not Wholly Communion: Skepticism and the Instrumentalization of Religion in Stoker's *Dracula*," *Christianity and Literature* 67, no. 2 (2018): 303.

This epistemology—a scientific method infused with quasi-religious fear and uncertainty—resembles Taylor's "third way" and, I contend, grounds the Crew of Light's ethical praxis. Upon bearing witness to Lucy's Undead status, Van Helsing concludes: "I have been thinking, and have made up my mind as to what is best. If I did simply follow my inclining I would do now, at this moment, what is to be done; but there are other things to follow, and things that are thousand times more difficult in that them we do not know" (180). In the course of this complex sentence, the Dutchman undercuts his rational certainty—that the Undead Lucy must be destroyed immediately by himself—with anticipations of the unknown that imply a sense of dread. As a result, he does not take matters into his own hands "at this moment," but alternatively makes an ethically informed decision to delay. He realizes that it is absolutely essential for Arthur to witness his lover's transformation: "He, poor fellow, must have one hour that will make the very face of heaven grow black to him; then we can act for good all round and send him peace" (180). Only because Van Helsing pauses to consider all the "other things to follow, and things that are thousand times more difficult in that them we do not know" is he able to extend sympathy to "the poor fellow," who, without closure "may think that in some more mistaken idea this woman was buried alive" (180). Such sympathetic deferral prevents Van Helsing from becoming the Great Man who directly slays the vampiress on his own. Instead, he replaces the individualist and presentist course of action—"what *I* would do now"—with a collective, future-minded, and explicitly ethical one: "*we* can act for good all round." Dread is the affective fulcrum of this ethos. Although no longer attached to a notion of Judgment Day, this feeling surely remained attached to ideas of social judgment and belief in future possibilities beyond the reasonable conclusions of modern materialism and the aspirations of individual exceptionalism.

Reconciling the Privileged and Popular Dreadful

This chapter has illuminated how representations of dread and the dreadful in these paradigmatic science fiction and Gothic novels participate in a shared project, one that develops sympathy and promotes collaborative action in order to resist the logic of imperial expansion and colonial subjugation. However, to examine *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula* exclusively would be to miss a much more obvious and popular use of "the dreadful" at the fin de siècle: namely, the infamous "penny dreadful" genre of serial fiction. Unlike *Dracula*, which a reviewer for the *Bookman*, at least, deemed appropriate and delightful for "a grown reader," penny dreadfuls were marketed to and predominantly read by lower- and middle-class boys.[719] These "stories of adventure, mystery, and crime" consisted of "pictures of school life hideously unlike the reality; exploits of pirates, robbers, cut-throats, prostitutes, and rogues," according to the *Edinburgh Review*.[720] A vigorous periodical debate reigned throughout the last three decades of the nineteenth century regarding the so-called "dreadfulness" of this juvenile fiction. Late-Victorian critics considered penny dreadfuls, at best, "exceedingly foolish and frivolous" and censured them for encouraging readers "to escape from thought."[721] At its worst, this fiction was supposed to encourage crime: "Find me the boy who murders his mother or steals his father's watch, and I will find you the Penny Dreadful."[722] The reputed dreadfulness of this popular fiction was therefore attributed to both its menial prose style and immoral ramifications. In the

[719] "Rev. of *Dracula*," *Bookman* 12, no. 71 (August 1897): 129.

[720] [B. G. Johns], "The Literature of the Street," *Edinburgh Review* 165, no. 337 (January 1887): 43.

[721] Francis Hitchman, "The Penny Press," *Macmillan's Magazine* 43, no. 257 (March 1881): 398.

[722] "A Penny-Dreadful Scare," *National Observer* 14, no. 358 (September 28, 1895): 546.

damning words of critic B. G. Johns: "Of such trash as this it is impossible to exaggerate the worthlessness, both as regards style of composition and moral drift."[723]

In contrast to this negative attitude toward the dreadfuls, a reviewer for the *Daily Mail* extolled the way in which *Dracula* elicited his dread: "At midnight the narrative had fairly got upon our nerves… we even felt at our throat in dread lest an actual vampire should have left there the two ghastly punctures… the eerie chapters are written and strung together with very considerable art and cunning, and also with unmistakable literary power."[724] For the *Dracula* reviewer, his deep absorption in the novel is a desirable experience that positively signals Stoker's prowess, rather than negatively reflecting this critic's own incapacity to distinguish between fiction and reality. Similarly, the reviewer of *The War of the Worlds* for the *Saturday Review* declared: "Mr. Wells' exciting story […] can scarcely be read without sensation of physical terror," because "No astronomer, no physicist, can take upon himself to declare that it is absolutely certain that this planet will never be invaded from a foreign world."[725] Just like the critic of *Dracula*, this writer attributes *The War of the Worlds*' affective power to the collapse of fiction and reality. The diegetic dread of Martian conquest transcends the fiction to a real-world fear of planetary invasion in the future.

And yet, the *Saturday Review* writer is paradoxically unwilling to describe Wells as an affect-inducing author: "In Mr. Wells the intellectual processes are foremost, not the emotional."[726] However, the very same reviewer considers this triumph of intellect over emotion as a virtue that elevates Wells's fiction above the appreciation of the masses: "This is not the

[723] [Johns], "The Literature of the Street," 49-50.

[724] "Rev. of *Dracula*," *Daily Mail* (June 1, 1897).

[725] "Rev. of *The War of the Worlds*," 146.

[726] "Rev. of *The War of the Worlds*," 146.

way to woo the great coarse public, which likes glowing emotions and a glare of false images to light up the conventional landscapes of the mind."[727] Thus, while being affected himself by the intellectual probability of Wells's dreadful future, the critic assumes such feeling is beyond the ken of the "great coarse public." Rather than a subtle emotion like dread, this public seeks "glowing emotions," such as horror, suspense, and vengeance, that dominated the far more widely read penny dreadfuls. The condescending class fallacy in this remark would not be undercut for many decades, when T. S. Eliot positively declared that Wells's fiction was widely consumed "in the first class as well as the third class compartment."[728]

In the *Saturday Review* we can, at least, perceive echoes of Henry Home, Lord Kames's lowly estimation of the poor who witness the dreadful spectacle of a public execution, as discussed in Chapter 1. Rather than morally sympathizing with the victim, the common folk, in Kames's opinion, are "blindly to be led by curiosity with little attention whether it will contribute to their good or not."[729] Like Kames, *The War of the Worlds* reviewer disregards the masses because of their base emotions. In turn, he elevates Wells's novel above them to the level of the sublime in its ability to convey "the appalling vastness of the conquest of man by an octopus from another planet, a creature infinitely more intelligent, active and ingenious than he, with whom he is unable to communicate."[730] As a result of its transcendent subject matter, which supposedly only moves the intellectual, the reviewer concludes that the author of *The War of the*

[727] "Rev. of *The War of the Worlds*," 146.

[728] Patrick Parrinder, ed., *H.G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, Later Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century English and European Novelists (London: Routledge, 1997), 321.

[729] Henry Home Kames, Lord, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion, Corrected and Improved, in a Third Edition. Several Essays Added Concerning the Proof of a Deity*, ed. Mary Catherine Moran (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 21. https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1352.

[730] "Rev. of *The War of the Worlds*," 146.

Worlds will never be a "dangerous rival of those gods whom the Philistines worship in their millions."[731]

By considering representations of dread and the dreadful in Wells's and Stoker's fiction in relation to periodical discourse on penny dreadfuls, we can better understand how these terms were inflected by class and to what extent they were considered "good" (in facilitating moral or prosocial behavior) at the fin de siècle. Wells's and Stoker's respective novels, and the reviews discussed here, present dread—with its slow-paced and ambiguous aesthetics that enable thoughtful action for better future outcomes—as a high-brow affect felt by fictional heroes and self-important reviewers in the real world. Dread remains connected to the sublime and suffused, to varying extents, with religiosity. The dreadful, however, is a more vexed phenomenon. In specific contexts, like Ogilvy's reaction to the trapped "man" in the cylinder, it can signal eighteenth-century moral sympathy. However, generally speaking, the epithet dreadful—as it became inseparable from the penny dreadful—plainly meant "bad, very bad indeed."[732] We can see this meaning illuminated in Henry Irving's declaration that the first theatrical production of *Dracula* at the Lyceum on May 18, 1897 was "dreadful."[733] In fact, only two tickets were sold. This was, simply, a "very bad" venture.

One of the most threatening aspects of the penny dreadful was its rapid growth as a genre, amounting to "a veritable mountain of pernicious trash" in the words of the outraged Johns, which contemporaries understood in relation to imperial expansion.[734] The anonymous writer of "The Influence of Penny Dreadfuls" in the *Saturday Review* asserted: "As Sir Samuel

[731] "Rev. of *The War of the Worlds*," 146.

[732] "A Penny-Dreadful Scare," 546.

[733] Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 199.

[734] [Johns], "The Literature of the Street," 43.

Baker has been explaining, in these days the rise of the Nile could be prevented by altering the course of the Atbara. Even so the imitation of crime might be modified, if not stopped, by drying up the penny dreadful."[735] This editorialist thus aligns the penny dreadful with a primary natural resource of Northeast Africa, the newly acquired territory of the British Empire, and simultaneously justifies the artificial manipulation of both the printed material and the waterway. Controlling the Nile—which supplied water, electricity, and a method of transportation—meant economic and political control for Great Britain in the region. Analogously, stemming the production of penny dreadfuls would result in a stronger manipulation over the reading masses. These readers were, to a large extent, adolescent boys who were expected to play a central role in the imperial future.[736]

According to this metaphor, the pervasive and malignant nature of these penny dreadfuls threatened the British Empire from within, just as the unpredictable ebbs and flows of the Nile threatened the empire abroad. Johns, for instance, bewailed how this "intolerable stuff that finds tens of thousands of juvenile readers, gilds the byways of crime and helps to fill our reformatories with precocious gaolbirds of the worst class."[737] Rather than instructing compliant subjects, which was the primary goal of literacy education in the nineteenth century, this fiction was thought to convert a vast number of adolescents into unmanageable delinquents. Their misconduct, moreover, was considered "of the worst class" because it manifested a "cunning

[735] "The Influence of the Penny Dreadful," *Saturday Review* 66, no. 1721 (October 20, 1888): 458. The *Saturday Review* writer was not alone in conceiving of the penny dreadfuls as a body of water that needed to be controlled. Johns similarly asserted: "… the fountain head of the poisonous stream is in the great towns and cities, especially in London itself; and it is with that we now have to deal." "The Literature of the Street," 42-43.

[736] See Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (London: Harper Collins Academic, 1991) for a detailed examination of the aggrandizement of the fit, moral, and patriotic boy in British imperial discourse, and the ways in which boyhood and masculinity were constructed in penny dreadfuls and adventure stories at the fin de siècle.

[737] [Johns], "The Literature of the Street," 50.

intelligence" wherein the children turned "their knowledge to the vilest use."[738] In other words, the penny dreadfuls were not simply generating copycat criminals, but creative mavericks who did not comply with the reigning notions of Progress.

Thus, the dreadful rebelliousness of the penny dreadfuls functioned in tandem with representations of dread in *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula* in ways that were perceived to undermine British imperial dominion. Moreover, the penny dreadful phenomenon, as it was described in periodicals, actually manifested the aesthetics of dread—slow, ominous, spreading—in a manner that similarly disrupted hegemonic power. While Victorian editorialists may have perceived the feeling of dread and dreadful spectacles as operating in different classed and moral purviews, I propose that there was a crucial collusion between penny dreadfuls, the newborn science fiction novel, and revitalized Gothic. Though very different in style, the similar feelings of dread and representations of the dreadful in these fictional worlds all facilitate hope for a different, subversive future and inspire action to attain it. As the preface to the infamous dreadful, *The Wild Boys of London* (1866), proclaims: "there is hope for those who are born in the lowest depths of degradation, and […] many of the world's future heroes–the great in honor and the rich in fame–have yet to rise from the ranks of 'The Wild Boys of London.'"[739] Emotively driven actions in the penny dreadfuls, *The War of the Worlds*, and *Dracula* are not without their ethical problems. The wild boys entirely disregard the law to follow their own moral code. The sympathy for the colonized in Wells's novel is self-interested. And Stoker's heroes bring about their desired future through violent execution. The behaviors represented in these works are not prescriptive of a utopic future, but the feeling-tone of their dread-filled

[738] [Johns], "The Literature of the Street," 50.

[739] *The Wild Boys of London: Or, The Children of Night*, vol. 1 (London: Newsagents Publishing Company, 1866), 2.

worlds initiates, in an open-ended and frightening way, an affective means of resistance to status quo Progress, bearing seeds for more progressive possibilities based on sympathy and cooperation across class and national lines in the unpredictable future.

Coda
Dread in the Twenty-First Century

> "The quality of 'dread' has become a driver of our time. Prolonged dread is the mark of this moment, of its seeming inscrutability, its illegibility, where the improbable has become likely."
>
> —David Theo Goldberg, "In the Grip of Dread" (September 2018)

Dread is an emotional response to phenomena that are more vast, powerful, and ambiguous than an individual or her actions. Our present moment is chock-full of such unintelligible events, systems, and technologies: continuous warfare, immigration, rampant poverty and inequality, rapid digital advancements, artificial intelligence, and climate change. As a result of these global conditions, David Theo Goldberg concludes: "It is no wonder then that the ineffability of dread has come so readily to inhabit these spaces of disruption, unpredictability, uncertainty, doubt, confusion, and denial" in our present world.[740]

In Goldberg's evaluation of the global situation, our current state of dread enables reactionary politics. Due to "a political theater of incendiary and hostile pronouncement followed by immediate denial," societies across the globe are paralyzed in an all-consuming affective vortex of dread whose telos is nihilism.[741] The affective antidote Goldberg proposes is sympathy, calling for "creative, interactive, collaborative efforts to make our complicated worlds come together across boundaries and walls and borders."[742]

Goldberg's argument casts dread and sympathy as conflicting impulses. However, as this dissertation has revealed, historically, dread and sympathy have not been understood as

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[740] David Theo Goldberg, "In the Grip of Dread," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, September 9, 2018, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/in-the-grip-of-dread/.

[741] Goldberg.

[742] Goldberg.

diametrically opposed. Numerous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century intellectuals deemed it necessary to bear witness to "dreadful" phenomena in order to cultivate ethical emotional sensitivity. Moreover, the past chapters have demonstrated the extent to which representations of dread and the dreadful in novels, poems, periodical articles, and devotional texts throughout the long nineteenth century often served prosocial and politically progressive functions. Rather than "undercutting political possibility," as Goldberg claims of our present moment, feelings of dread two centuries ago frequently enabled fictional characters and real authors to actively reflect upon how their actions might impact the future and consequently act according to a moral or ethical code that sometimes went against orthodox standards.[743] Feelings of dread in nineteenth-century writing are affective portals into deeply uncertain moments in British history, and offer us ways of understanding how different types of authors and readers speculated about the future in an attempt to alter their present circumstances for the better. Dread was not a thoughtlessly reactive affect, but one conducive to sustained contemplation.

Goldberg is not the only present-day scholar to have argued for the unproductive and unsympathetic effects of dread in Western culture. Most recently, psychologist Sheldon Solomon has conducted several social experiments to better understand the role of dread in our present world. He has concluded that "existential dread"—that is, fear of death—is responsible for the rise of authoritarian populist leaders, such as President Donald Trump.[744] Solomon's recent study asked American participants to contemplate their end of life and then describe their emotions. Participants were also asked to write down what they expected to happen when they died.

[743] Goldberg, "In the Grip of Dread."

[744] Sheldon Solomon, "The Secret to Trump's Success? It's Sheer Existential Dread," *The Guardian*, November 23, 2019, sec. Opinion, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/nov/23/secret-trump-success-existential-dread-populist-death.

Immediately after this reflection, they were asked questions relating to immigrants, Islam, and Trump. The researchers found that, after reflecting upon death, participants expressed more intolerant attitudes, such as resistance to a mosque being built in their neighborhood. Moreover, existential dread also appeared to increase the participants' likelihood of voting for Trump for president. All in all, Solomon reports: "After being reminded of their mortality […] Christians had more favourable impressions of other Christians and more negative impressions of Jews; Germans sat closer to Germans and further away from Turkish immigrants; Iranians were more supportive of suicide bombings; and Americans advocated using nuclear, chemical and biological weapons against countries that posed no direct threat to the US."[745] Solomon hypothesizes that this is the case because contemplating death induces us to yearn for literal or symbolic immortality through national or religious identity: "People are therefore highly motivated to maintain faith in their cultural worldviews as a psychological bulwark against existential dread."[746] As a result, we become entrenched in tribalism.

Adam Smith argues the exact opposite in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, as the opening chapter explained. Smith understands our dread of death as the one global experience that unites humankind. It is mortal dread that bolsters our sympathetic engagement with others, Smith affirms. Even as Solomon and Smith seem at odds here, Solomon's study yields a similar conclusion about the effect of reflecting on our common humanity: "[W]hen participants were also encouraged to think of universal human experiences, shared by people from diverse cultures" their "negative reactions to immigrants following death reminders were reduced."[747]

[745] Solomon, "The Secret to Trump's Success?"

[746] Solomon.

[747] Solomon.

So, instead of asking participants to contemplate personal demise, what if the researchers had asked them to consider the end of the whole human species because of a catastrophic event, such as an asteroid, or (more likely) climate change? Dread is not necessarily correlated to a lack of sympathy. Rather, I suspect that what is most salient in assessing dread's relationship to tolerance is whether the object of dread is individual or collective.

When present-day intellectuals indict dread as an enabler of reactionary politics, I am inclined to think that they are conceiving of this affect in its individualized expression. By contrast, the historical sense of dread was oftentimes a collective one, or, at least, a feeling that connected the individual with a wider communal or spiritual sensibility. This experience of dread is not entirely missing in our world today. Recently, there have been two adjacent attempts to reclaim this bygone feeling and harness it to re-envision political engagement in our modern world. These endeavors come from the Dutch artist Juha van 't Zelfde and the British urban fantasy writer and Socialist China Miéville.

Van 't Zelfde began his career as an independent organizer and disc jockey of experimental electronic music in Rotterdam, which led him to realize the exhibition and book project *Dread: The Dizziness of Freedom* (2012-13). The visual art and essays in the collection theorize the extent to which "[d]read is an essential and potentially productive element of the human consciousness, and […] a defining characteristic of the present day *condition humaine*."[748] While acknowledging, like Goldberg and Solomon, dread's potential for a "dialectical coupling […] of paralysis and overdrive," the contributors maintain that this feeling also "allows us to imagine the world spectacularly differently, offering glimpses of the

[748] Xander Karskens, "Foreward," in *Dread: The Dizziness of Freedom*, ed. Juha van 't Zelfde, Antennae Series 9 (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2013), 2.

unthinkable and the unknown."[749] Their conclusion has far-reaching implications: "It is precisely this creative agency [of dread] that seems ever so valuable in our complex times — an agency that is created by the very forces that, in their politicised guises, wish to suppress or even destroy it."[750]

Kevin Slavin's contribution, "Garbage Out," is an essay that offers a particularly evocative account of how dread might benefit our world today, a world that outsources a great deal of its processing power to automated machines. In Slavin's words:

> What's worrisome is that the machinery mingles with *homo sapiens sapiens* without making human concessions to the genuine complexity of the world we live in.
>
> Which is not to say that we should dread what the machines are doing. It's that there are lessons to learn from them about what dread is, why it is useful, necessary, and why the scariest aspect of machine intelligence is that it operates without any dread at all.[751]

By way of illustration, Slavin recounts a classic psychological experiment about selective attention. Participants are told that they will watch a video of basketball players and they must count how many times the ball is passed back and forth. After the video, the researchers do not inquire about the passes, but instead ask: "Did you see the gorilla?" Indeed, halfway through the one minute and twenty second video, a person in a gorilla costume walks into the center of the ring and shakes around. But only about fifty percent of participants notice this surprising

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[749] Karskens, "Forward," 2.

[750] Karskens, 2.

[751] Kevin Slavin, "Garbage Out," in *Dread: The Dizziness of Freedom*, ed. Juha van 't Zelfde, Antennae Series 9 (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2013), 123. Note: Slavin repeatedly uses the full classification *Homo sapiens sapiens*, including the second *sapiens* to denote the subspecies, as distinct from *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens idaltu*, which are now extinct.

appearance, because they are myopically focusing on the ball. Slavin sees this experiment as a compelling metaphor for the ways in which we notice or ignore unexpected issues in our world today: "Sometimes the gorilla is the economy, sometimes it's a war. Sometimes it's infidelity, or ecology, sometimes the gorilla is a virus, or a nuke […] The gorilla represents the thing that neither humans nor machines are looking for. Unlike half of all humans, an algorithm designed to detect the ball-passing will miss the headline event *100%* of the time."[752]

Slavin thus turns science fiction's fear of hyper-rational machines on its head. The problem is *not* that machines will achieve a level of perfection that makes humans irrelevant or undesirable. The issue is that machines follow their algorithms faultlessly, and consequently miss critical details outside the bounds of their programming. Our efficiency-infatuated society prizes productivity and often stigmatizes (or pathologizes) distractibility. But Slavin's account affirms the value of us being "distracted by the things we aren't looking for."[753] Ultimately, he links this perceptual capacity (or, perhaps, incapacity) to a sense of dread: "In the end, it's possible that the only way to see what is actually happening is to be as *inefficient* as homo sapiens sapiens. And in the end, this ability to know that there is a gorilla in the room that no one is looking for: this is dread."[754] Slavin thus suggests that our anticipatory fear of an unexpected variable, "the gorilla," keeps us patiently alert for signs of its presence, even when we are observing the normal "game" (the passing of basketballs) that we have been conditioned to watch. Contrary to Goldberg's conception, Slavin's sense of dread entails a break with—rather than conformity to—expectations. Instead of making us cower in complicity with higher powers, Slavin's dread

[752] Slavin, "Garbage Out," 125.

[753] Slavin, 126.

[754] Slavin, 126.

enables us to spot what we have not been told to notice. Slavin's dread is the foundation of critical, innovative thinking, a faculty needed in the academy, the boardroom, and the senate or parliamentary floor.

China Miéville especially concentrates on this form of dread in the political arena during an interview with van 't Zelfde. Rather than claiming dread for any one ideology, Miéville astutely discerns how this feeling operates across the political spectrum, as I have similarly argued in the context of long-nineteenth century thought. Miéville likewise asserts that the key to dread's vast political purchase is its relation to ecstasy and the sublime. "It seems to me," he maintains, "that dread can tip quite easily into a kind of reactionary ecstasy that you see in a lot of the writing of H.P. Lovecraft."[755] Nevertheless, Miéville reminds us that "[e]cstasy is very powerful, a very politically and philosophically polyvalent condition."[756] It is not just the purview of the right. While, on the one hand, "That sense of trembling before God [or any great authority] can be tremendously reactionary," on the other hand, it "can also be a kind of explosive overturning of everything."[757] On this premise, Miéville goes on to illustrate the role of dread for the right, parapolitics (his respectful term for conspiracy theorists), and the far left.

Miéville begins by discussing the two ways in which the right weaponizes dread. First, he identifies military drones as a "tremendously dread-engendering" weapon, because they wreak havoc while being "piloted by absence."[758] James Bridle expands on this observation in the

[755] Juha van 't Zelfde and China Miéville, "The Surplus Value of Fear: A Conversation Between China Miéville and Juha van 't Zelfde," in *Dread: The Dizziness of Freedom*, ed. Juha van 't Zelfde, Antennae Series 9 (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2013), 54.

[756] van 't Zelfde and Miéville, 55.

[757] van 't Zelfde and Miéville, 55.

[758] van 't Zelfde and Miéville, 72.

subsequent essay "Drones and Dread" by refencing a report co-authored by the International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic at Stanford Law School and the Global Justice Clinic at NYU School of Law. As Bridle recounts: "[t]he constant presence or anticipation of drones in the sky above […] 'leads to substantial levels of fear and stress in the civilian communities below.'"[759] The result is "a pervasive worry about future trauma composed of a feeling of helplessness and the belief that 'they could be attacked at any time', compounded by the visual imperceptibility of the drone."[760] These affective consequences make clear that drone attacks serve two separate but related functions in wartime. Their overt purpose is to eradicate specific targets. But their "fringe benefit," as Miéville calls it, is to contribute to a larger "Shock and Awe" campaign that is designed to shackle the entire population of the region at war.[761] In Miéville's words: "Dread is just bad awe. Dread is awe gone nasty. So what you have with Shock and Awe […] is pretty much explicitly weaponised dread. Which is useful in the battlefield."[762]

Miéville therefore suggests that dread is consciously instrumentalized by the right in a way that is altogether different from its role in parapolitics. When discussing these marginal political beliefs, Miéville views dread as a barometer in order to differentiate between legitimate so-called conspiracy theories—believing that the Bilderberg Group has vast, insidious power—and spurious ones—giving credence to the idea that Jews and/or giant lizards and/or the Illuminati secretly rule the world for diabolical purposes. Miéville perceives a "tipping point"

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[759] James Bridle, "Drones and Dread," in *Dread: The Dizziness of Freedom*, ed. Juha van 't Zelfde, Antennae Series 9 (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2013), 82.

[760] Bridle, 82.

[761] van 't Zelfde and Miéville, "The Surplus Value of Fear," 73.

[762] van 't Zelfde and Miéville, 73.

from accepting the Bilderberg Group's power to accepting the Illuminati's as "the point at which rigorous fear tips over and the dread component of fear begins to overwhelm, and then becomes a kind of ecstatic surrender to the surplus."[763] In stark contrast to the right's meticulous use of dread in wartime strategy, the parapolitical experience of dread appears unconscious. The feeling is uncontrolled and forms a kind of rapt, libidinal devotion to excess fear.

In his keynote address at the 2013 Socialism Conference, Miéville utilizes dread in yet another ideological context. His concluding appeal—"Socialists for dread!"—presents a productive blend of the self-aware and explosive senses of dread that he has identified in other frameworks. In his speech, Miéville argues that dread is not only a fundamental component of the human condition, but a particularly relevant affect for Marxists. The crux of his argument rests in his assertion that dread operates as "a copula between tools, a sophisticated brain, and not simply a sense of the future but a sense of alternative futures—potentiality."[764] He illustrates this point through a surprising and amusing (though nonetheless revealing) scientific article about octopuses. Researchers have recently observed that octopuses carry cumbersome coconut shells over long distances in the event that they are attacked by predators, in which case the octopus wields the shell as a shield. Although numerous animals deploy tools, cephalopods and humans are the only animals to bear an apparatus *preemptively* with the hope that it will never be used. For Miéville, this capacity is essential to sentience: "sentience comes not from orienting toward the future with tools but with orienting towards potentiality, towards variable futures, different futures to be negotiated," which is done by "arming yourself against what in psychology is called

[763] van 't Zelfde and Miéville, "The Surplus Value of Fear," 67.

[764] China Miéville, *Marxism and Halloween - Socialism 2013* (Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel and Conference Center, 2013), uploaded on October 30, 2013, 23:50, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paCqiY1jwqc.

a 'dreaded outcome.'"[765] The vital difference between humans and octopuses, Miéville maintains, is human imagination, which allows us to experience the dreadful in increasingly abstract and unknowable ways that ultimately manifest in the supernatural: "Octopuses will make their final leap to full sentience when they carry coconut shells against imaginary monsters."[766] For Miéville, this capacity to embrace potentiality is central to the Marxist project. If, as Frederic Jameson suggested, "It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism," dread might act as the affective engine to make such re-envisioning possible.[767]

All in all, Miéville's broad-ranging exploration of politicized dread allows us to see the erroneous limitations of attributing this feeling to conservative thought alone. The counterpointing political traditions of dread, which I have traced through the long-nineteenth century, remain present in our cultural dialogue today. For this reason, I would encourage intellectuals and cultural leaders to stop viewing dread as a *symptom* of our time, but as a *mechanism* that is shaping our present and future. Instead of indicting dread as the affective cause of bigotry and passive complicity, we might consider the ways in which dread could be consciously harnessed to form ethical communities. As this dissertation has shown, shared feelings of dread have historically united diverse individuals and simultaneously motivated action to resist injustice and devastation. Given the status of our world today, we might do well to meditate on Søren Kierkegaard's proclamation: "learning to know dread is an adventure which every man has to affront if he would not go to perdition either by not having known dread or by

[765] Miéville, *Marxism and Halloween*, 23:04.

[766] Miéville, 29:37.

[767] Fredric Jameson, "Future City," *New Left Review* 21 (May/June 2003): 76. Jameson references this idea without attribution. It has since been ascribed to him and Slavoj Žižek.

sinking under it. He therefore who has learned rightly to be in dread has learned the most important thing."[768]

[768] Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's The Concept of Dread*, trans. Walter Lowrie, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), 139.

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