Mapping Gothic Cumbria: An Alternative Literary History

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Declaration

This thesis is my own work. It has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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Abstract

'Mapping Cumbrian Gothic: Towards an Alternative Literary History'

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This thesis constructs an alternative literary history of the English Lake District, thereby making a case for a spatially specific Cumbrian Gothic. Criticism has tended to concentrate on the region's exemplary beauty and the Romantic influences of the Lake Poets, neglecting to consider the prevalence of the Gothic mode. This study remedies this scholarly absence by investigating understudied texts and conducting alternative readings of canonical Romantic literature. In doing so it recognises the diversity of Cumbria's cultural legacy and demonstrates the pervasive presence of the Gothic from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. It argues that whilst fictional incarnations of Cumbrian Gothic have become more popular in this century, they draw on a long history of such representation. This diachronic research identifies three key moments in the development of a distinctive Cumbrian Gothic. It firstly explores how the Romantic period tourist experiences and literary responses of Ann Radcliffe and William Wordsworth were shaped by Gothic narratives that reframed unappealing mountainscapes into sources of the sublime and topographical terror. It then examines how the construction of a Gothic region is compounded by nineteenth-century perceptions of local legends, people and place. This construction was influenced by Victorian-era interests in folklore and antiquarianism, which appropriated oral traditions to make monsters of marginal figures. Lastly, it analyses the self-awareness of contemporary Cumbrian fiction which uses pre-existing Gothic narratives to comment on political and environmental issues. It engages with ecocritical and EcoGothic debates to reconsider 'nature'; it evaluates disability inclusion; and proposes rewilding the region as a remedy for ecophobia. This thesis presents Cumbrian Gothic as a multivalent mode that can suitably convey the often unpleasant aspects of rural life. Its

revelation of the repressed 'dark side' of the Lake District communicates inarticulable social and environmental crises particular to Cumbria and provincial Britain.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Mapping Gothic Cumbria: An Alternative Literary History

This thesis constructs an alternative literary history to Cumbria, which ventures from the popular critical and cultural path into what Dickens deems the 'rough wild country'.[1] My topographical, literary and cultural study of the region aims to make a case for a specifically Cumbrian Gothic. This regional Gothic is intrinsically linked to its local lore, physical and cultural landscape, synonymy with the sublime and connotations with wilderness. Such characterisation and qualities undermine the romanticised aesthetic which dominates common cultural perceptions of Cumbria. I argue that whilst cinematic and fictional incarnations of Cumbrian Gothic have become more popular in this century, they actually draw on a long history of such representations. This research is driven by a desire to de-homogenise the established cultural canon of Cumbria. Not only do I propose an alternative way of reading the Lakeland landscape, but my research also shows that the prevalence of the Gothic mode pre-existed Cumbria's consecration as a Romantic region. As William Hughes writes in the introduction to *Gothic Britain*, the literary Gothic has always 'enjoyed an intimacy with the geographically provincial and the culturally peripheral', which is encapsulated by Cumbria, a region that abounds in provincial idiosyncrasies.[2] Whilst my research focuses on the key characteristics and moments in the development of a Cumbrian Gothic, I participate in current debates on Gothic regionalism and demonstrate how the Cumbrian utilisation of the mode engages with broader rural, regional and national Gothic discourses. This demonstrates its far-

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[1] Mamie Dickens and Georgina Hogarth, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*: *Volume Two* (Frankfurt: Outlook Verlag, 2020), p. 22.

[2] William Hughes and Ruth Heholt, *Gothic Britain: Dark Places in the Provinces and Margins of the British Isles* (Wales: University of Wales Press, 2018), p. 1.

reaching relevance beyond its geographical borders, which also reveals a shared language amongst similar regions, crafting a kinship amongst many Gothicised spaces within Britain.

The purpose of this introduction is to establish a historical, terminological and methodological overview that forms a foundation for defining Cumbrian Gothic and provides commonality between the varied contents of each chapter. I begin by explaining how tourism catalysed the creation of Cumbrian Gothic in the late eighteenth century. I will then historicise the meaning of Gothic as both a cultural and literary tradition, which can be more fluidly and discursively applied to my study of Cumbria's people, place and lived experience. Borrowing Dale Townshend's application of Gothic chronotopes, I attempt to organise the multivalence of regional Gothic into a mode that engages with time and space in a specifically Gothic way. I illustrate the defining topographical features of the natural and cultural landscape that are either intrinsically Gothic or predisposed to Gothicisation, which are continuous, albeit various in their effect, throughout the literature in my thesis. Then, I discuss how the intertextuality of the landscape, both organic and transplanted, creates an added layering of imaginative association that renders Cumbria an enchanted space prolific in Gothic narrativisation.

Tourism and the Lake District

Cumbria's literary heritage is condensed by conventional criticism and tourism alike into a reductive canon, featuring William Wordsworth, Beatrix Potter and Alfred Wainwright – potentially Ruskin and the Lake Poets in certain circles. However, it is the region's Romantic-era associations in particular that have fostered a literary re-territorialisation of the landscape, converting place into a fictionalised geography, perpetuating a single style and romanticised experience. This fusing of poet into place and the literary tourism it inspired was formalised in

1854 when James Russell Lowell renamed the region 'Wordsworthshire'.[3] The consecration of Cumbria as a Romantic literary locality has endured. Eric Robertson undertakes the role of what we would now identify as a rural psychogeographer in *Wordsworthshire: an introduction to a poet's country* (1911), which is neither a guidebook nor biography, 'but a series of suggestions about a Poet's mind in relation to the country in which he dwelt'.[4] Robertson's work highlights the profound intimacy that critics identify between the poet and this particular place, signified by the possessive nature of the title and reaffirmed by his quotation that reiterates the inextricability of the poet's psychology, personality and spatiality. Not only does this singularity of cultural expression romanticise Wordsworth's personal and professional experience of Cumbria, it displaces other authors and genres from gaining notable recognition especially in the public sphere.

Twenty-first-century critical and tourist discourses continue this interest in spatially mapping Wordsworth's county, but modernise this notion for a digital era. Christopher Donaldson, Patricia Murrieta-Flores and Ian Gregory innovatively used the GIS Corpus of Lakeland literature for the purpose of 'Mapping Wordsworthshire' (2016).[5] The Wordsworth Trust has taken this literary reclamation of landscape into a virtual medium, developing an app named 'iWordsworth' to appeal to the modern tourist. 'Wordsworthshire' is digitised into an interactive tourist map, pinning locations according to their literary associations and inviting the public to contribute their Wordsworthian experiences.[6] 'iWordsworth' epitomises the

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[3] James Russell Lowell, 'Sketch of Wordsworth's Life', *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 7 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1854), I, xxxviii. On the phenomenon of 'literary countries', see Nicola Watson, *The Literary Tourist: Readers & Places in Romantic & Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 169-70.
[4] Eric Robertson, *Wordsworthshire: An Introduction to a Poet's Country* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1911), p. vii.
[5] Christopher Donaldson et al., 'Mapping 'Wordsworthshire': A GIS Study of Literary Tourism in Victorian Lakeland", *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 20.3 (2015), pp. 287–307.
[6] Wordsworth Trust, 'iWordsworth' (2021) <https://wordsworth.org.uk/learn/iwordsworth/> [accessed 18 March 2020].

poet's timeless pervasion into contemporary culture and the digital age. Furthermore, if postulated as 'I, Wordsworth' it reflexively suggests the interiority of the Romantic Self, which is more to do with a subjective response to nature and less about the physical landscape. Regardless, both understandings transfigure geographical space into virtual, imagined landscapes. Such protracted cultural and critical interest in romanticising the landscape justifies Keith Hanley's claim that Cumbria is an 'imaginatively privileged area, whose significance depended principally on Wordsworth's exemplary presence'.[7] However, such assertions of Cumbria's principal dependency on a single poet is culturally homogenising, which creates two fundamental issues: firstly, it supresses so many alternative narratives that equally warrant recognition and secondly, this sustained privileging of Wordsworth has, by extension, commercially popularised Romantic associations to the extent that even Romantic-era aesthetics and Wordsworth himself are often misrepresented. The primary aim of my thesis is to highlight narratives that have been suppressed by this commercial literary homogenisation, Wordsworth included, to provide an alternative way of reading and experiencing the Lakes, predominantly through a Gothic lens.

This stereotypical romanticisation of the Lakeland landscape is widespread throughout popular culture, epitomised by the BBC's weekly magazine show *Countryfile*'s opening credits, which masterfully displays the Lakes' 'harmonious beauty' that contributed to its winning of UNESCO World Heritage status in 2017.[8] Panning images of the sun-lit, summer landscape featuring the verdant Langdale Valley and a sparkling Blea Tarn are amplified by the uplifting, melodic theme tune; the landscape is presented as a paragon of the English

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[7] Keith Hanley, 'The Imaginative Visitor: Wordsworth and the Romantic Construction of Literary Tourism in the Lake District', *The Making of a Cultural Landscape: The English Lake District as Tourist Destination, 1750–2010*, ed. by John K. Walton and Jason Wood (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 125.
[8] UNESCO World Heritage Convention, *The English Lake District* (2017) <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6902> [accessed 15 January 2020].

countryside. With such established stereotypes widely held in the popular imagination, plus the general allure that any national park has, tourism is undoubtedly integral to the local economy. The majority of tourist discourses in Cumbria are mindful of representing a particular stylisation of the landscape that befits the idyllic imagery familiarised by Wainwright and popularised by programmes such as *Countryfile*, which disseminates this aesthetic that is appealing to and expected by a wide-ranging audience. To support this romanticised aesthetic, touristic discourses capitalise on Cumbria's Romantic-era literary heritage for commercial appeal, which might interest a particular kind of literary tourist, but it also condenses the literary landscape into a reductive cultural canon.

This privileging of Cumbria's Romantic-era literary heritage by touristic discourses, which exploit and appropriate these associations in their promotion of a romanticised landscape, is misleading for tourists and is culturally misrepresentative. The 2019 *Golakes* homepage – the official site of Cumbria Tourism before it rebranded as *Visit Lake District* in 2020 – features a prominent footer image that emblazons a Wordsworth quotation on a scenic shot of a bench overlooking the lake, which is located up Latrigg in Keswick.[9] The incorrectly formatted quotation from Wordsworth's misnamed 'Daffodils' is overlaid on an image that overlooks Derwentwater, despite Ullswater being the original inspiration for 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'. The quotation is dated 1804, which is the composition date rather than the 1807 publication date, perhaps to give the lines more temporal immediacy and connection to the particular place that inspired the poem. However, the inspiration actually occurred during a walk in 1802 and Wordsworth later composed the lines whilst in Grasmere based on Dorothy's journal entry written at the time. *Golakes* has temporally and spatially displaced the literary specificity of these words. This demonstrates how touristic discourses appropriate the

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[9] Cumbria Tourism, < https://www.golakes.co.uk> [accessed 21 February 2019].

Lakes' Romantic heritage in order to romanticise the entire region, not simply the spaces that have actual literary associations ascribed to them.

Cumbria Tourism's rebranding to *Visit Lake District*, however, has signalled a reorientation away from predominantly romanticising the region and the past privileging of its selective literary heritage. The iconic Latrigg viewpoint and poetic quotation has been replaced by a shadowy mountain silhouette with a quotation that reads 'you may leave the Lake District, but once you've been, it'll never leave you'.[10] The website in general does not provide citations for any quotations, but this particular quotation is anonymous according to other sources that have also alluded to it. This displacement of Wordsworth's literary pre-eminence from the homepage with an anonymous quotation, accompanied by a monochrome impression of a mountainscape, depersonalises both the physical landscape and its specific literary significance that previously adorned the *GoLakes* site. This is reaffirmed by its renaming to 'Visit Lake District', which reinforces a national agenda that aesthetically and linguistically aligns with the official tourism bodies of *Visit England* and *Visit Britain*. This is a self-conscious depersonalising of place in order to centralise and conform to a national narrative on how to attractively present collective tourist spaces within Britain.

Cumbria Tourism's efforts to become more inclusive has actually reinforced its cultural homogenisation by conforming to a national representation of rural spaces at the expense of regional individuality. Richard Leafe, the Lake District National Park Authority's Chief Executive, defended this re-narrativisation in an interview with *Sky News* in December 2019, explaining that 'We need to be able to sell the national park to everybody in Britain, all society, and it's important that it doesn't just become exclusive to one single use group.'[11] Conforming

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[10] Cumbria Tourism, <https://www.visitlakedistrict.com> [accessed 18 January 2021].
[11] Lake District National Park Authority, 'Sky News Statement 2 January 2020' <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/aboutus/media-centre/latest-news/statements/sky-news-statement-2-january-2020> [accessed 20 January 2021].

to Cumbria Tourism's rhetoric, Leafe generalises the Lakes as simply another 'national park', explicitly commercialising this generic tourist space that must 'sell' to 'everybody'.[12] However, he flags up an important issue with the region's inclusivity, acknowledging its deficiency 'in terms of young people, black and minority ethnic communities' and he adds, 'we are not particularly well-visited by those who are less able in terms of their mobility.'[13] I elaborate on some of these access issues in my final chapter specifically in relation to marginalised figures in literature and how this engages with debates around rewilding and reclaiming nature. Leafe, however, offers no solution other than postulating that 'our challenge is to see what we can do to reverse that, to encourage people from broader backgrounds and a wider range of personal mobilities into the national park to be able to benefit in the same way that those other groups do.'[14]

Leafe fails to acknowledge diversity as he continues to amalgamate groups of people: firstly, by combining excluded communities together as if they are one category and secondly, by offering this excluded group the 'same' homogenising experience that 'other groups' currently 'benefit' from. Furthermore, his suggestion of a reversal implies that this exclusion is something that has consciously occurred, so he proposes that we need to go back to a previous state of representation that undoes current perceptions of the region. However, as my chapters demonstrate, even early domestic tourism was a right reserved for people like Radcliffe and Wordsworth. The marginalisation of certain groups has occurred for as long as folklore exists in Cumbria, which is a central concern of contemporary literature as I explore in my final chapter. Furthermore, Leafe's proposition coincides with the displacement of Wordsworth and the Lakes' wider cultural heritage from its previous spotlight on Cumbria Tourism's website,

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[12] Lake District National Park Authority, 'Sky News Statement 2 January 2020'.
[13] Lake District National Park Authority, 'Sky News Statement 2 January 2020'.
[14] Lake District National Park Authority, 'Sky News Statement 2 January 2020'.

which makes assumptions about education, intelligence and the class of, to quote Leafe, 'people from broader backgrounds'.[15]

Cumbria Tourism's new model posits a kind of reverse acculturation, a de-conditioning of the Lakes as a culturally elite space for the educated traveller. However, it does so by marginalising its literary history in a presumptive exercise of inclusivity that actually erases regional identity. This erasure is echoed by absences: the unsourced quotations that erase authorial voices and the natural topography that has been hollowed out into a figurative shadow of the landscape. This defamiliarisation implicitly invites the visitor to make their own mark on the landscape, to formulate their own interpretations and experiences, but it is mediated by the spectral remnants of that which has been removed. Diminished traces of its literary heritage invite tourists to experience the 'wonder' of the Lakes for themselves, 'like so many have done before, from Wordsworth to Wainwright, from Ruskin to Potter'.[16] Cumbria Tourism has now relocated its literary allusions to the 'arts and culture' section, neatly containing it within a purpose-built space for those seeking a more educational experience. It is here where Wordsworth is now located in the company of his unsourced words: 'the loveliest spot that man hath ever found'.[17] This quotation is taken from 'A Farewell' written in 1802 and specifically refers to his garden at Dove Cottage – not just to Grasmere as is commonly thought – which is an incredibly personal and particular place. The website's lack of context, however, gives it the appearance of applying more broadly to the region, reaffirming Cumbria Tourism's participation in spatially homogenising the physical and literary landscape.

This depersonalisation and diminishing of Wordsworth's significance marks a semantic shift away from solely romanticising the Lakes, but, as the erasures and spectral remnants

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[15] Lake District National Park Authority, 'Sky News Statement 2 January 2020'
[16] Cumbria Tourism, <https://www.visitlakedistrict.com>.
[17] Cumbria Tourism, <https://www.visitlakedistrict.com/things-to-do/arts-and-culture/famous-artists-poets-and-writers>, [accessed 10 February 2021].

indicate, a latent Gothicism has emerged in its absence. There is a detectable tonal shift that is best exemplified by the two aforementioned quotations on the respective homepages. The *GoLakes* website is whimsically Wordsworthian, presenting a romanticised landscape accentuated by the poetic imagery of dancing daffodils. The poem itself is written in the past tense, because it is a reimagination of this past experience manifested presently by the poet's 'inward eye'.[18] 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' is a positive message for the prospective tourist, a reaffirmation that their memories of the Lake District will endure and become even more powerful when recollected in the present. *Visit Lake District* pays an uncanny homage to Wordsworth's message with its aforesaid homepage greeting, 'you may leave the Lake District, but it will never leave you'. It is unusual that both homepages, which are purposefully designed to welcome prospective visitors to the Lakes, prematurely anticipate their departure. *Visit Lake District* especially does this, explicitly and abruptly, which bizarrely appears unwelcoming. Furthermore, as aforesaid, the Wordsworth quotation that *Visit Lake District* repurposes for its 'arts and culture' section is taken from 'A Farewell', which unambiguously signals the poet's departure. *Visit Lake District's* insidious promise that permits the visitor to 'leave the Lake District', whilst literally highlighting that 'it'll never leave you', subverts the power dynamics of Wordsworth's original sentiment. Instead of the visitor having the imaginative power to recreate the past, the region itself is mobilised as the enabler, forever haunting the Lakeland tourist like the spectral cliff that chases Wordsworth's rowboat in *The Prelude* (1798).

The unsettling strangeness in this change of register is reaffirmed by Cumbria Tourism's own vocabulary as exemplified by their invitation to visit 'ancient' Cumbria: a time-worn yet timeless region entangled with the past; a landscape both haunted and haunting. This is encapsulated by the rhetoric used in the opening paragraph:

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[18] William Wordsworth, *Poems in Two Volumes 1807*, ed. By Helen Derbyshire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 224.

In England's north western corner lies ancient Cumbria and the timeless landscapes of the Lake District. This is where modern tourism was born, in the shimmering lakes and hushed mountains whose radiant beauty inspired poets and painters to turn nature into art.[19]

Its numerous provocative claims regarding the timelessness of the landscapes, the founding of 'modern tourism' and the artistic inspiration that the 'radiant beauty' provided for 'poets and painters' construct a particularly English, romanticised tourist experience. Cumbria Tourism reinforce the stereotypical imagery of the tantalising 'shimmering lakes' and subdue the potentially intimidating mountains into peaceful silence. However, the latent Gothicism is ingrained in its manipulation of time and space, which is integral to my conceptualisation of 'Gothic' within this thesis, as I will show. In just these opening sentences, the county is 'ancient', 'timeless' and simultaneously 'modern', which collapses multiple temporalities. Cumbria Tourism suggestively separates the national park from Cumbria and assigns them different temporal qualities. Its reference to 'Ancient Cumbria' is a deliberate historicising of the region, which assimilates the past with Cumbrian locals, their lived experience and lore. The physical region holds on to its history as a geographical receptacle of the past. In contrast, the 'landscapes' of the Lake District take on a 'timeless' quality, suggestive of their immortality and almost preternatural transcendence beyond time. This suggestion creates a subtle mysticism and implied otherworldliness that is reaffirmed by their enigmatic description of the region as 'a world apart, but so easy to get to.'[20] This paradoxical representation is consciously careful of depicting the Lakes as suggestively other, so as to offer an escape from the visitor's everyday reality, but not so different that it becomes alarmingly alien or inaccessible.

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[19] Cumbria Tourism, *Explore, Lake District* (2020) <https://www.visitlakedistrict.com> [accessed 26 November 2020].

[20] Cumbria Tourism, *Explore, Lake District*.

The geographical inference of Cumbria as lying in the 'north western corner' purposefully positions the Lakes on the peripheries of the known, which is reaffirmed by the foreignness of the topography and culture, whilst being conveniently close and physically accessible thanks to modern infrastructure. Joan Passey identifies a similar tactic employed in Cornwall in connection with the 'Cornish Riviera Express' in 1903, exotically named to further their 'agenda of Otherness and distance' but only to preserve appearances as logistically it became more accessible.[21] Like Cumbria, Cornwall too is 'accessible, yet simultaneously foreign, barbaric, and primitive'.[22] Although there is an implied exoticism within contemporary touristic discourses, they draw on a literary history of atavism, barbarity and primitivism circulated by eighteenth and nineteenth-century Cumbrian literature. In 1894 Richard Ferguson, the chancellor of Carlisle, determined 'For the greater part of the last century the Lake District was as primitive and as out-of-the-world a place as could possibly be imagined'.[23] When other-worldliness was perceived pejoratively, the leisurely mountain traveller of that era liked 'their scenery flat' and their preferred view is from 'Richmond Hill, Surrey'.[24] Wilkie Collins's character in *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* (1857) parodically reaffirms Ferguson's presumptions whilst ascending Carrock Fell, wistfully longing for London's 'nice short walks in level public gardens, with benches of repose', where 'rugged stone is humanely pounded […] and intelligently shaped into smooth slabs for the pavement!'[25] Thomas Idle (Collins) disparages the rugged wildness of the Lakeland terrain in favour of the manmade,

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[21] Joan Passey, '"Imagined Ghosts on Unfrequented Roads": Gothic Tourism in Nineteenth-Century Cornwall', *Virtual Dark Tourism: Ghost Roads,* ed. by Kathryn N. McDaniel (London: Palgrave, 2018), p. 42.

[22] Passey, '"Imagined Ghosts"', p. 42.

[23] Richard Ferguson, *A History of Westmoreland*, (London: Elliot Stock, 1984), p. 6.

[24] Ferguson, *A History of Westmoreland*, p. 7.

[25] Charles Dickens, *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* (Luton: Andrews UK Limited, 2012), p. 9.

cultivated urban landscape of London engineered for leisure.

Despite the sardonic tone of *The Lazy Tour*, the previously unfrequented Cumbria was a foreign landscape for any nineteenth-century Lakeland traveller, even the enthusiastic visitor. When the French Revolution closed off the continent, the Lakeland mountains became a domestic substitute for the Alps, as exemplified by Radcliffe's travel guide which I explore further in the first chapter. Even the Cumbrian dialect could be mistaken for a foreign language, complete with its own colloquialisms. In 1857, Dickens relays an encounter with a 'queer little old woman' who brought him a night-light during his stay in Cumbria, which he writes phonetically:

> "It's joost a vara keeyourious thing, sir, and joost new coom oop. It'll burn awt hoors a' end, an no gootther, nor no waste, nor ony sike a thing, if you can creedit what I say, seein' the airticle."[26]

Dickens exaggerates the foreignness of her diction, making it appear almost incomprehensible in both syntax and speech. The sudden appearance of Cumbrian dialect starkly contrasts the clarity of Dickens's English and further highlights the local lady's difference to him, whilst also implicitly remarking on her intelligence and class.

This perceptible strangeness and unfamiliarity is much more akin to my personal experience of the Lakes, which has always been at odds with the dogmatic romanticisation of such a culturally diverse region. In the 1990s, my dad worked away at Sellafield, the nuclear powerplant in Seascale on the western coast of Cumbria, so I spent most weekends growing up on the periphery of the Lakes, the often-forgotten parts of the county sustained by its suppressed industrial landscape. Regardless, the primordial pull of my childhood second home motivated

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[26] Dickens and Hogarth, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*: *Volume Two*, p. 22.

my relocation to the Lakes as an adult. Having been both a visitor and now a fully initiated Cumbrian, I am infatuated with the Lakes, yet my real, lived experience frequently leaves me feeling alien, uncomfortable and in conflict with the culturally dominant representation of Lakeland life. For me, this discomfort is out of respect for and experience of the changeability of nature and how instantly conditions can change. I can be comfortably wild-swimming in Windermere before a cloud inversion eclipses the shoreline and immediately disorientates me. An easy climb up Jack's Rake in the winter sun becomes instantly perilous in a whiteout. My solitary adventures often amplify my isolation in the sheer expanse of nature, overpowering my infinitesimal self with the vastness of the lake, forests or ridgelines with not another soul to be seen. Like Wordsworth, my initiation into Cumbrian life has been 'fostered alike by beauty and by fear'.[27]

This co-existence of beauty and fear in Cumbria is foundational to the creation of Cumbrian Gothic, which finds expression in the landscape and the local people who live there. This is communicated in the various genres and mediums I cover across seventeenth-century folklore to twenty-first-century culture, which illustrates a 'Gothic holism' demonstrative of the Gothic's pervasion, but also how the Gothic becomes an accepted mode of expression to convey the reality of rural life. Kelly Hurley rejects the idea that the Gothic genre 're-emerges at different historical moments' to represent social anxieties and taboos of that particular time, because 'then nearly any text that treats social transgression may be understood as Gothic, rendering the category meaningless.'[28] Despite this, Hurley asserts that criticism maintains an 'understanding of Gothic as a transhistorical genre', even though its plot, settings and 'social

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[27] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850),* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 52, 1, 306. Subsequent references to this text will appear in parentheses following the quotation.
[28] Kelly Hurley, 'British Gothic Fiction, 1885-1930', *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. by Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.193.

transgressions may change from one era to another […] the Gothic still shows a fascination with extreme behaviours and derangements of human subjectivity'.[29] Rather than seeing Cumbrian Gothic as fashionable, something that periodically rears its head, I argue that this regional Gothic has long been present. In contemporary culture, Gothic stylisation has become increasingly popular, but this is not simply an opportunistic 're-emergence' of the Gothic to express ever-changing 'social transgressions'; Cumbrian Gothic communicates a sustained history of rural, ecological and social issues that are particular to the lived experience of rural regions and specifically to this area. I suggest the ascension of tourism in the region has exacerbated such traumas and tensions, which have persisted and become heightened in present-day Cumbria.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted many unsettling tensions within Cumbria, particularly relating to exacerbating xenophobia that some locals harbour towards outsiders. Resentment has escalated in relation to the unknown impact of untenable tourist numbers on the ecology and whether the environment can support increasing human interaction. After the first lockdown in 2020 lifted, there was an insurgence of national tourism referred to as the 'lockdown freedom frenzy' in the media. Tourist rates grew exponentially in Cumbria bringing with it 'a new brand of visitor'.[30] This led to a revival of the 2019 'Leave No Trace' campaign, figure-headed by Friends of the Lake District, after tourists blocked roads, started fires, camped illegally, destroyed the landscape, left abhorrent amounts of litter and publicly defecated.[31] Media outlets drew attention to most offenders being first-time visitors as an indirect way of

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[29] Hurley, 'British Gothic Fiction', pp. 193-4.
[30] Yasmin Cooke, 'Leave no trace plea after "lockdown freedom frenzy" in Lake District continues', *Lancs Live* (14 August 2020) <https://www.lancs.live/news/local-news/leave-no-trace-plea-after-18782090>.
[31] 'Coronavirus: Lake District visitors pose "significant problems"', *BBC News* (2 June 2020) *<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-52889903>.*

accounting for their inexperience and misguided behaviour, whilst being careful not to insult Lakeland regulars.

Regardless, this antisocial behaviour continued into the third national lockdown. In the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association's press release dated January 2021, they highlight a frequent observation from recent call-outs pertaining to 'extremely ill-equipped parties', reiterating that 'ice axes and crampons' are absolutely essential.[32] The classist snubbing of this 'new brand' of tourist refers to a particular kind of unwanted visitor, which has resulted in forcible action. At one stage, the road along the eastern shore of Coniston was closed after continuous irresponsible parking rendered it too dangerous to remain as a permissible route.[33] Locals then took it upon themselves to create their own roadblocks and signage denying access to public places.[34] The pandemic arrogated locals with the power to privatise public rights of way, making parts of the Lakes inaccessible. The Cumbrian residents' attempts to reclaim the region and close off its borders to outsiders evokes the *unheimlich*, as verbalised by one Cumbrian local in a letter to *The Mail* who explicitly deters visitors who 'are not welcome. In fact very very unwelcome. Go home!'[35] Concerns about increasing tourism have always been at the forefront of regional anxieties since tourism took off in the nineteenth

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[32] Lake District Search And Mountain Rescue Association – LDSAMRA, 'Press Release – Issue 8 January 2021' (8 January 2021) <https://www.facebook.com/lakedistrictsearchandmountainrescueassociation/photos/pcb.810 0167256736455/8100155866737594/?type=3&theater>.
[33] Catherine Mackinlay, 'Key road near Lake Coniston closed due to persistent poor parking', *Lancs Live* (19 June 2020) <https://www.lancs.live/news/local-news/key-road-near-lake-coniston-18450259>.
[34] Joe Duggan, 'THE LOCK DISTRICT: Lake District locals erect fake signs and roadblocks to keep tourists away from beauty spots as lockdown eases', *The Sun* (19 May 2020) <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11652948/lake-district-locals-lockdown-tourists/>.
[35] Greg Lambert, 'Lake District resident says go home...you're not welcome!', *The Mail* (13 May 2020) <https://www.nwemail.co.uk/opinion/18444546.letter-lake-district-resident-says-go-home-not-welcome/>.

century, as vocalised by Wordsworth in his numerous objections published in the *Morning Post*.[36] In their article entitled 'Covid-19 and Reimagining the Lake District', Karen Lloyd and Charlie Gere compare 8000 visitors in 1865 with 47 million in 2018 and nervously anticipate this number increasing due to its World Heritage status. Their thought-provoking discussion demands a re-narrativisation of the Lake District, declaring 'Not to do so is an act of abandonment in the face of an increasingly uncertain future.'[37]

These tensions have been mirrored in some contemporary representations of Cumbria, which use Gothic techniques to highlight regional issues in ways that not only increase awareness but also demand action in some instances. Ben Wheatley's horror comedy, *Sightseers* (2012), depicts a camping-trip-turned-murder rampage through the Lakes – also shot in Yorkshire and the Peak District – which literalises the horror of tourism and the villainisation of tourists in rural settings. Guillermo Del Toro used Cumberland as inspiration for the setting of Allerdale Hall, a haunted Gothic mansion built atop a clay mine, on the desolate Cumberland moors in his Gothic Romance film, *Crimson Peak* (2015). The film viscerally portrays the impact of industry on nature. The red clay mines' collapse signals the unravelling of the Sharpe family's incestuous and violent past, creating a metaphorical bloodstain on the moors that is both industrial and atavistic, an enmeshing of past barbarism and progressive modernisation. *Wire in the Blood* author, Val McDermid, wrote a Lakeland-based crime novel entitled *Grave Tattoo* (2006), which illustrates a darker side to Romantic-era scholarship and the reckless acquisition of cultural history when a disinterred corpse connected to Wordsworth incites

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[36] William Wordsworth, "To the Editor of the Morning Post", *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, vol. 3, ed. W. J. Owen and J. W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 352-53.

[37] Karen Lloyd and Charlie Gere, 'Covid-19 and Reimagining the Lake District' (2020) <https://www.gold.ac.uk/goldsmiths-press/features/covid-19-and-reimagining-the-lake-district/> [accessed 26 January 2021].

multiple murders in the pursuit of a lost manuscript. Martin Edwards found ample regional inspiration to write an entire crime series called *The Lake District Mysteries* (2004-2015). All of these examples, despite overlaps with various other genres, employ Gothic imagery and techniques to create a specific stylisation of place. I explore contemporary fictional incarnations of Cumbrian Gothic further in my final chapter; however, the preceding chapters demonstrate that these current interests are influenced by a protracted literary history of such representations.

Transhistorical Gothic

I will now outline the etymological and literary history of Gothic as it appertains to Cumbrian Gothic. This is to locate the regional mode within the notoriously multivalent understanding of Gothic, especially in modern culture and criticism. In the fifth century AD, long before the ascension of literary Gothic, the term belonged to a group of people, the northern European 'Goths' who infamously sacked Rome. Gothic literally translates to Gothic people, so it is explicitly an embodied term. This heritage actively encourages criticism to consider the communities that are communicated in Gothic terms, not just literary material. Despite what Catherine Spooner describes as a 'sophisticated culture', she qualifies that the Goths' 'nomadic, tribal existence led them to be presented by subsequent generations as barbaric, primitive peoples who with brute force had overturned the cultural achievements of Roman civilisation.'[38] The inherent difference of the Goths granted them a counter-cultural status as outliers that challenge the status quo, whilst simultaneously imbuing them with properties of identifiable otherness that would later become characteristic literary Gothic conventions. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century antiquarianism identified 'Gothick' as a specifically 'British cultural tradition', championing 'political freedom and progressivism embodied in the

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[38] Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic* (London: Reaktion, 2006) pp. 12-13.

achievements of the Middle Ages'.[39] Beyond being simply anti-classical, the Goths became a positive symbol embodying a patriotic spirit of the 'indigenous identity of Britain that had resisted Roman colonisation.'[40] Thus Gothic originally referred to an alternative social class and culture. It related to a particular group of people that gained notoriety for their triumphant retaliation over the established order and the ideologies associated with that particular place.

The seventeenth and eighteenth-century historians of the Goths had limited knowledge of the Dark Ages, and so the Goth namesake became less about geography and historical specificity and more a metaphor of post-Roman medievalism that connoted the wild and uncivilised. David Punter explains that Gothic then 'stood for' the provincial, 'the archaic, the pagan'; further to this, writers then 'began to make out a case for the importance of these Gothic qualities', stressing that 'primitivism and barbarism possessed a fire, a vigour, a sense of grandeur which was sorely needed in English culture'.[41] Punter's reading of Gothic culture as positive and progressive anticipates some of the arguments I make in my final chapter and conclusion that relate to how these Gothic qualities are once again needed in contemporary culture. The symbolism of the Goths' opposition and overthrow of accepted social structures enables Gothic as a contemporary mode to challenge regional issues that also have global impact, such as ecological crises. Early Goth culture is particularly relevant to regional Gothic research as it demonstrates the inextricability of people, place and lived experience, which is central to my Cumbrian Gothic analysis.

However, in early Gothic fiction the symbolic properties of the Goths inspired authors to reinject their present culture with the terror-inducing vivacity of the past. As Punter proclaims in *The Literature of Terror*, literary Gothic typically denotes a group of 'novels

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[39] Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*, p. 13.
[40] Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic,* pp. 13-14.
[41] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* (New York: Longman, 1996), p. 5.

written between the 1760s and 1820s', which share common characteristics: the terrifying, archaic setting, the supernatural, highly stereotyped characters and perfect techniques of literary suspense'.[42] Understood in this way, Gothic literature is 'the fiction of the haunted castle, of heroines preyed on by unspeakable terrors, of the blackly lowering villain, of ghosts, vampires, monsters and werewolves'.[43] This 'original' literary Gothic has shapeshifted over time and later genres – such as romance, horror and supernatural fiction – borrow this narrative stylisation to various effect. With a growing list of Gothic tropes present in a miscellany of genres, it is imperative to quantify key identifiers of Gothic fiction. Chris Baldick qualifies that

> For the Gothic effect to be attained, a tale should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in a time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration.[44]

In agreement with Baldick, for something to be identified as Gothic it must, at a minimum, present time and space in a stylistic way that produces a physiological affect.

In 1974, Angela Carter authoritatively stated 'We live in Gothic times'.[45] Her much-quoted adage does not just apply contemporaneously, but highlights the temporality that classifies Gothic fiction. Carter's statement resonates with a much earlier sentiment made by Clara Reeve in her preface to *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (1777), which acknowledges that her subtitle is a reflection of the 'picture of Gothic times and manners' that

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[42] Punter, *Literature of Terror,* p. 1.

[43] Punter, *Literature of Terror*, p. 1.

[44] Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. xix.

[45] Angela Carter, *Fireworks: Nine Profane Pieces* (London: Quartet Books, 1974), p. 122.

her novel depicts.[46] As Townshend observes in *Gothic Antiquity,* when Walpole added 'A Gothic Story' as a subtitle to the second edition of *Otranto* he did so as a 'historical marker of the fiction's purported origins'.[47] Both Walpole and Reeves employ 'Gothic' temporally, which refers to a certain stylistic envisioning of the past rather than a specific period.

Not only does Gothic represent a perception of the past, but it can also be applied spatially to interpret certain landscapes in similar terms. I refer extensively to Robert Mighall's historicist study entitled *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction,* as its place-based application of Gothic criticism was the first of its kind and is hugely influential in my research. Mighall argues that 'the Gothic, at its emergence and in its development through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, testifies to a concern with the historical past, and adopts a number of rhetorical and textual strategies to locate the past and represent its perceived iniquities, terrors, and survivals'.[48] Mighall reaffirms the importance of temporality, but he crucially distinguishes that literary devices are designed to '*locate* the past', outlining the significance of spatially mapping Gothic literature and our criticism of it. Mighall unequivocally states that 'The "Gothic" by definition is about history and geography', alluding again to the aforementioned Goth namesake.[49] Like Townshend, Mighall's case study points out that *Otranto* is 'Gothic' because of its medieval setting; however, Radcliffe, Lewis and Maturin's novels are not set in the Middle Ages but 'derive their "Gothicity" predominantly from the fact that the principal events take place in Catholic countries'.[50] Townshend reiterates that 'Gothic' is used 'as a category of historical fiction, but was by no means solely restricted to, its supernatural

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[46] Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (1778)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5182/5182-h/5182-h.htm> [accessed 12 March 2019].
[47] Dale Townshend, *Gothic Antiquity History, Romance, and the Architectural Imagination, 1760-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 9.
[48] Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. xiv.
[49] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. xiv.
[50] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. xvi.

contents'.[51] These iconic examples of literature highlight the central importance of both history and geography in the Gothic tradition offering consistency and coherency to an inherently discursive mode.

The early development of literary Gothic witnesses a geographical relocation from the Germanic North to the Latin South. Mighall refers to Sir Walter Scott's commentary on Radcliffe's southern Catholic settings, which abound in 'ruined monuments of antiquity, and where feudal tyranny and Catholic superstition still continue to exercise their sway'.[52] According to Scott, these are present-day locations ingrained with the past. He further adds, 'these circumstances are skilfully selected, to give probability to events which could not, without great violation of truth, be represented as having taken place in England'.[53] Scott identifies that the conditions in these locations have been 'skilfully selected' to intentionally render the events of Gothic narratives realistically plausible not just improbable fantasy. The Protestant perception of Catholic spaces summons conditions in which supernaturalism is realistic. Mighall argues that Scott's perception perpetuates a notion of these places as 'still Feudal' engaging with pejorative discourses that utilise 'Gothic' as an indicator of outdatedness and regression, thus spatialising history.[54]

The mobilisation of Gothic to represent a multitude of different geographies grouped by their religious identity, Mighall argues, highlights that 'a cultural and semantic reversal has taken place'.[55] Consequently 'Gothic', which 'originally denoted to the Classical mind Germanic uncouthness and unreason, came to be associated with the Latin South, which from the Protestant perspective was uncivilized, unenlightened, and regressive'.[56] Mighall notes that

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[51] Townshend, *Gothic Antiquity*, p. 9.
[52] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. xvi.
[53] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. xvi.
[54] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. xvii.
[55] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. xvii.
[56] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. xvii.

this evolution continues as 'Gothic settings change—from Naples in the thirteenth century, to Madrid in the late eighteenth, or even to London in the nineteenth century'.[57] Mighall's historical mapping of Gothic settings demonstrates how spaces are historically contingent. However, he proposes that Gothic settings arrive in England in the nineteenth century, emphasising the particularity of the Gothic's emergence *'even'* in London. Scott argued that the events like those that occur in Radcliffe's novels would not be at all plausible in England. Yet, *Bleak House* (1852), *The Mysteries of London* (1845) and *Dracula* (1897) would later disprove Scott and bring the Gothic not just to England, but into the beating heart of the culturally and socially progressive metropolis. Using materials that predate even these examples, this thesis demonstrates that the Gothic was already present within England's borders, in the rural region of Cumbria. Furthermore, as my first chapter argues, this regional Gothic was fostered by the Mother of Gothic herself – Ann Radcliffe.

Victorian regional writing flourished in the nineteenth century and influenced Gothic writers to reposition their Mediterranean settings to England's 'colonial fringes', recognised by Jarlath Killeen as 'potent sources of horror for the English imagination'.[58] Sustained studies have so far focused on the 'Gothic nationalisms' of Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and have neglected to acknowledge the significance of regional English landscapes.[59] However, awareness of more localized Gothics is increasing, signaled by the publication of *Gothic Britain: Dark Places in the Provinces and Margins of the British Isles* (2018)*,* a collection of regional Gothic essays edited by William Hughes and Ruth Heholt. Since its publication

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[57] Mighall, p. xviii.

[58] Jarlath Killeen, *Gothic Literature 1825-1914,* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 91.

[59] see Kirsty Macdonald, '"This Desolate and Appalling Landscape": The Journey North in Contemporary Scottish Gothic', *Gothic Studies*, 13.2 (2011); Jarlath Killeen, *The Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction: History, Origins, Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Jane Aaron, *Welsh Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013).

Cornwall has become of particular critical interest, which is affirmed by the recently published *Cornwall as Strange Fiction or Gothic Kernow* by Ruth Heholt and Tanya Krzywinska and Joan Passey's forthcoming *Cornish Gothic*. [60] Although, Cornwall is more akin to the nations of Scotland and Wales than regional Cumbria because it has its own native language - not just a dialect or colloquialisms - and it has a national separatist movement that bolsters its independence from Britain. Killeen defines regional Gothic in terms of the 'Gothic novel of the regions, which poses a pathological account of the breakdown of identity and the collapse of personal and national integrity in the encounter with otherness'.[61]

Before I explore regional Gothic in more depth, it is necessary for me to explain why I have defined my research as Cumbrian Gothic, especially because Cumbria did not exist as a county until its naming in 1974. During Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's period of writing, the region was known as the Lake Counties, or Lakeland, consisting of Westmoreland, Cumberland and Lancashire north of the sands. When I analyse their respective works and the folklore in chapter two, I am careful to use the historically accurate place names that the texts refer to. However, I have consciously chosen to use Cumbria when defining the mode. This is because I am taking a presentist approach that retrospectively historicises the cultural foundations of contemporary examples of Cumbrian Gothic. Furthermore, it was not appropriate to coin a Lake District Gothic, because, although it is sometimes thought of as synonymous with the entirety of Cumbria, the Lake District National Park, named in 1951, only refers to a selective part of the region.

The peripheral position of Cumbria in the north-western corner of England geographically distances the region; combine this with the mountainous topography that

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[60] See Ruth Heholt and Tanya Krzywinska, *Cornwall as Strange Fiction or Gothic Kernow* (London; Anthem Press, 2022). Passey's *Cornish Gothic* is being published by University of Wales Press later in 2022.
[61] Killeen, *Gothic Literature,* p. 94.

encircles it and it appears as its own self-contained space. Furthermore, its borderland position neighbouring both Scotland and the Irish Sea positions it in close proximity with renowned locations of regional otherness that are traditionally perceived as a threat to the home nation. Historically, this rendered Cumbria susceptible to invasions, so it is a legitimate site of violent insurgence susceptible to the usurpation of England's others. Culturally, Cumbria has an affinity with its Celtic and Gaelic neighbours that are renowned for their affiliation with myth, magic and the foundations of Folk Horror. Moreover, regional Gothic writing offers an opportunity to reclaim aspects of English identity that have been culturally suppressed and fictionally relocated to foreign settings. Despite 'a pathological fear of the regional Other', Killeen illustrates that 'the Gothic is infected by a desire for the Other disallowed within conventional culture'.[62] This desire to seek out England's inherent otherness and reveal its innate Gothic practices belies its literary history, as exemplified by Hughes in his introduction to *Gothic Britain*. At first glance, his opening appears uninspired by stereotypically beginning with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which marks the ascension of literary Gothic and establishes the conventions of foreign feudalism in Catholic countries. However, Hughes draws particular attention to the 'overlooked' aspect of the Preface that locates the manuscript in 'the library of an explicitly Catholic family in the North of England'.[63] He argues that British provincial cultural practices enabled the emergence of the first Gothic novel and then develops this argument into an allegory for regional Gothic approaches. Hughes' reasoning encourages readers and scholars to pay close attention to spaces, places, locations and settings in canonical texts and to investigate overshadowed regional literature. He argues that this renewed attention to regional peculiarities unearths enlightening contributions to Gothic criticism that have previously gone amiss. This aligns with Punter's earlier assertion

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[62] Killeen, *Gothic Literature,* p. 94.
[63] Hughes and Heholt, *Gothic Britain,* p. 5.

that the provincial, archaic and pagan aspects of Gothic, which abound in rural regions, are desirable qualities for reanimating English culture. Thus, Gothic literature and regional criticism complement each other in their endeavour to elucidate understudied and overlooked areas of the nation, provincial practices and native identities. However, this re-building and re-narrativisation of nation, inclusive of its provincial parts, is another construct. Throughout my thesis, I evaluate who benefits from this 'reclamation': whether it better represents the region in its suggestion of a kind of Gothic realism, or if it reproduces another degree of romanticising Cumbrian culture by Gothicising local practices, like Dickens's description of his Cumbrian guide who by habitually placing a stone on a cairn is instead performing an 'incantation' with the 'gesture of a magician adding an ingredient to a cauldron in full bubble.'[64]

Defining Cumbrian Gothic

Whilst there is a shared language in regional Gothic literature, I make the case for a specifically Cumbrian Gothic that is unique to this area: spatially, socially and culturally. Whilst *Gothic Britain* is significant as the first substantial collection to acknowledge regional Gothic criticism, it lacks a definition of regional Gothic that could tie the insightful, but various, essays together. Without this definition, regional Gothic studies can often lose their spatial focus and analyse literature just because it is set in a particular area without any real consideration for the unique influences its location has. What makes Cumbria Gothic is its interaction with time and space, which in Townshend's introduction to *The Gothic World* he singles out as 'crucial elements' of a 'Gothic aesthetic'.[65] As I have already shown, both early and contemporary representations of Cumbria fixate on its temporality. In response to criticism of the over-application of the Gothic, Townshend cites Baldick's previously mentioned quotation that

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[64] Dickens, *Lazy Tour*, p. 11.
[65] Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend, *The Gothic World* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), pp. xl-xli.

locates the Gothic effect in the intersection between time and space. It is at this juncture between past horrors and physical entrapment that the Gothic presides. Furthermore, the cooperation between space and time mutually produces the 'Gothic effect' and 'sickening descent', which refers to the emotional and physiological affectiveness of the genre on the protagonist, reader, and/or viewer.

However, Townshend perceives the subjectivity of emotional responses to be a limitation that is not critically constructive given the vagaries of Gothic fiction. In response, Townshend applies Mikhail Bakhtin's theorisation of the 'chronotope', a term borrowed from Einstein that literally translates to space-time.[66] Bakhtin classifies genres by how corresponding literature responds to and organises time and space. Bakhtin refers to chivalric romance as 'a miraculous world in adventure-time', which Townshend interprets as the 'magic unreadable, unstable nature of the romance world' and 'the numerous temporal interruptions, sudden occurrences and short, sequential adventures into which time in medieval romance is often divided'.[67] However, Townshend argues that it is Bakhtin's particular consideration of the 'Gothic chronotope' that is especially useful.[68] Bakhtin's main point of reference is the Gothic castle, which is infused with the historical past evidenced by the historical figures that lived there and accentuated by the visible relics of history that abound in the weapons, furnishings and ancestral portraits. Bakhtin declares, 'It is this quality that gives rise to the specific kind of narrative inherent in castles and that is then worked out in Gothic novels'.[69] Townshend summarises that the 'ruined Gothic pile is, itself, the spatial embodiment of historical time' and so adapts Bakhtin's earlier statement to coin Gothic fiction as 'adventure-

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[66] Byron and Townshend, *The Gothic World*, p. xli.
[67] Byron and Townshend, *The Gothic World*, p. xli.
[68] Byron and Townshend, *The Gothic World,* p. xli.
[69] Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: notes toward a historical poetics', *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. M. Holquist and C. Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 246.

time in Gothic architectural space'.[70] The transgressive twists and turns are organised and played out within the temporal spaces of labyrinths, dungeons, castles and monasteries. Townshend thus produces a working definition that identifies the oeuvres of Radcliffe, Lewis, and Walpole as Gothic 'because they all give expression to the chronotope of "adventure-time in Gothic architectural space"'.[71]

Whilst I apply this chronotopic description to Radcliffe's representation of Lakeland ruins, Bakhtin's definition is limited to architectural spaces that cannot represent rural Gothic fully. Townshend responds to this limitation by asserting that its 'applicability far exceeds the well-known fictions of the early tradition'.[72] *Frankenstein*, he argues, reconfigures the Gothic chronotope as the 'spectacle of the monstrous body' that inspired further 'romance-fuelled adventures of deformed and Othered bodies'.[73] Furthermore, Townshend identifies that by the Victorian era these architectural underpinnings had become more spacious, displaying a miscellany of monstrous bodies that negotiate 'perverse adventure-time in urban space'.[74] What Townshend's introduction to Gothic chronotopes highlights is the broad scope of this critical vocabulary that can include Gothic's vagaries, whilst still maintaining clarity and specificity by its centralisation on the organisation of space-time.

I propose that Cumbrian Gothic is its own unique chronotope best described as 'adventure-time in sublime space'. This particular mode stages similar transgressive twists and turns iconic to the early Gothic literature Townshend identifies, but within the sublime topography of the rural wilderness that inspires alternative expressions of the Gothic. This thesis uses Cumbria as a case study for the rural Gothic chronotope. Its provincial personality

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[70] Byron and Townshend, *The Gothic World*, p. xlii.
[71] Byron and Townshend, *The Gothic World*, p. xliii.
[72] Byron and Townshend, *The Gothic World*, p. xliii.
[73] Byron and Townshend, *The Gothic World*, p. xliii.
[74] Byron and Townshend, *The Gothic World*, p. xliii.

lends a uniqueness to the Gothic representation of this region. Like Bakhtin's Gothic castle, Lakeland is infused with its own self-contained sense of history and strong affiliation with a stylised past. It is a space imbued with time, which finds expression in its rich intertextuality that is permeated with folklore, and its people are perceived as living a past way of life. Its sublime topography is a persistent reminder of the earth's formation; its various ruins echo bygone civilisations and ideologies forcefully removed or overturned. The prevalence of the natural wilderness pulls towards primal origins rather than the anthropocentric progressiveness of modern societies. The centuries of literature that my thesis explores depict a multitude of unique and individual expressions of Gothic; however, there are key elements that constitute a specifically Cumbrian Gothic: the prevalence of the sublime; its diverse folkloric past and its synonymy with wilderness. Of course many other rural Gothics contain these elements, so I will now explain exactly how these characteristics are uniquely portrayed and combined in Cumbrian Gothic.

The Sublime: Responding to the Landscape

The eighteenth century is responsible for developing a discourse, a 'new language of [landscape] appreciation'.[75] Popular terms in this vocabulary are the sublime, the picturesque and the beautiful. This formed a new terminology to describe the Lakeland landscape that reformulated the public perception of the region. As Collins and Dickens observe in their Lakeland tour, the bookshelves at the inn were populated with 'guide-books to the neighbouring antiquities, and eke the Lake country, in several dry and husky sorts' and drawing

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[75] Christopher Donaldson, Ian N. Gregory and Joanna E. Taylor, 'Locating the Beautiful, Picturesque, Sublime and Majestic: Spatially Analysing the Application of Aesthetic Terminology in Descriptions of the English Lake District', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 56 (2017), p. 43.

books for 'young ladies'.[76] Disregarding the implicit disdain for the outdated early Lakeland travel guides in contrast to their modern version, the two genres of text present gesture towards the compatibility of travel writing and aesthetics in this period, particularly in Cumbria. Their observation also highlights the gendered experiences of the landscape, differentiating between the haptic, experiential masculine travel and the passive voyeurism of feminised artistry, a tension that I explore through Radcliffe's experience as a female tourist in the first chapter. However, prior to this aesthetic movement the Cumbrian topography was considered displeasing, unwelcoming and ugly, estimable for neither touring nor painting. Defoe remarks that Cumbria's snow-capped peaks signalled 'the pleasant part of England was at an end'.[77] The iconic Lakeland fells form both a topographical and symbolic border that severs Cumbria from the national body and differentiates the region as an unpleasant, unwelcoming space. However, by the nineteenth century the language of the sublime and picturesque helped to codify the landscape of the Lakes, making its unruly, scary, rough parts aesthetically acceptable.

Landscape aesthetics is not simply visual; it is an embodied practice that mediates between the intertextual landscape (aspects of place that have fictional associations which embellish their physical properties) and the lived experience that entices visitors to the Lakes and promotes a more profound engagement with place. Simon Bainbridge argues that these aesthetic categories 'provided frameworks for the creation and reception of artistic and literary works while also shaping the way in which individuals responded to the world around them'.[78] The principal text responsible for creating this aesthetic engagement with place and objects is

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[76] Dickens, *Lazy Tour*, p. 7.

[77] Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain,* 4th edn, 3rd vol (London: 1748), p. 233.

[78] Simon Bainbridge, *Romanticism: A Sourcebook*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) p. 171.

Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* which distinguishes between the beautiful and the sublime as things that are small, round and quaint and that which is grand, awe-inspiring and obscure. As the Kantian sublime did not become influential in Britain until later, it is not relevant to Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's experiences of place that undoubtedly engage with Burke. Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* (1778), in conjunction with the works of Uvedale Price, Richard Payne Knight and William Gilpin, formulated the picturesque that pertains to matters which are rough, irregular and rustic. Simon Bainbridge accredits the picturesque with a pastoral patriotism, inspiring ways of 'appreciating the British landscape' and re-evaluating domestic rural landscapes instead of a preoccupation with grandiose Alpine imagery.[79]

Whilst the picturesque is a particularly British tradition, the pre-eminence of the sublime in the writings throughout my thesis demonstrate an indebtedness to this aesthetic. Admittedly, early encounters with the sublime took place in the Alps on the Grand Tour, but Burke's qualification diversified sublime encounters so that they could be emulated in the mountain scenery of 'the Lake District [and in] the reading of contemporary Gothic novels or the great sublime writers of the past'.[80] In addition, the restrictions on Continental travel inspired tourists to locate the sublime in more local landscapes. My first chapter explores Radcliffe's journey through Lakeland ruins and forests, amplified by intertextual allusions to Milton and Shakespeare that summon supernatural and sublime connotations, which present Cumbria as a synecdoche of the topographical sublime. The gloom of the forests, the vastness of its coastlines, its infinite summit views, the grandeur of its ridgelines, the roughness of its peaks, the obscure depths of the bodies of water and the power wielded by the omnipotence of nature is the very epitome of the Burkean sublime.

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[79] Bainbridge, *Romanticism*, p. 173.
[80] Bainbridge, *Romanticism*, p. 172.

The manifestation of Cumbria as a sublime space imbues place with a deeply affective and emotively engaging experience, which inspires Gothic narrativization primarily because of the symbiosis of pleasure and pain that is synonymous with terror. Building on Longinus' original theorisation of the sublime, John Dennis affirms in 1704, 'ideas producing terror contribute extremely to the sublime'.[81] These encounters frequently occur in nature, which Dennis personally confirms after an Alpine ascent in 1688 that stirred 'different emotions' in him, specifically 'a delightful Horrour, a terrible Joy, and at the same time, that I was infinitely pleas'd, I trembl'd'.[82] Joseph Addison's and Dennis's shared experiences of 'a pleasing kind of horrour' prefigures Burke's paradoxical exploration of 'delightful horror' and 'tranquillity tinged with terror'.[83] There are certain qualities that are deemed essential for something to constitute as a sublime experience, which conjures its characteristic physical and psychological reaction. Burke declares astonishment is 'the effect of the sublime in its highest degree', when 'all motions are suspended, with some degree of horror', and terror is 'the ruling principle of the sublime'.[84] The Lakeland topography constitutes a sublime space summarised by Defoe who describes the 'terrible aspect' of its 'unpassable Hills', its 'frightful mountains' and 'the great Winander Mere, extending itself like a Sea'.[85] Defoe's description hones in on the prolific mountains and the vastness of Windermere that collectively contribute towards this feeling of dread and terror. Burke qualifies if something is 'terrible' – analogous with 'pain', 'fear' and 'death' – it is also sublime, but only if experienced from a position of safety.[86]

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[81] *Eighteenth-century Critical Essays*, ed. by Scott Elledge, vol. 1 (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), pp. 121–2 and pp. 127–30.
[82] Bainbridge, *Romanticism,* p. 172.
[83] Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: Printed for J. Dodsley, 1787), pp. 95-97.
[84] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, pp. 95-97.
[85] Defoe, *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain,* p. 233.
[86] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, p. 96.

The coexistence of pain and pleasure codified by the language of terror and horror is further embroiled with a Gothic vocabulary in connection with the unknown. Burke distinguishes 'obscurity' as a 'necessary' property 'To make any thing very terrible'.[87] He implores the reader to consider 'how greatly night adds to our dread…and how much the notions of ghosts and goblins, of which none can form clear ideas, affect minds which give credit to the popular tales concerning such sorts of beings'.[88] It is unsurprising, when Burke himself alludes to the plausibility of the supernatural reified by the sublime, that Gothic literature and the sublime are so compatible. Burke's identification of the 'highest degree', 'the ruling principle', and a 'necessary' characteristic of the sublime employ a lexicon of terror and horror, which explicitly engages with Radcliffe's Gothic glossary that she would come to philosophise in 'On the Supernatural in Poetry'. The same can be said for Wordsworth, whose philosophical extract entitled *The Sublime and the Beautiful* (1811-12) demonstrates the similarity between his own aesthetic appreciation of the landscape and Burke's understanding. Like Burke, Wordsworth connects sublimity with terror (pain, fear, danger), which is conducive to a point until fear becomes 'strained' and the 'sensation is destroyed'.[89]

In contrast to Wordsworth's restraint, Anna Laetitia Aikin writes in 'On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror' that 'the more wild, fanciful, and extraordinary are the circumstances of a scene of horror, the more pleasure we receive from it'.[90] Wordsworth and Aikin's differences of opinion likely relate to their differing experiences of the sublime. One of which is physical, whereby real experiences of the sublime are considered more powerful as the danger is palpably present. The other is fictional, so the threat is only as great as the

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[87] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, p. 99.
[88] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, p. 99.
[89] William Wordsworth*, Selected Prose* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1988), p. 283.
[90] John and Anna Laetitia Aikin, *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1773), p. 121.

imagination. Aikin explains that the 'enchantments' of 'The old Gothic romance and the Eastern tale', despite how 'a refined critic may censure them as absurd and extravagant', still have 'a most powerful influence on the mind'.[91] Dennis provides further clarification on sublime objects:

> let us lay before the reader the several ideas which are capable of producing this enthusiastic terror, which seem to me to be those which follow: viz., gods, demons, hell, spirits and souls of men, miracles, prodigies, enchantments, witchcrafts, thunder, tempests, raging seas, inundations, torrents, earthquakes, volcanoes, monsters, serpents, lions, tigers, fire, war, pestilence, famine, etc.[92]

Interestingly, Dennis's list of terrifying things gives equal attention to supernatural and natural objects. He highlights that the mythical and magical is as capable of producing terror as animals, natural disasters and human suffering. This specific and potent combination of terror finds expression in the Cumbrian literature I analyse, which interlinks the natural environment and Gothic narrativisation.

Folklore: Reading the Landscape

The construction of Gothic Cumbria takes immediate inspiration from the natural landscape, but it is also intrinsically linked to intertextual and imaginative responses to its people and place. Cumbria's folklore makes the Gothic palpably real in its expression of landscape where readers and tourists can encounter and entertain all of Dennis's aforesaid list, where witches, vampires and ghosts are just as menacing as the realities of rural life and what lurks in the wild. In her chapter published in *Gothic Britain*, Catherine Spooner writes that Elizabeth Gaskell's formulation of 'Northern Gothic' manifests place as 'constructed not just through landscape,

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[91] Aikin, *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose*, p. 121.
[92] *Eighteenth-century Critical Essays*, ed. by Scott Elledge, p. 127.

but also through the accumulation of legends and folklore that inform local identity'.[93] Cumbrian Gothic supports this observation by demonstrating the inseparability of landscape, local experience and lore, which is epitomised by the works of Northern antiquarian and topographer William Hutchinson. He begins his *Excursion to the Lakes* (1774) by highlighting the 'regret' he feels when reading the 'descriptions given by travellers of foreign countries, in which their beauties and antiquities were lavishly praised', due to the 'neglect' of equally 'delightful scenes at home'.[94] Like the relocating properties of regional Gothic, Hutchinson too reorients the tourist gaze from international countries onto Britain's own 'monuments of antiquity' and the relics of the 'remotest ages' that memorialise the nation's 'revolutions and history'.[95] Hutchinson more than compensates for the previous literary lack by extensively documenting the Lake Counties, most notably producing an impressive two-volume antiquarian text entitled *The History of the County of Cumberland* (1794). Furthermore, his works also show an appreciation for surrounding Northern counties such as Yorkshire, Northumberland and Scotland, all of which are landscapes that have regional Gothic associations. His topographical and antiquarian interests in these Northern landscapes creatively cross over into his fictional works that find expression in the Gothic tradition. This is exemplified by *The Hermitage* (1772) and a disappointingly unavailable text entitled *A Romance after the manner of The Castle of Otranto,* which nevertheless communicates Walpole's influence via its titular homage.[96] *The Hermitage,* however, depicts the same anti-Catholic, nature-infused and subtle supernaturalism shared by Radcliffe. Like Walpole's

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[93] Catherine Spooner, '"Dark, and cold, and rugged is the North"' Regionalism, Folklore and Elizabeth Gaskell's 'Northern Gothic', *Gothic Britain,* p. 27.

[94] William Hutchinson, *An Excursion to the Lakes, in Westmoreland and Cumberland, August 1773* (London: J. Wilkie, 1774), p. 1.

[95] Hutchinson, *An Excursion to the Lakes*, p. 2.

[96] See John Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1817), p. 424 for Hutchinson's list of known written works.

indebtedness to the North's provincial practices and Radcliffe's imaginative inspiration that is cultivated in her tour of the Lakes, Hutchinson too demonstrates the inseparability of Gothic narratives and Northern topography, specifically the Lakeland landscape and its history that so captivated his life's work.

Cumbria's Gothic history is ingrained in the diversity and abundance of its regional folklore, which originally flourished in the nineteenth century due to antiquarianism then folklorism that is still alive today. Folklore's modern relevance is sustained by local legend Taffy Thomas who was awarded the title of the UK's first Laureate in Storytelling for two years in 2010, acknowledging Cumbria as a region to revitalise folklore in the present era. Thomas is often sighted in Grasmere wearing his 'Tale Coat', a fabulous baroque garment embroidered with scenes from his stories, a living incarnation of Lakeland legends brought to life. This sustained cultural interest in the region's folklore extends back to the nineteenth century, which first inspired the revivification and recovery of the lost voices of Lakeland lore. John Pagen White introduces his Cumbrian folklore collection *Lays and Legends of the English Lake Country* (1873) with a preface that describes the region's protracted history of invasion.[97] The Lake Counties, White proclaims, were 'the ancient inheritance of the Scottish Kings' incorporated into English rule by William, but their geographical alienation subjected the region to perpetual invasion by 'successive Kings of Scotland'.[98] Despite numerous peace settlements over three centuries, White argues that the region was in a state of continual conflict that extended from local antagonisms to war mongering amongst the borders of the two kingdoms. The region's sustained history of violent invasion indelibly marks the landscape with the physical remnants of conflict, thereby exposing the fragility of its borders, a trope that particularly lends itself to Gothic expression.

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[97] John Pagen White, *Lays and Legends of the English Lake Country* (J.R Smith, 1873), p. vii.

[98] White, *Lays and Legends*, p. vii [emphasis added].

The region abounds in a Gothic topography that is physically visible in the vestiges of violence left behind, which is often amplified by the folkloric tales, local legends and historical associations that intertextually inscribe themselves in to place. White writes that evidence of

the old troublous times remain in the dismantled Border Towers, and moated or fortified houses called Peles [...] in the ruins of the conventual retreats; and in the crumbling strongholds of the chiefs, which still retain something of a past existence of the names which even yet cling about their walls, as if the spirits of their former possessors were reluctant to depart entirely from them.[99]

This demonstrates how tangible ruins and crumbling edifices are harbingers of the past that are forever re-animated by their history. Moreover, the reanimation of these decaying structures is relayed in a Gothic register as history becomes a haunting figure. The imagery of reluctant ghosts clinging to the walls animates their presence with an active agency. Their permanence in the present immortalises the past and imbues cultural ruins with an embodied history that demands critical attention and public awareness.

Despite little remaining of Cumbria's violent past, White privileges places that 'are associated forever with images of those illustrious persons whose familiar *haunts* were within the shadows of the hills'.[100] Playing with Burkean obscurity, White positions the Lakeland landscape as playing an active part in shrouding its historical ghosts. He perceives the crumbling remains of the Lakeland landscape, not as dormant or neglected relics of the past, but as spectrally animated structures that are actively haunted by histories infiltrating the present. White's description befits Baldick's aforementioned definition, but it specifically evokes what Townshend calls 'topographical Gothic', which was initially inspired by

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[99] White, *Lays and Legends*, p. x.
[100] White, *Lays and Legends*, p. xi.

eighteenth and nineteenth-century antiquarian and folklore texts.[101] Topographical Gothic departs from fictional castles into real locations and the physical landscape, which moves the Gothic closer to home.[102]

Culture-seeking tourists whose visits White analogises with the 'old Border raids of violence' motivated this renewed interest in the region's history where the summer visitor is 'akin to the moss-trooping Borderer of an earlier time'.[103] These tourist quasi-Borderers scour the vales 'in search of their traditions; and in the pursuit of these have ransacked their annals, plundered their guides, and levied a sort of black-mail upon even casual and anonymous contributors to their history'.[104] White vilifies tourists for invading Cumbria and taking its culture, traditions and history away. This is particularly loaded language that anticipates present-day resentments towards an unwanted type of tourist. However, despite the obvious negative connotations, White credits tourism for catalysing the need to protect, preserve and rediscover local history. His preface concludes that 'to revive these [legends] among their ancient haunts, and to awaken yet another interest in this land of beauty, has been the aim and end of this modern Raid into the valleys of the North'.[105] White uses the same language that he used to describe the tourists in order to analogise his endeavour, suggesting that his 'modern Raid' is an acceptable and necessary one. The difference here is the stress he places on where the legends are re-awakened, again using latent Gothicism to emphasise that these legends are being revived within their haunting ground. One of the questions that I aim to answer throughout this thesis is the implication of who is representing Cumbrian Gothic, as the tension

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[101] See Townshend, 'From "Castles in the Air" to the Topographical Gothic', *Gothic Antiquity*.

[102] I refer to this in more depth in my first chapter in relation to Radcliffe's response to select Lakeland ruins.

[103] Townshend, *Gothic Antiquity*, p. xii.

[104] Townshend, *Gothic Antiquity*, p. xiii.

[105] Townshend, *Gothic Antiquity*, p. xiii.

between local author and inspired visitor produces different narratives, which is particularly exposed in my second chapter in relation to different representations of the same folklore.

The latent Gothic register that emerges in White's retelling of Lakeland lore similarly permeates fellow folklorist Wilson Armistead's *Tales and Legends of the English Lakes* (1891).[106] Armistead's folklore revival is a reactionary response to travel writers whom he feels have cast a 'sacred halo' around the Lake Country.[107] His sacred halo conforms to my earlier argument that the romanticisation of the region both misguides and misrepresents the landscape and its literature, which demonstrates a pattern of Lakeland literary hallowing. Armistead contends that whilst these guidebooks are a useful 'aid' to the traveller most are 'deficient in their allusion to the history and traditions of some of the more remarkable sites of this romantic region'.[108] Like White, Armistead writes in response to this deficiency and argues that local associations attached to certain places heighten our appreciation, but his revelations hint towards darker alternative narratives in the shadow of its 'sacred halo'. He reaffirms this by quoting Wordsworth's 'The Somnambulist': 'holier seems the ground / To him who catches on the gale / The spirit of a mournful tale, / Embodied in the sound'.[109] The folklore ballad recalls the legend of Lady Emma who was sleepwalking around Aira Force when her betrothed knight startled her awake causing her to fall to her death.[110] Not only does Armistead use a lesser-known poem from Wordsworth's collection, deviating from the canonical 'sacred halo', but he aptly chooses one in which folklore plays a central role and where place is a key feature, which are both amplified by Gothic elements that emphasise the macabre, melancholy and

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[106] Wilson Armistead, *Tales and Legends of the English Lakes*, (Simpkin: Marshall, 1891)
[107] Armistead, *Tales and Legends,* p. v.
[108] Armistead's comment is hypocritical considering his chapter on the Calgarth Skulls is an exact replica of West's footnote, p. vi.
[109] Armistead, *Tales and Legends,* p. vi.
[110] William Wordsworth, 'The Somnambulist', *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by William Knight, vol. 7 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1896).

volatility of nature. This choice quotation suggests that literary associations promote a phenomenological experience of place that affects the visitor emotionally and imaginatively.

Armistead's poetry collection re-embodies what Wordsworth's 'Somnambulist' characterises as the semi-spectral, half-formed, fleeting spirits of local tales that haunt locations demanding to be seen and heard. His re-embodiment and resurrection of local lore is both an act of preservation and a political call to action. Armistead writes that the 'spirit of romance is departing', driven away by deforestation, the aquatic and noise disturbance of steamboats and the ploughing and repurposing of land.[111] His concerns anticipate ecocritical issues that directly relate to the impact of tourism, which is reaffirmed by the EcoGothic contemporary literature in my final chapter, the environmental unrest that I allude to in my conclusion and echoed by criticism I cite earlier from Gere for example. Armistead laments 'we are a changed people – and the olden time is truly gone'.[112] The purpose of folklorism has often been identified in terms of the conservation and preservation of people's customs, but the manifestos of these Cumbrian folklorists identify a further purpose stimulated by a reactive urgency that goes beyond passively recording the past.

Armistead repeatedly laments the notion of a departed spirit that his writing attempts to reclaim and White revives the spectres of forgotten histories that haunt the hills. This discourse of resurrection, revival and reanimation spectrally animates the Lakeland landscape and intertwines the interests of folklorism with Gothic stylisation. Peter Ackroyd argues that the antiquarian's resurrection of picturesque ruins 'spawned a living or tangible Gothic.'[113] The written representations of the folkoric figures I discuss in the second chapter resurrect the 'spirit' of these oral narratives attached to places in the Lakes and materialise their being

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[111] Armistead, *Tales and Legends*, p. vii.
[112] Armistead, *Tales and Legends*, p. viii.
[113] Peter Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* (London: Vintage Books, 2004), p. 374.

through the act of writing. These case studies reincarnate the folkloric figures of the past to make monsters of present social outcasts: the vampire is the village lunatic and the revenant skulls are poor and elderly locals. I will evaluate what this representation reveals about nineteenth-century Cumbrian folklore customs within rural and national social politics. My second chapter establishes a pre-Gothic foundation embedded in its folklore, which foregrounds a Gothic history of literary representation in Cumbria, which shatters the 'sacred halo' of canonised Lakeland literature. Moreover, each case study explores different facets of rural politics and local identities that culminate in a distinctively regional Gothic produced by the landscape that influenced later literary imaginations.

Cumbrian Gothic: Reading and Writing the Wilderness

The construction of a Cumbrian chronotope – and in much of the language exemplified by Cumbria Tourism, Defoe and Dickens – implies that to travel north is to travel back in time, even to another world, both real and unreal. The retelling of folklore imagines a culture in which Gothic is the real, lived experience of rural life wherein haunting, superstitions and unworldly terror are part of everyday existence. In the case of Elizabeth Gaskell, Spooner argues that she 'implicitly defends what is regarded as overblown and grotesque by the cultured south as realistic by local standards'.[114] This is certainly true in lots of rural representations where the physical distance from urban centres is expressed temporally and ideologically. Spooner summarises that Gaskell 'constructs the north as a fictional space that is simultaneously Gothic and realist'.[115] Radcliffe's influence and the subsequent proliferation of folklore helped to constitute Cumbria as place where Gothic terrors are palpably real, thus amplifying horror by both its physical proximity and fearful plausibility.

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[114] Spooner, '"Dark, and cold, and rugged is the North"', p. 27.
[115] Spooner, '"Dark, and cold, and rugged is the North"', p. 27.

Contemporary Cumbrian literature expands on this idea of Gothic realism by reconsidering the role of monstrosity. Bernice Murphy considers *Yellow Brick Road* (2010) and *Blair Witch Project* (1999) as examples that pivot 'on the desperate fear of losing oneself in the wilderness' and instead show that it is the departure from civilisation that separates the characters from their 'rational selves'.[116] Both films stage a re-characterisation of the evil-lurking wilderness and instead reposition evil within individuals. Murphy then states these characters soon begin to experience fears that are symptomatic of rural Gothic. In American 'rural Gothic', Murphy observes the tendency to veer back to the beginning when imagining the end of human civilisation, which leads fiction to the forests, the 'beginnings of European settlements'.[117] My thesis structurally supports this cyclicality as it begins with Radcliffe and the creation of Cumbrian Gothic that coincides with the popularisation of Lakeland tourism and subsequent folklorism, which then culminates in contemporary literature that have recourse to the past.

Chapter One argues that the creation of Cumbria as a literary landscape preceded the popularisation of Romanticism and the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), and was instead fostered by the Mother of Gothic, Ann Radcliffe. I introduce the chapter by situating Radcliffe's travelogue, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794 Through Holland and the Western frontier of Germany, with a return down the Rhine; to which are* added*, observations during a tour to the lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland* (1795), within the broader context of eighteenth-century tourism, then specifically Lake District and literary tourism, to demonstrate how she produces a counternarrative to the popular tourist construction of the Lakeland landscape. Radcliffe's *Journey* is an incomplete rendition of the Grand Tour that stopped short of Switzerland, so the Cumbrian hills and lakes are a substitute that expose

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[116] Bernice M. Murphy, *The Rural Gothic in American Popular Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 1.
[117] Murphy, *Rural Gothic,* p. 2.

the uncanny nature of domestic tourism, exploring unfamiliar rural landscapes that are so close to home yet ideologically and culturally alien. Her reputation as 'The Great Enchantress' facilitates the transformation of place into an imaginative, intertextual and performative geography, which is juxtaposed by the realist mode of her travelogue and its regional setting that makes Cumbrian Gothic both an internally located terror and palpably real. I argue that Radcliffe's travelogue lays the foundations of the Cumbrian Gothic mode, which establishes a Gothic topography brimming with sublime encounters and historical hauntings that is enriched by her reading and writing of the landscape. Radcliffe draws on pre-Gothic associations, classical authors, romance traditions and regional folklore to create a discursive and preternatural literary landscape overflowing with supernatural, magical and mythical associations. Furthermore, rather than diminish Wordsworth's significance, I create a dialogue between the poet and Radcliffe to demonstrate their shared lived experience of Cumbrian Gothic that is culturally pervasive. I read Wordsworth's 'spots of time' as specific expressions of the Cumbrian Gothic chronotope due to their exact relation to space and time and how they are concerned with particularly haunting memories from the poet's past. My critical comparisons between Radcliffe and Wordsworth demonstrate a shared affinity for the sublime, similar experiences of Gothic affect and representations of Cumbria as a landscape of fear.

Chapter Two aims to establish a Gothic literary tradition that is foregrounded in Cumbrian folklore, demonstrating that this Gothic mode is a natural idiom integral to the local identity and its culture. I firstly provide a historical overview of Cumbrian folklore and folklorism, before I consider two spatially-specific case studies: the Croglin vampire and the Screaming Skulls of Calgarth. Augustus Hare's long-forgotten autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1896-1900), records what I argue is the first indigenous vampire story in the British Isles. In 1874, Hare records Captain Fisher's recitation of a family legend regarding a vampire that terrorised the Croglin community on the northernmost border of the Lake District. Later

investigations have traced its origins to the late seventeenth century, prior to the relaying of Eastern European vampire folklore to Britain. The disparity between the date from which the creature emanates and the period of its written publication results in an intriguing temporal and ideological conflict whereby folkloric monstrosity violently invades Victorian modernity. The vampire's victim repeatedly asserts that the creature is an escaped lunatic, mirroring the pattern of Victorian psychiatry that converted vampirism into sickness. However, this rationalisation is often not achieved in fiction and especially not in Cumbria. My regional research establishes Cumbrian psychiatry as a science informed by superstition which demonises the mentally ill. This demonization of the vampiric lunatic is actively produced by psychogeographical factors and is a materialisation not only of fears concerned with the incurability of madness, the abuses of asylums, and the failure to confine and control lunacy, but as a direct result of treatment at the local asylum just thirteen miles from the legend's setting. Ironically, the period that profited the most from insanity effectively silenced the mad and physically removed them from society, simultaneously igniting a cultural interest in the very thing they tried to suppress. In doing so, the Cumbrian mad doctor's fanaticism creates the impression of a region infected with insanity, resulting in the gothicisation of madness as a deviant monstrosity.

The far more widely documented legend of the Calgarth Skulls provides a polyphony of narratorial voices and discursive re-telling. The folklore first appears in two guidebooks, Thomas West's third edition of his *Guide to the Lakes* (1784) and James Clarke's *Survey of the Lakes* (1787), which stylise their accounts with themes of divergence and detour that suggestively posit Cumbrian Gothic folklore as a touristic counternarrative. Their publication coincides with the growing popularity of both Gothic fiction and Cumbria tourism, so I consider the ways in which these particular writers draw on the region's intrinsic Gothic qualities and pre-existing narratives for touristic appeal. I criticise such accounts for dredging Cumbrian culture for fashionable purposes, which misrepresents local lore and selectively

erases regional identity. Alexander Gibson's *Folk-speech Tales & Rhymes of Cumberland* (1864) responds to this erasure by giving voice to the marginal figures of the skulls and revelling in the region's Gothic qualities, rather than suppressing or disavowing them. Gibson's dialect poem positions the screaming skulls as the victims of the typically heroic Philipson family. This subversion exemplifies a kind of heroic Gothic, whereby the skulls arrogate the qualities of their gothicisation to empower themselves in death. From voiceless victim to justified villain, it suggests a cultural reversal in which Cumbrian locals can reclaim and reorient their appropriated narratives.

Chapter Three examines contemporary examples of Cumbrian Gothic, which utilise this alternative mode and literary heritage to re-frame the romanticised notion of returning to nature. I engage with environmentalism and ecocritical discourses that demonstrate how nature has become 'unnatural'. It is now no longer enough to return to nature; we must travel further back to the wilderness. I argue that the Cumbrian Gothic mode enables literature to reveal what has been repressed by conventional ecocriticism and sustained romanticisation, thus becoming constructive tools for environmental awareness on a regional, national and global level. Two novels that encapsulate both the positive and problematic processes of re-wilding are Sarah Hall's *Wolf Border* (2015) and Benjamin Myers' *Beastings* (2014). These texts build on the heroic Gothic of the Calgarth Skulls and Radcliffe's female travel writing by recentralising marginal figures and depicting female heroines who embrace their alterity and wildness. Their portrayals of re-wilding suggest stepping away from anthropocentric ecologies and the cultural landscape, instead embracing the region's history of wilderness, incivility and animalism. They self-consciously critique conventional markers of monstrosity; Hall represents female lycanthropy as the fear of sensual wild women, whilst Myers conveys the fear of wild children by examining medical and social models of disability in maladaptive environments. As Cumbria propels itself towards untenable tourist numbers, for reasons I alluded to earlier,

contemporary Cumbrian literature investigates the impact of the changing landscape, the death of nature and how the region subversively suggests we return to the Gothicised past in order to survive and flee from the destruction of modernity and villainous people, not monsters. In Cumbrian Gothic literature, the fear is no longer the past returning to haunt us, but that we cannot go back.

CHAPTER ONE

Radcliffe Country: Cumbria's Gothic Topography

The prevalence of the Gothic mode in contemporary Cumbrian fiction and tourism can be traced back to what I identify as a transitional period during the late eighteenth century when, prior to the popularisation of the Lake Poets, Ann Radcliffe influenced the imagination of Lakeland visitors. She visited Cumbria as a literary celebrity in 1794, later publishing her travels as *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794 Through Holland and the Western frontier of Germany, with a return down the Rhine; to which are added, observations during a tour to the lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland* (1795).[118] Radcliffe's travelogue would prove highly influential for Cumbrian tourism, mountaineering and future travel writers; the heroine of James Plumptre's Radcliffean parody, *The Lakers* (1798), threatens to write a Gothic novel called "The Horrors of the Hermitage" set on Derwentwater, starring a 'mysterious monk of Borrowdale'.[119] In Radcliffe's *Observations*, she combines the techniques of her Gothic fiction with her lived experience as a Cumbrian tourist. She catalyses the intrinsic Gothic properties already present in the Lakeland landscape with intertextual and imagined properties of other mountainscapes and enchanted grounds. Before the region became thought

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[118] Her travelogue was originally published as a luxury volume before its second edition publication as two. I will be referring to the following edition throughout; Ann Radcliffe, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794 Through Holland and the Western frontier of Germany, with a return down the Rhine; to which are* added*, observations during a tour to the lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland,* vol I & II, 2nd ed. (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1795). I abbreviate the title of the travelogue in its entirety to *Journey,* but when referring to her Lakeland section alone I will use the abbreviation of *Observations*. All references to these texts will appear in parentheses following the quotation.

[119] James Plumptre, *The Lakers: A Comic Opera* (London: printed for W. Clarke, 1798), available: https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0112870491/ECCO?u=unilanc&sid=bookmark-ECCO&xid=e0a71478&pg=31 [accessed 15 May 2019].

of predominantly as 'Wordsworthshire', I illustrate that the literary landscape was also crafted by Radcliffe on Gothic foundations.

Radcliffe's travelogue arises from the era of sublime mountaineering and uncanny explorations of the national body, and is shaped by antiquarian interests in regional folklore, provincial practices and superstitious customs. In her depiction of Cumbria, Radcliffe recognises the enchanted ground of the provincial, eliding it with other sublime spaces. At the same time, she preserves the region's rural personality to offer a specifically Cumbrian Gothic. In this chapter, I outline the key topographical features of Cumbrian Gothic foregrounded by Radcliffe's travelogue. The central feature of the natural environment is the Cumbrian mountainscape, which is a powerful source of the sublime. I explore how the semantics of sublimity are used to depict the most iconic feature of the Lakeland landscape as monstrous and terrifying. The mountains become synonymous with fear and danger, harbingers of death and destruction, yet are simultaneously pleasurable when reflected on from a position of safety. Central to the cultural landscape, I argue, are ruins that proliferate across the region and produce a profoundly Gothic response to place. Their timeworn structures are archetypally anachronistic, materialising the presence of the past with their historic and folkloric associations, real and imagined, that inspire supernatural, magical and mythical invention.

However, one of the aims of this thesis is to de-homogenise Cumbrian culture by recognising the presence and prevalence of the Gothic mode throughout its literary history. Therefore, in order to assert that the literary landscape of Cumbria was built on more than Romanticism, I show how the Gothic mode was utilised in Wordsworth's representations of the Lakeland landscape. Robert Miles dedicates a chapter to 'Gothic Wordsworth' in his *Romantic Misfits*, which first encouraged me to read Wordsworth's poetry as expressions of regional Gothic.[120] Whilst Miles's exemplary criticism demonstrates the fluidity of Romantic

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[120] Robert Miles, *Romantic Misfits* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008)

and Gothic modes in the poet's work, the importance of his argument lies in the way he shows how Wordsworth's oeuvre engages extensively with popular conventions of Gothic literature. Miles's broad approach is necessary for the undertakings of his project, but my regional research qualifies a particularly Cumbrian Gothic Wordsworth. I principally focus on the poet's response to the Lakeland landscape, particularly in his 'spots of time' that feature in *The Prelude.* Analysing Radcliffe and Wordsworth comparatively reveals a similar aesthetic, affect and imagination of Cumbria that is predicated on the coexistence of beauty and fear. Their construction of a sublime space recognises the terror that the natural and cultural landscape intrinsically and creatively inspires.

Romanticism and Gothic: Modes of Representing the Region

Taylor Swift's Covid-19 lockdown album *Folklore* (2020) features 'The Lakes', a lyrical longing for the Lake District inspired by her holidays to the national park. She solemnly sings, 'take me to the place where all the poets went to die'.[121] Whilst there are many reasons to visit the Lakes, this is an unconventional one – not least because only Wordsworth of the Lake Poets actually died in Cumbria, and he died of old age decades after he moved there permanently. Its macabre tone is at odds with the melodic folksong and the appearance of Swift's lived experience on holiday when she visited the Beatrix Potter Museum and the honeypot village of Bowness.[122] The landscape of 'The Lakes' becomes the embodiment of emotive and creative expression; she declares, 'Those Windermere peaks look like a perfect place to cry'.[123] The song's melancholia, sublimity, aesthetics and reliance on the literary past express key

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[121] Taylor Swift, 'The Lakes', *Folklore* (Republic, 2020).
[122] The World of Beatrix Potter, 'Harry Styles and Taylor Swift visit our shop!' (2012) <https://www.hop-skip-jump.com/news/harry-styles-and-taylor-swift-visit-our-shop/> [accessed January 2021].
[123] Swift, 'The Lakes'.

characteristics of Cumbrian Gothic that can be identified in both Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's writing on the Lake District that I explore further in this chapter.

Swift's representation of the region in 'The Lakes' derives its inspiration from Gothic and Romantic modes. She recalls visiting Wordsworth's grave – what began as a nineteenth-century literary tourist tradition, but could now be considered as dark, or specifically, thanatourism – and admiring the poet who 'just went away' and 'kept writing'.[124] This admiration is likely amplified by her own isolation and inability to escape during lockdown, so writing 'The Lakes' enables her to go 'there in my head'.[125] As I will explore later in this chapter, this is a very Wordsworthian form of creative escapism that collapses imagination and reality. In an interview on *Disney Plus*, she contextualises 'The Lakes' as an indulgence of her 'cottage backup plan', but says it is really 'about relating to people one hundred years ago', despite its nineteenth-century inspiration.[126] The singer's anachronistic setting is less about literary specificity and is more concerned with recreating an imaginative geography that sentimentalises the natural landscape as a place for creative injection, a cure for societal alienation and a nostalgic respite from modernity.

Whilst Swift is explicit about the inspiration of Romanticism – directly alluding to Wordsworth in a pun that conjectures, 'tell me what are my words worth' – there is a latent Gothic register throughout.[127] The lyrics are characterised by discomfiting, emotional excess, which is encapsulated by the Ophelia-esque imagery of her bathing in 'cliffside pools' accompanied by her 'calamitous love and insurmountable grief'.[128] The combination of ascent

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[124] Taylor Swift, *Folklore: The Long Pond Studio Sessions* (Disney Plus, 2020)

[125] Rebecca Lockwood, 'Taylor Swift's love for the Lake District as she re-records Red', *LancsLive* (13 November 2021) <https://www.lancs.live/news/local-news/taylor-swifts-love-lake-district-22158747> [accessed Feb 2021]

[126] Swift, *Long Pond Studio Sessions*.

[127] Swift, 'The Lakes'.

[128] Swift, 'The Lakes'.

and emotional affect is synonymous with the sublime, which, I will argue, is central to Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's representation of the Cumbrian landscape as a Gothic topography. She wishes 'wisteria [would] grow right over my bare feet'.[129] Her desire to be consumed by nature plays on the plant horror that I discuss later in my chapter in regard to Radcliffe and her ruin writing. Then, in a similar surreal image that intertwines nature and death/stasis, Swift states, 'a red rose grew up out of ice frozen ground'.[130] The conventional red and white colour symbolism is reminiscent of the frozen red rose in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) – connoting enchantment and fairy tale – and, more explicitly Gothic, the red clay bleeding into the snow of the Cumberland moors in Del Toro's *Crimson Peak* (2015). Swift's desire to escape to the 'place where all the poets went to die' imagines Cumbria as a casket for creatives. Uncannily like the *Visit Lake District*'s (un)welcome homepage discussed in the Introduction, Swift begins her song with death; the opening line reads, 'is it romantic that all my elegies eulogise me?' Besides the modern additions of 'hunters with cell phones' and Twitter, 'The Lakes' is a modern revival of Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's Cumbrian Gothic that is founded on a similar emotional, embodied and experiential response to this particular region.

Swift's song reveals a Gothic strain in the construction of the literary Lakes that has been neglected. Her contemporary rehabilitation in nature is perhaps not what Cumbria Tourism imagined when they, as previously stated, asserted that Romantic-era poets and painters founded 'modern tourism'. What popular culture and tourism neglect to consider is how, as Townshend aptly states, 'Before, and in some instances even after, the Lake District became known as "Wordsworthshire"…the region was presided over by the Great Enchantress'.[131] This cultural and critical neglect is the result of a systematic, selective

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[129] Swift, 'The Lakes'.
[130] Swift, 'The Lakes'.
[131] Dale Townshend, *Gothic Antiquity,* p. 178.

privileging of a singular set of ideas that reinforce the Lake District's 'harmonious beauty', as described by the World Heritage website who credit 'Picturesque and Romantic interest' with both the appreciation and protection of 'scenic landscapes'.[132] How the UNESCO website and Nomination Bid represent Cumbria is significant given that they emphasise the regional qualities that will be of universal interest, whilst also recognising characteristics that are particular to that location. Yet, it is only selective Romantic-era influences that are praised for inspiring 'the development of a number of powerful ideas and values', which they identify to be an 'emotional engagement' with nature and its restorative properties on the 'human spirit'.[133] Their short-sighted portrayal does not extend back to earlier engagements with the landscape, which promoted alternative emotional interactions with place with similar self-affirming results. Instead, the UNESCO website argues that Romantic values inspired environmental conservation initiatives, leading directly to the 'development of recreational activities to experience the landscape' primarily for 'enjoyment', which they accredit to Romantic-era literature and particularly to Wordsworth and *The Prelude* as the only named examples.[134] Whilst there is a degree of truth to UNESCO's claims, this privileging of a singular mode, poet, aesthetic and individual poem neglects to consider the nuances of Romantic-era literature, including the influence of Gothic within that mode.

Cumbrian Gothic and Romantic writing coexisted in the eighteenth century when the region underwent its cultural transformation from a landscape of fear to a romanticised tourist destination more akin to the modern model of tourism. When Daniel Defoe passes through Westmoreland in the 1720s during his tour of Great Britain, he disapprovingly declares it 'the

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[132] UNESCO World Heritage Centre, *The English Lake District* (09/07/2017), <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/> [accessed 29 October 2019].
[133] UNESCO, *The English Lake District.*
[134] UNESCO, *The English Lake District.*

wildest, most barren, and frightful of any that I have seen'.[135] However, by 1778 this perception had started to be re-narrativised, exemplified by Thomas West's *A Guide to the Lakes,* the first Cumbrian tourist guidebook, dedicated to the 'lovers of landscape studies, and to all who have visited, or intend to visit the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire'.[136] Whilst West goes on to summarise the various motivations for visiting the area, his prefatory dedication foregrounds the visual aesthetics of the Lakeland landscape as a primary incentive for travelling to Cumbria, which is a far cry from Defoe's displeased response. The following year, Hester Lynch Piozzi would describe the period as a defining age for the region, describing a 'Rage for the Lakes' that demonstrates its sudden popularity.[137] The first travel guides that started to proliferate following West's publication began shaping the influx of early tourist experiences, influenced by popular antiquarian traditions and landscape aesthetics, which instructed the middle-class eighteenth-century tourist exactly where to go, what to view and how to look at it, resulting in a stylistic, structured and selective perspective.

Radcliffe's travelogue embraces this transitional tension between the past perception of the region and burgeoning Romantic-era ideology. In *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*, Robert Miles observes that 'the late sixteenth century formed a Gothic cusp', which Mighall explains is 'the threshold of the medieval and the modern' where Radcliffe's romances reside.[138] I argue that Radcliffe's Cumbrian travelogue functions in the same way and is also located on a Gothic cusp. She is writing at a time when the moody, monstrous landscape is beginning to have its wildness organised into aesthetic principles of the beautiful, picturesque

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[135] Defoe, *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain,* p. 231.

[136] Thomas West, *A guide to the Lakes: dedicated to the lovers of landscape studies, and to all who have visited, or intend to visit, the lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire* (London: Richardson and Urquhart, 1778).

[137] Hester Lynch Piozzi, 'Journey to the North of England and Part of Scotland Wales &c' (John Rylands Library, Deansgate, Manchester, Eng. MS 623, fol, 1789), 17r.

[138] Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) p. 132; Robert Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. 7.

and sublime. Rather than suppressing the past and provincial practices, as I will show West and Clarke do in the case of the Calgarth Skulls in the following chapter, Radcliffe revels in Cumbria's topographical Gothic and creates a bridging text between pre-Romantic and Romantic Cumbria that acknowledges the region's diverse cultural heritage. Mighall writes of Radcliffe's era that, 'Whig history represents the past as a site of conflict between progressives and reactionaries', positioning 'ambassadors of modernity' against 'the benighted past', which he argues is exemplified by her modern heroines that retaliate against antiquated tyrants and paternal figures.[139] In the Gothic elements of *Observations*, Radcliffe positions herself as the modern heroine aligned with the values of her readers, whilst the region represents the past. Mighall reaffirms, 'It is the conflict between the civilized and the barbaric, the modern and the archaic, the progressive and the reactionary which provides the terrifying pleasures of these texts.'[140] Radcliffe's travelogue reflects the ambivalence in the perception of Cumbria during this period that still clings to primordial fears of rural ecologies, which clashes with the increasing fashion of ascents and antiquarianism that positively engage with the natural landscape.

This Gothic cusp consolidates the region's ambivalent spaces of beauty and fear into a landscape of terror, forming the foundations of Radcliffe's Cumbrian Gothic. Radcliffe's imaginative exploration of place combines Gothic topography, sublime nature, supernatural intertextuality and folkloric allusions, giving equal status to beauty and fear and honouring the diversity of a region that has since been culturally homogenised. Radcliffe's approach recalls Wordsworth's famous statement in *The Prelude* that he was 'Fostered alike by beauty and by fear', suggesting that the popular understanding of the Romantic Lake District is not an accurate representation of Wordsworth either (1805, I, 306). Like Radcliffe, Wordsworth gives

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[139] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic,* p. 7.
[140] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic*, p. 9.

equal status to both the idyllic and terrifying aspects of nature, whilst also crucially highlighting that their presence is not mutually exclusive, but a coexisting quasi-parental unit. Wordsworth's most potent expressions of the Gothic are located in his 'spots of time': haunting childhood memories that he continually revisits and renarrativises, empowered by sublime discourse, signifying the profound psychological and emotional impact that these early Cumbrian experiences had. If we are to believe the UNESCO Nomination Bid's accreditation of Wordsworth with the construction of the Lake District's 'literary country', he did so on Gothic foundations.

The contemporary homogenisation of selected Romantic literature as representative of Cumbrian culture neglects to consider the connectedness of Gothic and Romantic discourses within the cultural responses to the Lakeland landscape in the late eighteenth century. Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's representations of Cumbrian nature throughout this chapter reveal commonalities between their responses. Andrew Smith and William Hughes's introduction to *EcoGothic* begins by synergising Romanticism and Gothic as two compatible modes that share 'critical languages', even arguing that 'an ecologically aware Gothic…has its roots within the Romantic'.[141] The natural environment provides the meeting point at which Gothic and Romantic discourses collide in this period. Smith and Hughes elaborate further and suggest that 'nature is a contested term', which 'appears to participate in a language of estrangement and belonging'.[142] The uncanny nature of Radcliffe's domestic tourism and Wordsworth's impermanent and intermittent residences in the Lakes – particularly during the experience and re-writing of his 'spots of time' – participate in this paradoxical language of estrangement and belonging. The first half of my analysis is dedicated to exploring their shared critical language, which, I argue, is rooted in the sublime.

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[141] Andrew Smith and William Hughes, *EcoGothic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 1.
[142] Smith and Hughes, *EcoGothic*, p. 2.

Smith and Hughes's *EcoGothic* opens with this promising deconstruction of Gothic and Romanticism in relation to representations of nature, wherein they are shown to share similar critical and creative vocabularies; however, their introduction contains some oversights and generalisations. Firstly, they qualify the first quotation I alluded to, stating that 'ecologically-aware Gothic' is especially evident post-Radcliffe, but that it really begins with Ruskin.[143] It is true that whilst living at his Cumbrian home – Brantwood in Coniston – Ruskin writes about the 'horrors' of his 'Storm Cloud', summarised by Vicky Albritton and Fredrik Albritton Jonsson in *Green Victorians: The Simple Life in John Ruskin's Lake District* as 'a sweeping tide of pollution and climate change that transforms all of nature irreversibly'.[144] Whilst Smith and Hughes illustrate the strong foundation of EcoGothic writing emanating from the Lake District, their belated accreditation of Ruskin neglects the much earlier environmental writing of Radcliffe and Wordsworth. Radcliffe is a precursor to later Cumbrian EcoGothic, such as the work of Benjamin Myers and Sarah Hall that I analyse in the final chapter, which develops a way of interpreting the region in terms of its environment and the fearful affect that belies some of Wordsworth's most memorable encounters. My analysis of *Observations* in this chapter concentrates on Radcliffe's representations of nature, which typify an 'ecologically-aware Gothic'. Smith and Hughes then position *Frankenstein* (1818) as a metaphorical 'dark shadow that critiques a Wordsworthian model of nature', establishing a binary between Gothic's critique of nature and Wordsworth's idealisation of it.[145] This observation perpetuates the notion of Wordsworth's separation from Gothic criticism and literature, and suggests that Gothic discourse is diametrically opposed to his representations of nature. It denies the presence of Gothic in the poet's work and discourages Gothic critique. This chapter responds

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[143] Smith and Hughes, *EcoGothic*, p. 1.
[144] Vicky Albritton and Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, *Green Victorians: The Simple Life in John Ruskin's Lake District* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), p. 177.
[145] Smith and Hughes, *EcoGothic*, p. 2.

to this misconception and illustrates that Wordsworth also contributes to the creation of a Cumbrian Gothic.

An alternative Wordsworthian model

The Nomination Bid singles out Wordsworth's *Prelude* as a trailblazing example that reoriented perceptions of nature and depicted the Lakeland landscape as an 'enjoyable' leisure destination.[146] This is despite the poet's aforesaid description of his complex Cumbrian upbringing as characterised by 'beauty and fear'. *The Prelude* in style, structure and content was later described in Gothic terms by literary critics. After listening to Wordsworth recite a manuscript version of *The Prelude*, Coleridge poetically responds in 'To Wordsworth Wordsworth' calling him 'God's great Gift to me'.[147] Both Coleridge and De Quincey were privileged with hearing the poem prior to its publication and celebrated the work as a defining piece of English literature. However, when it was eventually posthumously published the consensus of multiple reviewers disappointingly agreed the poem was unsuitable for their day. In 1850, the *Eclectic Review* describes the poem as a 'large fossil relic – imperfect and magnificent – newly dug up, and with the fresh earth and the old dim subsoil meeting and mingling around it'.[148] This resonates with *Otranto's* infamous preface that begins with an unearthed manuscript, which indexically antiquates Wordsworth's *Prelude,* Gothicising it by this affiliation with the past and the trappings of early literary Gothic. The motifs of death, burial and ageing are reaffirmed by the same reviewer's comments on the thirty-four years of anticipation awaiting the posthumous publication, fuelled by De Quincey's 'panegyrizing',

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[146] UNESCO, *The English Lake District.*

[147] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'To William Wordsworth', *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850,* ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth et al (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979)*,* p. 542.

[148] Anon, '*The Prelude*', *Eclectic Review*, XXVIII (July-Dec 1850), cited in *The Prelude,* ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth et al, p. 548

which the reviewer infers causes audiences to almost morbidly will the poet's death so they could read his life's work.[149] As this Victorian reviewer's fashioning of *The Prelude* as something at odds with its time suggests, he unsurprisingly does not relate to the poem but prophetically suggests with uncanny accuracy that 'future ages will be thankful that a formation so peculiar, has been so carefully preserved'.[150] The poem itself is a Gothic relic, a historical 'fossil' buried in the past, out of place in its unearthed present, only to be reclaimed and reinterpreted in the future.

This Gothicised reception of the poem is reaffirmed by an 1850s reviewer from *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* who adapts Wordsworth's terminology from his 1814 Preface to *The Excursion*, identifying *The Prelude* as a 'Gothic ante-chapel' and 'The Recluse' as its appertaining 'chapel'.[151] Despite alluding to architectural Gothic, the same anti-classical and counter-cultural associations apply, whilst revealing the generically diverse reception of Wordsworth in the past who himself had intended to construct his oeuvre in Gothic terms. *The Prelude* resonates with Gothic narrativization in style, structure and content, which prompts a *Gentleman's Magazine* (1850) reviewer to emphasise that 'men' have shifted from 'phantasms' to 'realities', reasserting that English and German poets did not depict the 'apparent' only the 'true' and 'childish things were put away'.[152] Thus, he implies that *The Prelude* does not serve these progressive ideologies in the same pejorative way that Wordsworth too renounced the Gothic. The reviewer succinctly concludes that Wordsworth 'should not have printed, in his

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[149] Anon, 'The Prelude', *Eclectic Review,* p. 548
[150] Anon, 'The Prelude'. *Eclectic Review*, p. 549
[151] Anon, '*The Prelude*', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, XVII (1850), cited in *The Prelude,* ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth et al*,* p. 551.
[152] Anon, 'Wordsworth's Autobiographical Poem', *Gentleman's Magazine*, XXXIV (1850), cited in *The Prelude,* ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth et al*,* p. 553. The notion of putting aside childish toys is reminiscent of Corinthians 13.11: 'when I became a man, I put away childish things', which implies that mature, Godly adults do not dabble in Gothic juvenalia.

lifetime, this record of his mind's growth'.[153] This review reaffirms the aforementioned sentiment that Wordsworth's *Prelude* is out-of-place in the present, yet still optimistically hopeful of a later revival that would be softened by the sympathies of nostalgia.

During his early career, Wordsworth experimented with fashionable Gothic themes which he explored in works such as *The Borderers* (1797), *Fragment of a 'Gothic' Tale* (1796) and *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* (1795). However, these texts remained unpublished in the 1790s, which allowed his 'reputation as an anti-Gothic writer' to take hold according to Robert Miles.[154] This reputation was firmly instated when Wordsworth publicly disavowed the Gothic in his infamous preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). He scorns the 'poetry of the day […] frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse', associated with 'degrading thirst' and 'general evil', for blunting 'the discriminatory powers of the human mind' and causing the neglect of 'invaluable works of our elder writers', like Shakespeare.[155] Many critics identify this as the defining moment of Wordsworth's maturation as a writer; he even snubs his earlier writings as 'juvenilia', anticipating the advice from the *Gentleman's Magazine* reviewer in putting his childish toys away.[156]

However, Wordsworth's suppression of the Gothic and supposed relegation to his youth fails in that the spots of time are continuously rewritten from their origination in the 1790s into a further three decades after that. In *The Cambridge Companion to 'Lyrical Ballads'* (2020), Sally Bushell argues that the preface is 'A Manifesto for British Romanticism' but does not refer to Wordsworth's disdain for fashionable Gothic fiction, which, like the Nomination Bid

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[153] Anon, 'Wordsworth's Autobiographical Poem', p. 553.

[154] Although parts of *Adventures* were published in other forms. Robert Miles, 'William Wordsworth', cited in *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic*, ed. by William Hughes, David Punter, Andrew Smith (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. 747.

[155] William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (London: Biggs and Co., 1800) p. xix.

[156] Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 7.

and Cumbria Tourism, signifies the erasure of Gothic influences from the modern conception of Romanticism. In addition, Wordsworth's disapproval of popular literature refers to a particular kind of sensationalist Gothic and not necessarily all Gothic texts. Furthermore, the negative influence that such literature has had on Wordsworth is still an influence that is clearly present in the writer's consciousness. Thomas De Quincey accredits his gradual estrangement from Wordsworth to the fact that his intellect was one-sided and he expressed condescension towards books that Quincey admired or were popularly held in high regard. For example, Wordsworth specifically admitted to reading Radcliffe's *The Italian* 'by some strange accident […] but only to laugh at it'.[157] Regardless of Wordsworth's response to Radcliffe, this shows his familiarity with her work, and despite his public rejection of the Gothic, his writing remained deeply influenced by it.

The rural folklore and pastoral practices that influence Radcliffe's imagination similarly affect Wordsworth who accredits his most terrifying experiences to the 'numerous accidents […] distresses and disasters' and 'tragic facts of rural history', which all 'impressed [his] mind' (1799, I, 280-282). Wordsworth's unforgettable experiences in his life are directly credited to specifically rural conditions that he attaches to this particular landscape. This is exemplified by *The Prelude*'s opening lines, which read 'Was it for this / That one, the fairest of all rivers' (1799, I, 1-2). The poet credits the educative influence that the River Derwent had on his imagination, corresponding his creativity to this precise location. Wordsworth inextricably links his inspiration to the Lakeland landscape. Yet, many of his most profound Lakeland memories centralise on morbidity, death and violence, which is explicit from the titles alone; the drowned man, the murdered wife and the hanged murderer of the visionary dreariness episode, his father's death in waiting for the horses, the snared woodcock and the

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[157] Thomas De Quincey, *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey* (1897), ed. David Masson, vol. II (London: A & C Black, 1896), p. 206

stolen raven's eggs. Thus, whilst Wordsworth recognises the 'spots of time' as an important source for his imagination and creative success, which are intrinsically linked to the Lakeland landscape, they are also innately Gothic.

Wordsworth's blatant burial of the Gothic and rejection of Radcliffe only highlights the Gothicness of *The Prelude*. His denial of the Gothic, despite its presence, is yet another characteristic of the mode. In this chapter, I focus on Wordsworth's 'spots of time', which are especially Gothic given their enclosure in a particular time and place that collapses childhood memory with adult recollections, interventions of local lore and intertextual allusions that produce an atmosphere of fear. In Miles's *Romantic Misfits*, he tentatively describes the 'spots of time' as 'gothically tinged' because, he vaguely explains, they hint 'of a deeply disturbing apprehension of a mysterious presence'.[158] More specifically than that, I argue that the spatialised temporality of the 'spots of time' are expressions of the Cumbrian Gothic chronotope defined in my introduction. I will now demonstrate how Radcliffe fosters the perception of Cumbria as a Gothic ecology, primarily in her response to mountains and then ruins, consolidating an atmosphere of fear that is also present in Wordsworth.

Radcliffe's Country

Whilst Wordsworth's popularity evaded him until later in his career, Radcliffe's *Journey* was well-known and respected at the time. Townshend notes that her travelogue was

> approvingly cited in such publications as John Housman's *A Descriptive Tour, and Guide to the Lakes, Caves, Mountains, and other Natural Curiosities* (1800); John Robinson's *A Guide to the Lakes* (1819); Samuel Leigh's *Guide to the Lakes and*

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[158] Miles, *Romantic Misfits,* p. 750.

Mountains of Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire (1832); and Allison's

frequently reissued Northern Tourist's *Guide to the Lakes* (1837).[159]

Despite its contemporaneous influence, the travelogue has escaped sustained Gothic criticism

and is often critiqued for lacking in Radcliffe's usual supernatural flair. In one of the few

substantial critical studies of Radcliffe's *Journey*, JoEllen DeLucia assertively determines the

travelogue 'ungothic'.[160] Ernest de Sélincourt addresses Radcliffe's travelogue in his

introduction to Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes*, which highlights the importance of her text

in the period, even acknowledging the influence that it had on Wordsworth's experience despite

the poet's personal lack of accreditation. As aforesaid, Wordsworth read *The Italian* and

Bainbridge acknowledges that Radcliffe's Skiddaw ascent was 'one of the best-known ascent

narratives in the Romantic period', so it is likely he was familiar with Radcliffe's

Observations.[161] Regardless of the popularity of Radcliffe's travelogue and its undoubted

influence on Wordsworth, de Sélincourt postulates that although Radcliffe 'gained many a

"horrid" suggestion from her tour, her remarks upon it are written with unusual restraint'.[162]

He alludes to the imaginative influence of her travels on her fiction, but denies its expression

within the travelogue itself, musing that Radcliffe reserves her 'powers of romantic description'

for the Apennines, sardonically adding, 'which she had never seen'.[163] De Sélincourt implies

that Radcliffe's enchanting abilities fail to transfer from her fiction into her lived experience,

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[159] Townshend, *Gothic Antiquity*, p. 178.

[160] JoEllen DeLucia, 'Transnational aesthetics in Ann Radcliffe's *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* (1795)', *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 137.

[161] Simon Bainbridge, *Mountaineering and British Romanticism*: *The Literary Cultures of Climbing 1770-1836* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 206.

[162] William Wordsworth and Ernest de Sélincourt, *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes,* 5th ed. (Frowde, 1906), p. xv.

[163] Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes,* p. xv.

yet I argue *Observations* contains some of her most imaginative imagery that converts geography into a Gothic topography.

De Sélincourt and DeLucia have overlooked Radcliffe's subliminal and often overt Gothic discourse that she employs throughout her Cumbrian journey and have failed to recognise the *Observations* as a Gothic device in itself, which is foregrounded in the title. The travelogue was originally published as an entire luxury volume, but the second edition divided its contents into two sections enforcing a divide between her continental experience and her subsequent return to her (un)homely country. This framing technique is an earlier and subtler expression of Shelley's structuring of *Frankenstein* where its 'belated Introduction', Botting argues, 'inscribes another frame around a novel composed of frames', which 'alludes to the complexity and mystery of gothic narratives' and structurally evokes fragmentation; 'assembled from bits and pieces, the novel is like the monster itself, and like the unnatural, disproportionate monsters of gothic romances.'[164] The belated fragmentation of Radcliffe's travelogue in the second edition also emphasises that the Lakeland leg of her tour is '*added*' to the continental 'journey' and furthermore occupies just the latter half of the second volume. Thus, the title positions the Cumbrian tour as an addendum to her main journey overseas that deliberately marginalises it and reinforces the cultural hierarchy between domestic and international travel. This formal separation facilitates a shift in tone that distances her Cumbrian section and enables its presence as a counter-narrative to the Continental tour, which functions in a similar fashion to the many concealments present in her novels that often shroud the most provocative terrors.

During her tour, Radcliffe was at the height of her career as a Gothic novelist after publishing *Udolpho,* which financially enabled her to undertake the Continental Tour with

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[164] Fred Botting, *Gothic*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 93-4.

aspirations of visiting the Alpine landscape that her heroine had recently traversed. The inseparability of Gothic novelist and actual tourist playfully combine as Radcliffe animates ruins with revenant spectres, ascends 'dark and monstrous summits', and revels in the supernatural potential of rural seclusion (230). Contrary to DeLucia and de Sélincourt, I argue that the realist mode of travel writing amplifies the text's Gothicness due to encounters with real-life terrors. Radcliffe's *Observations* engages with regional Gothic narratives, a form that relocates the Gothic within Britain's borders making imagined fears palpably present. The reassuring effect of spatial and temporally distant settings, which Radcliffe employed in her most popular fictional works, is problematised in regional Gothic literature where the threat is proximally situated within the same nation. Furthermore, the Gothic horrors and fears found within Cumbria are not external threats that have infiltrated in a Dracula-like fashion. These Cumbrian horrors originate within that locality and are produced by the local people, their lore, and the landscape or are superimposed by domestic travellers that opportunistically perceive rural British spaces as apt settings for Gothic tales. Radcliffe's journal collapses the distinction between travelogue and Gothic fiction. The Gothic has escaped its containment within the reassuring confines of fiction set in a distant, imagined past and place into the travelogue form that documents real experiences of real places, thus having an unnerving and destabilizing effect that brings the events of her Gothic novels to life. Cumbrian Gothic thus posits an inescapable threat to the British readership uncovering terrors within their own borders.

Radcliffe perceives the Lakes as not simply a physical, representational geography, but as a performative place that she then maps her own associations on to. In *Tourism, Performance and Place,* Michelle Metro-Roland, Lisa Braverman, Daniel Knudsen and Dimitri Ioannides discuss how human geography studies have gravitated towards performative theory 'with

greater focus on the enactment of space, the body and embodied experiences'.[165] A repeated trope in Cumbrian travel writing is staging the landscape as an amphitheatre; Hutchinson uses it to describe the mountains that encircle the vale of St. John, whilst Radcliffe goes a step further and groups together 'an amphitheatre formed by nearly all the mountains of the Lakes; an exhibition of Alpine grandeur' positioning the entire region as a performative geography with specific visual, theatrical and artistic connotations (191).[166] Performativity expresses itself in tourist spaces as 'staged authenticity', which Radcliffe often constructs in her role as the tour guide, yet 'tourists are not simply an audience to a staged tourism performance, but are an essential part of the performance'.[167] As a tour guide, Radcliffe creates action 'through embodied performance', reaffirming 'ideological and political narratives in addition to publicizing historical events'.[168] This is especially true in her representation of Kendal Church and Castle, which I later expand on. However, tourist sites are 'heterogenous spaces' where tourists inevitably experience 'non-touristic social performances', such as any naturalistic intervention of locals and everyday life.[169] Because of the travelogue's heterogeneity (interactions with locals, accounts of the beautiful, everyday realism), it was previously dismissed as 'ungothic' by DeLucia.

Radcliffe's profoundly poetic writing of place is so convincing that it earned her a seat next to Shakespeare in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as Byron praises the literary influences that 'had stamped her image in me'.[170] Not only is Radcliffe organising the tourist gaze of her readership from her 'commanding position' on Skiddaw, making Cumbria accessible to a wider

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[165] Michelle Metro-Roland et al., *Tourism, Performance, and Place: A Geographic Perspective* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), p. 82.
[166] Hutchinson, *An Excursion to the Lakes*, p. 104.
[167] Metro-Roland et al., *Tourism, Performance, and Place,* p. 71 & 75.
[168] Metro-Roland et al., *Tourism, Performance, and Place,* p. 78.
[169] Metro-Roland et al., *Tourism, Performance, and Place, p.* 81.
[170] George Gordon Byron, *The Words of the Rt. Hon. Lord Byron*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: R.W Pomeroy, 1824), p. 137.

audience through her Gothic appeal, but we are reminded that her haptic movement through the landscape is also an embodied approach evoking 'not just the moment of the tourist's experience, but the context through which it is experienced culturally, socially, and bodily.'[171] In this chapter, I argue that Radcliffe's enchanting ability cultivates a Cumbrian Gothic that uniquely blends pre-Romantic ecophobia, sublime ideology and topographical Gothic. Her lived experience shapes her iconic views on terror and horror, which she theorises in 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', and creates the foundations of contemporary Cumbrian Gothic fiction that I explore in the final chapter.

Literary Tourism: Reading the Lakeland Landscape

An important aspect of Radcliffe's Cumbrian legacy was stepping away from landscape tourism that relies on the visual properties of place and instead imaginatively reproduces space as a performative geography. The ironic naming of Radcliffe's Cumbrian travelogue as *Observations* allows her to engage with the traditional guide form and its reliance on visual imagery, whilst subverting it with her personal style that creates an immersive experience of place that goes beyond the material. It is this property that allows Radcliffe to construct a Cumbrian Gothic narrative inspired by its intrinsic Gothic qualities, such as the natural geography and folklore that I will later analyse, but also by Gothicising her personal cultural tourist experience and intertextually inserting supernatural and pre-Gothic literary associations in to the landscape.

Literary tourism altered the perception of place as it intertwines physical locations with fictional representations. Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) was one of the first texts responsible for spawning the literary tourist. From 1764 onwards, *Héloïse* fans flocked to Geneva, as Watson writes, 'in search of vantage-points at which to have sentimental

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[171] Metro-Roland et al., *Tourism, Performance, and Place,* p. 84.

experiences which echoed those rapturously detailed in Rousseau's novel'.[172] Besides material circumstances, a Romantic condition emerged that was symptomatic of the 'author's anxiety over the alienation and degradation of his mass-audience, but which also, by contagion, infected the romantic reader who similarly became anxious over the alienation of the author'.[173] Towards the end of the eighteenth century, authors were becoming increasingly interested in ways to ground their creativity in accessible ways outside of their texts. Meanwhile, readers pursued the body of the author as a corporeal manifestation of their body of work sparking trends of grave visiting and travelling in their favourite author's footsteps that is an early expression of Gothic tourism. This soon evolved, as Watson observes, so that readers progressed from the 'pilgrimage to the author's grave' to 'a pilgrimage to the source of the text'.[174] Thus regional Gothic writing provides an accessible format for simultaneously encountering the author and place outside of the text.

Radcliffe capitalises on the increasing interest in the imaginative potential of place in order to cultivate a more abstract form of literary tourism. Unlike Rousseau, Radcliffe did not write about her hometown, nor did she visit any of the settings in her novels; the only novel that she wrote in her lifetime and set in Britain was remotely located in the Scottish Highlands.[175] Despite their physical existence, her iconic Gothic settings are Radcliffe's fictional inventions. Contrary to Rousseau's technique of imbuing physical locations with fictional associations, Radcliffe fictionalises physical place. As international travel became increasingly difficult, which Radcliffe's travelogue highlights, the British looked within their own country for creative inspiration and travelled to alternative sources of imagination – not dissimilar to the Covid-19 'freedom frenzy' I alluded to in my introduction. Radcliffe's

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[172] Nicola J. Watson, *The Literary Tourist,* p. 137.

[173] Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, p. 45.

[174] Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, p. 46.

[175] Radcliffe, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789).

representation of the Lakes becomes overlaid with spectral settings of imagined geographies, haunting histories, displaced people and dislocated places. Given the material circumstances that prevented foreign travel and the fact that Radcliffe did not visit the settings of *Udolpho,* nor would she for *The Italian*, the closest that her readers could physically get to her novels was by visiting such landscapes that inspired it. The growing accessibility of the Lakes enabled it to become a stand-in for both Radcliffe and her readers acting as a performative place where her literary works could be re-enacted and invented. Radcliffe's *Observations* provides an opportunity for both the author and her readers to become literary and cultural tourists.

Radcliffe collapses the distinctions between the Lakes and international Alpine imagery conflating societies, politics and cultures into one shared space. Townshend argues that the telos of Radcliffe's travelogue is to

> erase the differences between the European landscapes of Radcliffe's fictions and the English landscapes that she describes, a move that, in the context of British fears of the predominantly Catholic Continent, was of progressive political consequence and a reflection of the writer's cosmopolitan leanings.[176]

Whilst early Gothic novels would neatly contain fears of the French Revolution and Catholicism within international countries safely separated by the sea, Radcliffe's travelogue is forced to relocate these anxieties closer to home when her Grand Tour comes to an abrupt close. The second volume begins with a disappointing end to her intended journey as on their way to Switzerland Radcliffe and her husband are obstructed by an officer at the Austrian garrison of Friburg and denied further travel. After their six-hundred-mile journey, Radcliffe declares it 'a disappointment, which no person could bear without severe regret' (3). She attempts to console herself with the news that 'some approaching change in Switzerland' made it 'unfavourable to England' (3). Radcliffe is implicitly referring to the destabilising impact of

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[176] Townshend, *Gothic Antiquity*, p. 177.

the French Revolutionary Wars. She muses that the potential discomfort and lack of 'peacefulness' was enough to subdue their 'enquiry, or fancy' (3).

Radcliffe's disappointment is entirely justified as the crossing of Switzerland is the most anticipated experience of the Grand Tour and integral to early experiences of the sublime. This is reaffirmed at the end of the first volume when Radcliffe catches her first glimpse of the Swiss mountains, whose 'immensity and sublimity' she describes as the 'most astonishing and grand' in Europe (478). Their stirring sight 'awakened a thousand interesting recollections and delightful expectations', which has a profound emotional effect on Radcliffe prompting her to contemplate the 'insignificance of our temporary nature, and seeming more than ever conscious by what a slender system our existence is upheld' (479). Radcliffe's admiration of the Swiss scenery and the emotive response elicited by this brief glimpse is a formulaic reaction to the sublime, reproducing typical reactions of astonishment and awe, thus concluding the first volume with the pinnacle of her emotive awakening by just a glimpse of the Swiss mountains. Radcliffe's anti-climactic second volume begins with an ending, which is a Gothic device of uncanny subversion and narrational framing that sets the tone for her *Observations*. The unfulfilled Grand Tour materialises as a void in her tourist experience, an absence that she attempts to fill with her Lake District tour that becomes a substitute landscape, a Gothic mirroring of her intended journey. Firstly, I comment on how Radcliffe subconsciously perceives her travelogue and personal experiences as incomplete, which is exacerbated by her comparison with an earlier 'complete' guide. Then I demonstrate how she attempts to compensate for this absence by projecting presence onto an imagined geography.

Spectral Switzerland and the Cumbrian Alps

The absence of Switzerland is deep-seated in Radcliffe's narrative; the full extent of which manifests in a multitude of ways in her Lakeland *Observations*, transpiring in her descriptions

that are suggestively incomplete or fragmented. Radcliffe adopts her own form of literary tourism and – like Helen Maria Williams, a 'celebrated British radical poet, historian, travel-writer, and novelist', who carried Rousseau's novel with her to Geneva as a guidebook – mediates her experiences through Thomas Gray's *Journal of his Tour in the Lake District* (1769).[177] She is reminded when she first glimpses the southern fells how they were 'much distinguished by the notice of Mr. Gray', thus signalling that her very first impressions are influenced by previous literary attention to the landscape (195). Radcliffe even selects accommodation in Penrith because 'Mr. Gray had mentioned it' (290), demonstrating the continuation of Gray's influence that subtly shaped her travels. Ironically, Radcliffe's Swiss stand-in ascent of Skiddaw would become just as integral to the Home Tour as Switzerland is to the Grand Tour to the extent of becoming parodic. Dickens's and Collins's satirical opinion of Skiddaw is that it 'has vaunted himself a great deal more than his merits deserve; but that is rather the way of the Lake country'.[178] In Plumptre's *The Lakers* (1798), Veronica is 'infinitely distressed, quite in despair' on learning that the inclement weather will prevent her planned ascent of Skiddaw, which mimics Radcliffe's disappointed reaction to her Swiss embargo. Reaffirming Radcliffe's fragmentation, the absence of Skiddaw renders Veronica's journey 'absolutely incomplete' (196-198). However, comparison with previous experiences reveals how literary tourism can be a Gothic act in itself as the timeworn present disappointingly exposes the inherent absences in Radcliffe's account.

Unlike Radcliffe, Gray crossed the Swiss Alps accompanied by another of Radcliffe's influences and renowned Gothic novelist, Horace Walpole, during their Grand Tour in 1738. Afterwards, Gray made numerous trips to the English Lakes, which were informed by his Continental experience. Thus, it is possible that Radcliffe perceives Gray's *Journal* as a more

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[177] Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, pp. 140-141.
[178] Charles Dickens, *Lazy Tour*, p. 7.

authoritative and complete rendition of the landscape whereas her travelogue fails to capture an entire experience. This is demonstrated by Radcliffe's representation of Kendal Church, which she contrasts with Gray's account decades earlier. Radcliffe opens her description by referring to Gray's 'entire' depiction of the church ornaments (207). However, she laments that the majority of those notable decorations are now 'gone', 'broken', 'fragments', or 'obliterated' (207). Her ruinous and timeworn description is a visual signifier of her belatedness and inability to witness its former glory, serving as a broader analogy for her travel ambitions that are decades too late. Radcliffe's determination of Gray's 'entire' account is self-reflexive that exposes the brokenness of her later experience. Watson writes that Haworth, the family home of the Brontë sisters, is an 'effect of their novels' that derives its Gothicity from deliberate acts of preservation and construction in a manner that visitors 'desired and expected to see'.[179] Kendal Church, however, is the opposite; its Gothicness emanates from Gray's absence and the ruinous state of the building, a symbolic disintegration of past travelling freedoms and the ability to experience sites in their entirety. Unlike Haworth that is made Gothic by its past narrative associations, it is Radcliffe's present description of Kendal Church, marked by its absence and austerity, that emphasises its Gothic qualities and literary allusions to its more vibrant past revivifies its sense of grandeur. Radcliffe is living in the Gothic present.

The omission of Switzerland from Radcliffe's itinerary spectrally manifests as a physical and psychological absence in her text, which paradoxically allows its presence to be truly felt in the Lakeland landscape. Watson writes that 'tourists actively seek out the anti-realist experience of being "haunted" of forcefully realising the presence of an absence, a form of tourist gothic powerfully characteristic of literary pilgrimage'.[180] By visiting the Lake District, Radcliffe is able to reconcile this loss by displacing her imagined experience of

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[179] Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, p. 110.
[180] Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, p. 7.

Switzerland and her Continental travels on to the alternative sublime geography of the Cumbrian landscape. Unconventionally for a 1790s travel guide influenced by aesthetics, Radcliffe's *Journey* does not contain illustrations, which contemporaneous critics deemed 'absurd' and declare it 'diminished' depictions of the scenery.[181] Instead, Radcliffe's ekphrastic language imaginatively incarnates a virtual impression of the scene that liberates her from geographical specificity. Townshend ponders if this better showcases her 'writerly abilities: a verbal renderer of vivid pictures as dexterous as any landscape painter'; I argue that the absence of visual representation facilitates Radcliffe's imaginative portrayal of place as it prevents material presumptions. Not only can Radcliffe be more expressive, but absence also facilitates Gothic properties of the eerie and unspeakable, that I later expand on, so she can project presence into the visual gaps.

Radcliffe collapses Continental geography within the Lakeland topography, recreating an imagined experience of Switzerland and the Alps that materialises their presence within Cumbria. Radcliffe, like William Hutchinson before her, comments on the thinness of air ascending Skiddaw, which Simon Bainbridge argues is an attempt of representing their experience 'through the sensations described in Alpine writing'.[182] Her experience of elevation is a recreation of previous Alpine ascent narratives, which mimics the anachronisms in her Gothic fiction. Thomas West similarly describes the Lakes as a 'miniature' Alps, recommending that 'those who intend to make the continental tour should begin here'.[183] Where Radcliffe hyperbolises the difficulty of her ascent, West's comparison downsizes the Lakeland landscape and diminishes its scale, creating a false impression that the terrain is easily

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[181] *The English Review* (1795) and *The Critical Review* (1795) cited in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, p. 10.

[182] Bainbridge, *Mountaineering and British Romanticism*, p. 42.

[183] Thomas West, *A Guide to the Lakes, in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire*, 2nd ed. (London: 1780) p. 5.

negotiable for beginners. He reaffirms this with the broad speculation that 'the mountains here are all accessible to the summit', which in comparison with the inaccessibility of the Alps is empirically true, but it should come with a disclaimer that this is dependent on the day and the ability of the person as a lot of the higher fells become inaccessible to the ill-equipped or novice walker reflected in the yearly fatalities.[184] In this instance, West downplays the dangers of the Lakes and distorts the topography to seem more appealing to the amateur traveller, whereas Radcliffe tends to highlight the hazardous aspects of her travels. In the decade preceding Radcliffe's tour, West claims 'the goodness of the roads' was enough 'inducement' for the budding traveller to now visit the Lakes.[185] However, Radcliffe contradicts West by repeatedly drawing attention to the difficulties of travelling to and through the Lakes, the treacherous mountain passes, and the laborious hours spent just attempting to get from town to town. One particularly notable experience occurs during 'a serene day' travelling through Borrowdale, the pleasant weather having a 'magical effect' on the scenery (347). As if is almost conscious of her otherworldly idealisation of the Lakes, Radcliffe reorients her grandiose perspective onto the crumbling fragments of the cliff face strewn across the road. This has a grounding effect that displaces serenity with an increasing feeling of 'danger', particularly on the 'edge of precipices' perilously close to a steep drop descending in to Derwentwater (347). In 1857 Dickens and Collins arrive by train, heralding the arrival of modernity at the fringes of the region. However, their inward journey thrusts them back in time on a cart up and down endless hills, twisting left and right – past villages they call 'lonely nooks, and wild'.[186] This contrast between the fringes of modernity and the untouched, self-contained space within Cumbria is a tourist paradigm that demonstrates how easy it is to encounter the past, the Alps and England's others.

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[184] West, *A Guide to the Lakes,* p. 5.
[185] West, *A Guide to the Lakes,* p. 2.
[186] Dickens, *The Lazy Tour,* p. 7.

Regardless, the inaccessibility of the Continent has rendered Cumbria a consolation for those anticipating the Alps; its topographical representation is manipulated so that it can appear as an intermediary destination, a bridge between the Home Tour and the Alps. Radcliffe marvels at the northern fells, naming them the 'alps of the Lakes' (287), incarnating the Alps within Cumbria, describing the northern ridgeline as 'scarcely to be equalled in England' (287) in an attempt to bolster the significance of this scenery in a way that echoes her astonishment at the Swiss mountains. However, she undermines this almost immediately by recalling 'the first exquisite appearance of the mountains at Goodesberg', which she has 'never seen equalled' (287). Radcliffe continuously compares and contrasts different mountainscapes, attempting to evaluate their scenery by measuring them up against each other. Yet, this continual evaluation does not categorise spaces, but their repetitive similarities collapse them together.

Radcliffe creates a collective space between Cumbria and similar landscapes that share topographical and ideological characteristics or creates links so that can she project these qualities in their absence. Yi-Fu Tuan explains that cities, regions, and countries are too large to be intimately connected with, so 'politics, education, and the arts are employed to construct shared places at these scales'.[187] Mountainous regions are especially vast, isolating, and often alien, so creating similarities with more familiar and comforting imagery is a means to connect people with place. Radcliffe's parting remarks of Kendal concern the obelisk erected in 1788 to commemorate the overthrow of the despotic James II during the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Radcliffe declares the obelisk a 'testimony to the independence of the inhabitants…dedicated to liberty' (210). She finds the obelisk poignant given that it was erected 'at a time, when the memory of that revolution is reviled, and the praises of liberty itself endeavoured to be suppressed by the artifice of imputing to it the crimes of anarchy'

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[187] Michelle Metro-Roland et al. *Tourism, Performance, and Place,* p. 8.

(210). This exemplifies Metro-Roland's earlier criticism, which reminds us 'not just the moment of the tourist's experience, but the context through which it is experienced culturally, socially, and bodily'. Radcliffe experiences the obelisk subjectively through her first-hand experience of the destruction of the ongoing French Revolutionary Wars. Overlooking Kendal, Radcliffe describes the scene as 'simple, great, and free as the spirit revered amidst it' (210). These sentiments had in the past been associated more popularly with Switzerland. After the Swiss mountain peasantry defeated the Habsburg army in 1315 and 1386, Oliver Zimmer describes how Switzerland's central mountains came to signify 'the ultimate birthplace of liberty and independence'.[188] The resilience of the 'untamed, Alpine landscape' became synonymous with their nationalist values upholding liberty, freedom, and independence in the eighteenth century.[189] However, Switzerland's involvement in the Revolutionary Wars led to them sacrificing their admirable sovereignty. In the introduction to *Tourism, Performance, and Place: A Geographic Perspective*, the authors state that 'tourism performances do not begin and end in places, but through tourism, place is performed'.[190] Radcliffe's subjective experience imbues Cumbria as an ideological container that she can project her roles on to. Furthermore, tourism itself 'fosters relations to and across places; it transforms places, engaging bodies, imaginations, and ideologies'.[191] Having personally experienced the atrocities of these wars, which she recounts in the first volume, Radcliffe retreats from these horrors and recognizes the potential to recreate a nostalgic vision of Switzerland's political freedom in Kendal, the gateway to the English Lake District. She envisages England's mountainous region

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[188] Oliver Zimmer, 'In Search of Natural Identity: Alpine Landscape and the Reconstruction of the Swiss Nation', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40.4 (1998), p. 647.

[189] Zimmer, 'In Search of Natural Identity', p. 647.

[190] Metro-Roland et al., *Tourism, Performance, and Place*, p. 1.

[191] Metro-Roland et al., *Tourism, Performance, and Place,* p. 1.

to offer the same political freedom to the rest of the nation that Switzerland once symbolised, thus entertaining the idea of Cumbria as an escape from domestic and international politics.

Radcliffe's romantic vision of the rural peasantry is projected onto the Lakeland locals. In 'Ann Radcliffe's Lake District', Jeanne Moskal interprets Radcliffe's glamorization of Cumbrian locals as the epitome of 'English virtue', which 'sets them apart from the corruption of the Continent' (58). Radcliffe applauds the 'superior simplicity and modesty of the people' and believes their seclusion from cities must be utterly freeing (224). She asserts they are 'obliging, without servility, and plain but not rude' (224). Radcliffe sentimentalises pastoral life as a form of temporal and physical escapism from the corruption of both the continent and politicised western cities in general. Moskal perpetuates the notion that 'informed internal tourism claimed to be a way of proclaiming who one was', asserting that Radcliffe finds 'true Englishness' in the Lake District.[192] Moskal's study suggests that Radcliffe's binary structure, which separates the Continent from her homeland travels, goes beyond linear chronology. Instead, Moskal purports that this is a conceptual divide between the Continent's shortcomings and the 'fulfillment' of the Lake District that 'never disappoints'.[193] Moskal's traditionalist view perpetuates discourses that consistently idealise the Lakes, which Radcliffe herself muddies and reveals to be both unrealistic and untrue.

In an attempt to maintain the illusion of an idealised experience, Radcliffe resurrects a fictionalised identity and reads the environment searching for remnants of English literary history compelled by what Watson coins 'nostalgic belatedness'.[194] Like Lord Byron's literary tourist who, desiring physical authenticity, carved the author's name into the dungeon of Chillon, Radcliffe too desires to find physical evidence of a past existence only to find it

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[192] Jeanne Moskal, 'Ann Radcliffe's Lake District', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 30.1 (2000), p. 58

[193] Moskal, 'Ann Radcliffe's Lake District', p. 57.

[194] Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, p. 13.

missing and consequently implants it herself. JoEllen DeLucia refers to Radcliffe's visit to an idyllic parsonage by Haweswater where she imagines the family reading 'Shakespeare, Milton, Gray or Collins - the favourite authors found in the libraries of her Gothic heroines'.[195] She is disappointed to find contemporary political texts evocative of 'human passions and human suffering', remonstrating 'how opposite the simplicity, the innocence and peace of these!' (402). Radcliffe had imagined that locals would only be interested in texts that reflect the 'innocence and peace' of their surroundings. Radcliffe perceives their geographical seclusion as an ideological one, which would grant them the freedom to isolate themselves from national and global affairs. This revelation is unsettling for Radcliffe who had optimistically held on to the idea that despite foreign wars 'his home cannot be invaded' and the 'immediate horrors of them cannot enter cities, or the cottages of an island' (402). As the timeworn Kendal Castle earlier suggested, this scene confirms what Watson terms the 'constitutive disappointment' of literary tourism wherein the expectation often does not live up to the reality.[196] Radcliffe is horrified to discover that the terrors of wars, which she hoped had remained overseas, have been carried with her. The stronghold of national security is unhinged by the revelation that foreign wars are insidiously nestled within the sequestered nook of English pastoralism.

Gothic Intertextuality

Radcliffe attempts to erase the presence of the unsettling outside world by writing the missing texts from the locals' libraries into the Lakeland landscape, pre-empting what Watson explains would become a Victorian fashion of viewing 'the landscape associatively, in terms of historical narrative, in a spirit of romantic documentary'.[197] She draws on canonical, classical English authors, such as Milton and Shakespeare, venerating what Moskal earlier described as

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[195] DeLucia, 'Transnational Aesthetics', p. 150.
[196] Watson, *The Literary Tourist,* p. 13.
[197] Watson, *The Literary Tourist*, p. 162.

'true Englishness'. However, despite the classical appearance of her literary allusions, the intertextual references can be identified as pre-Gothic with their profound magical and supernatural themes intricately connected to the natural environment. Radcliffe imbues nature with magical effects, aligning with Romance traditions that perennially read nature as an active character rather simply a setting of fiction. Radcliffe's description of Brougham Castle echoes the enchantment of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* which Joseph Addison describes in 1712 as 'walking on enchanted ground, and seeing nothing but scenes of magic lying around us'.[198] 'Enchanted Ground', Arthur Johnston writes, was 'the phrase made famous by Hurd' which 'signified the world of magic and faerie found in the romances'.[199] Radcliffe's imaginative ruins are framed by the medieval romance tradition when 'our forefathers looked upon nature with more reverence and horror' and readers of their poetry delighted in 'a pleasing kind of horror' and 'secret terrors' evocative of their childhood tales.[200] This language echoes the vocabulary of the sublime and Gothic. Radcliffe's experience as travel writer, historian, antiquarian, poet, author, romance writer, and Gothic enchantress provides her with a distinctive literary tool kit capable of conveying the multifaceted variety of the Cumbrian landscape that is primarily concerned with the nonhuman world and its relation to the human. Rictor Norton explains that Radcliffe's allusions to the likes of Shakespeare and Milton are 'imprimatur to align her work with high culture […] to demonstrate her taste and even to suggest that she herself belonged among them'.[201] However, in doing so Radcliffe has also created a richly intertextual landscape predicated on romance traditions that unashamedly

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[198] Joseph Addison, 'On the Pleasures of the Imagination', cited in *The Spectator* (London: Henry Washbourne, 1847), p. 481.
[199] Arthur Johnston, *Enchanted Ground: The Study of Medieval Romance in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) p. 9.
[200] Addison, 'On the Pleasures of the Imagination', p. 483.
[201] Christy Desmet and Anne Williams, *Shakespearean Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 46.

suspend reason and revel in the supernatural. As the Miltonian allusions, which I will discuss in more detail, imply with their conjuring of salacious serpents and wicked magicians, Radcliffe's fascination with natural environments is linked to romance traditions of housing evil, darkness, and magic in nature.

Instead of drawing on the more obvious Edenic imagery in *Paradise Lost,* Radcliffe quotes Milton's supernaturally inflected *Comus* to describe the 'pastoral richness' and 'verdant beauty' of St. John's Vale (306). Milton's masque is about a Lady who gets lost in a forest and is subsequently captured by Comus, a necromantic sorcerer. Radcliffe's allusion to *Comus* deliberately summons more overt supernatural connotations than the religious imagery of *Paradise Lost.* However, like Switzerland, Radcliffe's omission of *Paradise Lost* actually conjures its presence as a textual haunting that mirrors *Comus* as its narrative also didactically warns of the potential evil that conceals itself within the beauty of nature. In *Comus*, the Attendant Spirit, Thyrsis, assumes the guise of a shepherd after he is directed by Jove to help the two brothers save their sister from Comus. In St John's Vale, Radcliffe quotes that the herd and the shepherd's footsteps, '"in this office of his mountain watch," are all that haunt 'the dark sequestered nook"' (307). The first quotation originates from the end of the opening monologue in *Comus* delivered by Thyrsis, who disguises himself as the shepherd after he hears Comus's 'tread of hateful steps' (306). Thus Radcliffe, listening to the Cumbrian shepherd work, summons Comus into the scene, which collapses fiction and reality and aligns pastoral realism with the terror of an imperceptible evil. The second quotation belongs to the elder brother, who recognises Thyrsis in the mid-section of the play and asks the spirit why he is in 'the dark sequestered nook', to which the angelic shepherd replies that he has been sent to save their sister from the necromancer. Radcliffe elevates the native shepherd to the spiritual status of Thyrsis, indicative of how significant the shepherd figure is in pastoral imagery and the construction of the cultural landscape. However, in *Comus*, the ominous footsteps belong

to an evil force hidden within the darkness of the disorientating and dangerous woods, yet in St. John's Vale the shepherd and his sheep make the only sounds. The idealised image of rural realism is juxtaposed by the intertextual presence of a maleficent other ready to terrorise this peacefulness. This fear operates on the potential loss of nature, that beauty can easily be subsumed by horror. The real geography of the peaceful vale conflates with the imaginative topography of Milton's obscure woods, which creates a kind of Gothic realism that presents everyday rural life as having the potential for Gothicisation based on a literary history of nascent ecohorror.

There are particular spaces within Cumbria that Radcliffe directly Gothicises, eliciting more explicit supernatural connotations. In a later description of the 'seclusion and sublimity' of the vale of St John, Radcliffe ruminates how 'well suited' it is 'to the deep and wild mysteries of the Druids' (316). Without metaphor, she boldly asserts that 'at moon-light, every Druid, summoned by that terrible horn' gathered by 'one sacrilegious footstep' and celebrated 'a midnight festival by a savage sacrifice' (316). Then she abruptly quotes William Mason's *Caractacus* (1756), 'in rites of such strange potency as, done in open day, would dim the sun, tho' thron'd in noon-tide brightness' (316). In the poem this is proclaimed by Elidurus who, like Radcliffe herself, fearfully refers to the subterranean Druid caverns. Radcliffe imagines 'the very region, which the wild fancy of a poet, like Shakespeare, would people with witches, and shew them at their incantations, calling spirits from the clouds and spectres from the earth' (303). This entanglement of Druidism and sorcery formulates the plot of Radcliffe's narrative poem 'Salisbury Plains' (1826), which contains similar themes to Wordsworth's 'Salisbury Plain' (1793-4). Radcliffe's 'Salisbury Plains', although posthumously published, is estimated to have been written between 1802 and 1811, thus it is possible that her Cumbrian experience loaned itself to the explicit Gothicism of her poem. 'Salisbury Plains' describes a battle between a magical Druid and a werewolf sorcerer hailed by Kirstyn Leuner as an exploration

of 'the absolute fringe of where the human meets the fantastic'.[202] The intertextual and realist connotations that Radcliffe encounters and constructs in the Lakeland landscape become a source of inspiration, which suggests that 'Salisbury Plains' is not a deviation from the Gothic rationalism of her novels that most critics argue, but a continuation of her authorial voice that was developing in her travelogue.

Radcliffe's *Observations* imbues the natural scenery with magical connotations searching for folkloric and textual allusions to attach to place. The prolific intertextuality of her travelogue creates an immersive and experiential sense of space that Radcliffe performs to the reader. Magical folklore particularly resonates throughout the discourse used to describe the Lakes exemplified by her allusions to *Comus* as opposed to *Paradise Lost*. Descending the 'romantic fells' into Keswick, Radcliffe writes that the lake below was concealed in its 'rocky cauldron' that has magical connotations (317). The natural environment is transformed into fantasy, assimilating the properties of its textual associations. Radcliffe conveys the natural through the supernatural, inspired by both her fictional imagination owed to the 'wild' fancies of poets 'like Shakespeare' that she projects on to place, often adding to the folkloric associations already connected with these spaces. Radcliffe emphasises the supernatural magnetism of the Vale of Newland with further comparisons to *Comus*. Radcliffe analogises her first view of Derwentwater with the moment the sun solemnly sets on the Lady estranged from her brothers in Milton's poem. Unlike the earlier contrasting imagery of *Comus* and St John's Vale, here Radcliffe directly compares her experience to *Comus*. This is reaffirmed by

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[202] Kirstyn Leuner, 'Defanging Ann Radcliffe's "Salisbury Plains": The Unexplained Supernatural, Myth, and History', Paper delivered at NASSR 2011, "Romanticism and Independence," (2011), <https://kirstynleuner.wordpress.com/2011/08/24/defanging-ann-radcliffe's-"salisbury-plains"-the-unexplained-supernatural-myth-and-history> [accessed October 2019].

her description of the 'wildness, seclusion, and magical beauty of this vale', which, she conjectures, make it the appropriate 'abode' for the poem's eponymous figure, '"deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries"' (326). Radcliffe conjures the sorcerer into the present place, imagining him hurling '"his dazzling spells in to the air"' (326). She desires to 'believe' in the '"stories of old, in high immortal verse"' (326). This is quoted from Thyrsus who is about to convince the brothers that the unbelievable tales of hell, heaven, and monstrous beings are indeed real and very much present (327). This analogous allusion collapses the Lakeland vale with Comus's forest creating a hybridised space that is both real and imagined. The shared similarities between the topographies of the vale and Milton's setting bring fantasy to life. Disbelief of the supernatural is suspended in the mystery and seclusion of the Lakeland landscape where Gothic fantasies are lived experience. Radcliffe then fancies to hear '"the sound of riot and ill manag'd merriment"' that lured the Lady to Comus (326). Radcliffe positions herself as the Lady being lured to join the revelry of Lakeland locals. The peacefulness of the vale is intruded on by the haranguing of the carnivalesque that incites chaos, a temporary repression of societal constraints and countercultural release. These sounds are then succeeded by the music that Comus describes his mother and the bewitching sirens singing, which '"lull the sense, / and, in sweet madness, rob it of itself"' (326). Radcliffe's sensory depictions of the vale immerse her and, in turn, her readers within the enchanting locality and idealised Lakeland life.

As the siren song implies, however, the enchantment of rural life simultaneously presents the possibility of losing oneself in the process. The Radcliffe analysis hitherto has highlighted her reading of the landscape as an intertextual, imaginative and symbolic space, which she overlays magical and supernatural connotations on to, creating presence where there was absence. Her response to the Lakeland landscape has, so far, been mediated by pre-existing Gothic and pre-Gothic traditions. I will now explore how the intrinsic properties of the

Lakeland landscape further inspire Gothic narrativisation, as well as the uncanny process of domestic tourism and the alienating effect of encounters with the non-human world.

Regional Gothic Tourism

Domestic travel is an act of self-exploration, a discovery of one's national body, which is problematised by Gothic topographies. Travelling within one's country is an inherently uncanny experience, because of the ambivalent role of the native tourist who becomes a guest within their homeland. Regional travel defamiliarises nationalistic behaviours and unravels national identity, fracturing the homogenised self into provincial personalities. The traveller becomes othered through the exploration of their national self, unearthing parts of their identity that simultaneously reject them. The breakdown of self and other is a popular concept in modern criticism, which has developed into more nuanced understandings of this complex binary. In *Gothic Britain*, Ruth Heholt and Sarah Illott's chapters explore fascinating representations of this dualism, which internalises the threat of the other in their studies on Cornish and Kentish Gothic respectively. Ruth Heholt argues that Cornwall's attachment to the mainland 'emphasises its otherness' expounding that 'the spaces of uncertainty, ambivalence and difference that are nearest to 'us' always pose the greatest threats and instabilities'.[203] Heholt's analysis of *The Plague* and *The Reptile* argues that Cornwall's peripheral position makes it receptive to invasion by the other and concludes that the 'foreign is already at home'.[204] The same is true for Cumbria that is encircled by England's 'others', bordering its peripheral position: the Irish Sea flanks the West, the Scottish borderland demarcates the north, the Howgills encircle the East, accentuating the region's extreme insider and outsider situation. Sarah Ilott identifies Dover Castle as a destructive chronotope associated

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[203] Ruth Heholt, 'The Hammer House of Cornish Horror: The Inversion of Imperial Gothic in *The Plague of the Zombies* and *The Reptile*', *Gothic Britain,* p. 197.
[204] Heholt, 'The Hammer House of Cornish Horror', p. 208

with a 'construction of Britishness located in hazily remembered archives of the past'.[205] Ilott's study revolves around the hostile host whose xenophobic resentment is directed towards the innocent other. The threat, Ilott argues, is not 'an attack on the castle', but of 'the castle itself, as a structure that implies conflict, defence, and an insistence on a bygone way of life'.[206] Heholt and Ilott's essays are thought-provoking examples of why regional Gothic can be a particularly potent source of Gothic inspiration, primarily by exploiting their liminal insider/outsider status and destructive, regressive nostalgia. However, these arguments still rely on the presence of a foreign other and the violation of external borders. So what happens when the self explores within their own boundaries, but instead of finding themselves they become othered?

The most disturbing aspect of regional Gothic writing is its unwelcoming strangeness *and* its uncanny similarities. Natives become foreign within their own country, encountering unfamiliar customs, behaviours, and cultures that are tethered to an unstable collective identity whilst being unnervingly different. Moskal argues that the diachronic structure of Radcliffe's travel guide produces two narratives: one that represents the hostility of the Continent and one that signifies the comforting return to England.[207] This structure reinforces the familiar oppositional binary between self and other that Moskal is drawing on here in order to separate Englishness and Foreignness. However, as Radcliffe collapses the distinction between international, fictional, and real locations, it is impossible to maintain such polar differentiation. The threats that destabilise personal subjectivity and elicit terror in Cumbria are connected with its Gothic topography, composed of both natural and cultural objects, but I will firstly concentrate on its Gothic ecology before turning to representations of ruins.

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[205] Sarah Illot, 'Gothic Immigration: Kentish Gothic and the Borders of Britishness', *Gothic Britain,* p. 228.
[206] Illot, 'Gothic Immigration', p. 228.
[207] Moskal, 'Ann Radcliffe's Lake District', p. 56.

Elizabeth Parker and Michelle Poland introduce the inaugural *Gothic Nature* (2019) journal with two tales; the first casts nature as the villain and the second begins with the death of nature. These scenarios represent the two fundamental storylines of EcoGothic literature that either preys on the perennial fear of the nonhuman or espouses fear of environmental collapse and its impact on humanity. Parker and Poland summarise the aim of the journal to explore both representations of Gothic Nature – 'that is, the Nature in Gothic and the Gothic in Nature'.[208] My final chapter articulates the Gothic in Nature and demonstrates the effects of such sustained ecophobia and its impact on Cumbria's natural environment. The following analysis of Radcliffe's Cumbrian Gothic topography, however, analyses the 'Nature in Gothic', which encapsulates Parker and Poland's assessment of nature as 'Other, excessive, unpredictable, disruptive, chaotic, enticing, supernaturally powerful, and, perhaps most disturbingly, *alive*.'[209]

Both Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's lived experiences that inform their fictional work challenge romanticised notions of self-discovery and affinity with nature. Radcliffe asserts:

> among the things to be gained by seeing the lakes is a conception of the extreme wildness of their boundaries. You arrive with a notion, that you can and dare rove anywhere amongst the mountains; and have only to see three to have the utmost terror of losing your way (227)

Radcliffe's reference to the 'extreme wildness' of Cumbria's boundaries presents disorder as an appealing attraction. Furthermore, its topography is initially exhilarating and self-affirming, yet Radcliffe's experience alludes to a physical and deeper psychological self-othering in connecting with this landscape. Radcliffe's ambivalent and often contradictory descriptions are symptomatic of the Gothic cusp she is writing within that Romantically positions nature

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[208] Elizabeth Parker and Michelle Poland, '*Gothic Nature*: An Introduction', *Gothic Nature*, 1 (2019), p. 1.
[209] Parker and Poland, '*Gothic Nature*', p. 1.

attractively, whilst resonating with the abject repulsion of earlier writers that fear nature. Wordsworth expresses this duality when he recalls being fostered 'alike by beauty and by fear', which echoes Radcliffe's representation of nature in *Udolpho* when she describes the Alpine valley as 'beauty sleeping in the lap of horror'.[210] However, Radcliffe borrows this description from Gilpin who originally quotes 'the late Mr. Aviton, organist of St. Nicholas at Newcastle' to describe Derwentwater sitting amidst the mountains, exclaiming that 'here is beauty indeed – Beauty lying in the lap of horror!'[211] I earlier argued that the author relocated Alpine terror to the Lakes after her incomplete tour, but this demonstrates that this particular representation originated in the Cumbrian landscape. Radcliffe, Wordsworth and Gilpin constitute a Cumbrian tradition of representing the aesthetic and atmosphere of mountainous landscapes in terms of beauty and fear.

The 'spots of time' in *The Prelude* balance the beauty of the natural environment with terror, which is often a result of human intervention in nature. For example, in the drowned man scene Wordsworth recalls seeing a body pulled from the lake, manifesting terror by contrasting the beauty of the natural environment with the horror of death. Using Gothic pathetic fallacy of 'twilight' and 'gloom', he creates an atmosphere of obscurity and nervous anticipation that is typically associated with this liminal temporality (1799, I, 266). For Radcliffe's heroine, Emily, in *Mysteries of Udolpho*, however, 'the gloom of the woods; the trembling of their leaves […] the bat, flitting on the twilight […] were circumstances that awakened her mind into effort, and led to enthusiasm and poetry'.[212] This betwixt time is loaded with creative potential, allowing a momentary blurring of reality ruled by the imagination.

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[210] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 55.
[211] William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland,* 2 vols, (London: Printed for R. Blamire, 1786), vol. 1, p. 183.
[212] Radcliffe, *Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 9.

Despite the indistinctness of the evening, Wordsworth 'distinctly' sees 'A heap of garments' abandoned on the opposite side of the lake (1799, I, 266-9). There is a strange distortion of sight in recollection; it is paradoxically unclear yet distinctive, the abnormalities etched in the cloudiness of his memory. The following day a body was retrieved from the lake; 'the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene / Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright / Rose with his ghastly face' (1799, I, 277-9). The juxtaposition of the ghastly corpse and the 'beauteous' scene evokes Mark Fisher's concept of 'the weird', which he explains is 'constituted by a presence – the presence of that which does not belong'.[213] The intrusion of horror is made more powerful by its incongruity with the beautiful setting. Wordsworth subverts Radcliffe's 'beauty lying in the lap of horror' by relocating the source of terror to the bottomless depths of the lake, demonstrating how pervasive fear is in the entirety of Cumbria's natural landscape. He constructs the retrieval of the body in Gothic terms as the animated corpse appears like the living dead, mobilised from its subterranean grave, fixating on its deathly appearance, which is particularly haunting for the reader and clearly for the poet. Haunting is endemic in Wordsworth's 'spots of time' that populate both the physical landscape and the poet's memory with Gothic doublings; Wordsworth is haunted by the memory of the places in which traumatic events occurred and then haunts these places with his memories.

Radcliffe and Wordsworth particularly rely on sublime discourse to frame the coexistence of fear and pleasure in singular experiences. Both writers were influenced by Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), which is generally regarded as the foundational text for sublime aesthetics that Radcliffe quotes from directly in her treatise 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' extracted from *Gaston de Blondeville*. Burke's understanding that the most provocative sites of the sublime are those that inspire fear and danger lends itself to Gothic affect. Furthermore, an important

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[213] Mark Fisher, *The Weird and The Eerie* (London: Repeater, 2016), p. 27.

tenet of the Burkean sublime that particularly correlates with Gothic fiction is the notion that pain, fear and near-death experiences can paradoxically be pleasurable when experienced from a position of safety. Prior to sublime aesthetics, Ernest Giddey writes that 'mountains, with their wild irregularity, are a permanent manifestation of ugliness', highlighting the visual displeasure that characterised pre-Romantic ascents. [214] Giddey credits the likes of Rousseau for the cultural transformation of mountains that led to the gradual amelioration of appreciating rugged scenery. [215] The once derogatory dread of vast mountainscapes then became scenes of creative and cultural awakening. Bainbridge explores this further, suggesting 'the value of ascent lies in its potential for transforming self and society'.[216] Such expectations transformed mountaineering into a revered pursuit that romanticised ascents, but the undeniable danger of this landscape and past perceptions of the landscape are still integral to such experiences. I explore how the mountainous topography elicits powerful instances of the sublime in Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's writing, which is a key characteristic of Cumbrian Gothic.

'Dark and Monstrous' Mountains

The transitional period of the late eighteenth century celebrates the physical and psychological benefits of mountaineering, yet the irregularities of the mountains and the changeability of the natural environment creates conflict amongst its shifting cultural perception. Bainbridge acknowledges this ambivalence, exemplifying that Wordsworth himself 'contested and even at times denied the moral and ethical value of ascent'.[217] Like the 'constitutive disappointment'

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[214] Ernest Giddey, '1816: Switzerland and the Revival of the Grand Tour', *The Byron Journal*, 19 (1991), p. 18.

[215] Giddey, 'Revival of the Grand Tour', p. 19.

[216] Simon Bainbridge, '"The Columbus of the Alps" Rousseau and the Writing of Mountain Experience in British Literature of the Romantic Period', *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and British Romanticism: Gender and Selfhood, Politics,* ed. by Russell Goulbourne and David Higgins (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 60.

[217] Bainbridge, 'Rousseau and the Writing of Mountain Experience', p. 63.

of literary tourism, the variability of mountaineering experiences could not always live up to the unattainable standards of personal and spiritual enlightenment. During Walpole and Gray's crossing of the Alps, Walpole's dog was eaten by a wolf and he claimed the 'horrors' of the mountains too dangerous to appreciate their beauty.[218] Leaving the mountains, Walpole understandably wished to 'never see them again'; William Lyon Phelps, however, contrarily described Gray as 'one of the first men in Europe who had any appreciation of wild and romantic scenery' after reading his enthusiastic report of the matter.[219] As an early mountaineering account, Walpole and Gray find themselves within the shifting signification of mountains and their differing perspectives is indicative of the ambivalence between alpine horror and awe-inspiring terror. As Dickens and Collins's walk up Carrock Fell can attest, the fearful Cumbrian fells in bad weather can be just as terrifying as the impressive Alps. They liken its precipices to 'Mont Blanc', borrowing Radcliffe's comparative technique of collapsing geographies for sardonic effect.[220] However, their sarcastic hyperbole is arrested by the obscuring 'mountain mist' that quickly converts their confident climb into a 'sublime spectacle', amplifying their fears of becoming 'lost on the mountain'.[221] Despite their initial mockery of Carrock's scale in comparison to the Alps, the effect of the sublime elicits the same fearful response. Collins's character calamitously sprains his ankle and finds himself in almost mortal danger, worrying 'that another ten minutes at most would find him at the end of his last physical resources.'[222] It is only when they are safely on their homeward journey that their landlord-turned-guide indulges in some storytelling about a past guest who had got lost on

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[218] Marjorie Hope Nicholson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 355.
[219] William Lyon Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement: A Study in Eighteenth Century Literature* (Boston, 1893), p. 166.
[220] Dickens, *Lazy Tour*, p. 11.
[221] Dickens, *Lazy Tour*, p. 11.
[222] Dickens, *Lazy Tour*, p. 11.

Carrock and was 'found the next morning, scared and starved; and who never went out afterwards, except on his way to the grave.'[223] Defoe's once barren mountains are now populated with people in the pursuit of the sublime, searching for folklore that plays on the fears that these landscapes realistically present. The dangers of mountaineering evoke material fears of mortality, which manifest as monstrosity in Gothic narratives.

Radcliffe's personal and authorial development highlights the shifting signification of sublime mountains in both her fiction and lived experience. For example, *Udolpho* represents a formulaic sublime experience in Emily's crossing of the Alps and whilst Radcliffe's ascent of Skiddaw parallels her character's account her lived experience offers some revisions based on her subjective and embodied experience of the sublime. Radcliffe's navigation of a Lakeland summit then subtly shapes her application of the sublime in *The Italian*. The most obvious difference is Radcliffe's immediacy to the Lakeland landscape, which evokes an important tenet of the Burkean sublime that requires the object to be viewed from a position of safety, because 'when danger and death press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible'.[224] The mountains actively stimulate fear and are never portrayed in positive terms by Radcliffe; instead they are monstrously ominous, and Wordsworth describes them regularly as punitive. Yi-Fu Tuan develops the idea of 'landscapes of fear', which is predicated on the mental and material effects of certain places that are predisposed to cause alarm and anxiety in the subject. Like Burke who explicitly refers to mountains as a source of the sublime, Tuan addresses mountains specifically as a topographical feature synonymous with fear. He qualifies that they 'injured only those who encroached upon their domain' but recognises how their 'commanding and ominous presence' can 'induce dread

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[223] Dickens, *Lazy Tour*, p. 14.
[224] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* pp. 59-60.

in the people of subjacent valleys'.[225] Radcliffe reaffirms this with her description of Cumbria's southern ridgeline that is composed of intersecting summits which fell in 'deep and abrupt precipices', appearing to 'sink in a bottomless abyss' (204). This despairingly bleak image is reiterated by her emphasis of their darkness; 'dark and awful' (213), 'dark and monstrous summits' (230). The vastness of the mountains and almost infinite scale is exaggerated by the semantics of darkness. The mountainous irregularities are pathologized as deformities, imagined as 'threatening forms' with a 'grotesque appearance', evoking monstrosity, ugliness and repulsion (377). Unlike the mountains being a portent of danger or simply staging and facilitating evil like *Comus*, Radcliffe's lived experience recognises the mountainous landscape as independently monstrous.

In the stolen boat 'spot of time', Wordsworth similarly transfigures the mountain, which is already fearful, into a monstrous entity. After the initial incident, the same figures remain in his mind, but are distorted by memory. The 'familiar shapes of hourly objects', all of which relate to nature, are replaced by 'huge and mighty forms that do not live / Like living men' that 'moved slowly through my mind / By day, and were the trouble of my dreams' (1799, I, 127-9). The life-like purposefulness of the animated cliff that was horrifying when it initially pursued after him on the lake has become even more terrifying in its virtual state. The physical landscape becomes ghostly terrain that eerily occupies the shadows of his subconscious erupting into nightly terrors. Wordsworth's tendency to anthropomorphise nature is often to emphasise the human affinity of the self in harmony with nature, but here it has a pejorative effect emphasising only his difference. The 'huge and mighty forms that do not live / Like living men' are not like him. These ambulatory forms challenge Tuan's earlier assessment that mountains only endanger those that are in the vicinity of them, as Wordsworth's terrifying

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[225] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), p. 7.

experience both mobilises the mountain during the act and mentally haunts him wherever he goes. The fearful affect of these forms has made them monstrous others and the stuff of nightmares, preternaturally materialising his disconnect from the natural world.

Mountains appear otherworldly in all respects; distance from them can alter their appearance, darkness shrouds them, closeness to them highlights their vastness and ascent especially positions the subject vulnerably. When Radcliffe descends Skiddaw, she describes how the valley recovers its distinctive topographical features, suggesting that the landscape changed instead of her situational perspective. As Radcliffe relinquishes her bird's-eye view, the topography composes itself, recovering its 'dignity' as she renounces her commanding position. Radcliffe's descent returns the world to normality 'as if her elevated views had been a distortion, hallucination, or enchantment' (79). Reaffirming Bainbridge's assessment, Radcliffe notes a perceptible change 'in the climate, which became comparatively warm' and the buzzing of bees remerged (342). The summit occupies an otherworldly position, whose alternative existence is signalled by the contrasting weather and absence of lower-lying species and horticulture. Sublime nature stages such an excess of the natural that it exceeds human understanding and mirrors 'gothic styles', which Botting proclaims 'disturb the borders of knowing and conjure up obscure otherworldly phenomena' such as this transfiguration of the summit into a transgressive and enchanting space that also is 'characterised as delusion, apparition, deception.'[226]

Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's manifestation of monstrous mountains ironically presents them as unnatural, expressing a type of ecophobia that perceives the natural world as dangerous and threatening. All along Borrowdale's mountain pass, fragments of rock obstruct Radcliffe's path and deny entry to obscure, endless chasms until they reached a fell that looked like the 'roof of a house reversed' (352). This subversive image perfectly encapsulates the

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[226] Botting, *Gothic*, p. 2.

unhomeliness of the mountains; this is no place for people. She animatedly characterises Borrowdale valley by its surrounding 'pyramid of naked cliff', seclusion by 'terrible masses' and rocky fragments, which were haphazardly strewn about in 'tremendous ruin', opening from the 'centre of the amphitheatre' (350-351). This image of naked forms and rocky ruins gathering in a mass implicitly reads as nature's performance of a witches' sabbath or a pagan gathering around one of Cumbria's many stone circles. The abundance of nature and absence of people in Radcliffe's descriptions correlates with Fisher's description of the 'eerie', which he explains can be found 'more readily in landscapes partially emptied of the human'.[227] Thus, an eerie atmosphere is more readily available in rural landscapes that abound in the non-human. As Sam George further explains, the eerie appears in absences presenting 'a landscape constituted more actively by what is missing than by what is present, a spectred, rather than "a scepter'd isle"'.[228] Cumbrian folklorism and antiquarianism also exemplifies this reconciliation of absence that evokes the eerie. Hutchinson's representation of the Vale of St. John describes the 'ancient castle' as 'awful, rude and gothic'; he does not dare to inspect it more closely in case the inhabitants equipped with 'supernatural arts and necromancy…strip it of all its beauties'.[229] Hutchinson appreciates its Gothic architectural style that is outwardly visible, but imaginatively populates it with the everyday Gothic of Cumbrian culture that he disdains. By imagining the ruin replete with magical associations, he conjures them into being by believing that 'The vale seems like the habitation of such beings; - its gloomy recesses and retirements look like the haunts of evil spirits'.[230] The spatial distance from the castle allows his creative imagination to fill the gap with fictive imagery of eerie objects. However, like Radcliffe's

[227] Fisher, *The Weird*, p. 11.
[228] Sam George, 'Wolves in the Wolds: Late Capitalism, the English Eerie, and the Weird Case of 'Old Stinker' the Hull Werewolf', *Gothic Studies*, 21.1 (2019), p. 69.
[229] Hutchinson, *An Excursion to the Lakes,* pp. 103-104.
[230] Hutchinson, *An Excursion to the Lakes*, p. 104.

veiling device in *Udolpho*, they discovered as they grew nearer that the castle 'changed its figure, and proved no other than a shaken, massive pile of rocks'.[231] Both Radcliffe and Hutchinson are self-aware in their desire to supernaturally transform and mysticise the landscape. Hutchinson's discovery of their momentary delusion is palpably disappointing. Appreciation for the actual landscape, the 'pile of rocks', is diminished in comparison with his supernatural narrativization despite his apparent contempt.

The instability of the natural landscape, such as Hutchinson's 'shaken' pile of rocks, inspires the characteristic destabilisation of its descriptions. Tuan classifies fearful landscapes as 'almost infinite manifestations of the forces for chaos, natural and human', which is exemplified by Borrowdale's topographical transfigurations.[232] Horrifying, haunting imagery takes full effect as Radcliffe describes the 'dark rocks' that 'yawn at its entrance, terrific as the wildness of a maniac; and disclose a narrow pass, running up between mountains of granite, that are shook into almost every possible form of horror' (350). The imagery of the yawning rocks positions them as a mouth ready to engulf prospective visitors, which is suggestive of the overpowering abundance of the natural world that can readily consume humanity. The maniac reference is especially pertinent to my second chapter's discussion of Cumbria's lunacy crisis, but the sheer animation of the fells yawning, maniacal and shaking reimagines the immoveable mountains as a living landscape mobilised to enact 'every possible' horror. Radcliffe quotes Gray when she is standing atop Skiddaw to describe the 'turbulent chaos of dark mountains', which, in its original context, was used to describe

> the jaws of Borodale, with that turbulent Chaos of mountain behind mountain roll'd in
> confusion; beneath you, & stretching far away to the right, the shining purity of the

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[231] Hutchinson, *An Excursion to the Lakes*, p. 104.
[232] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, p. 5.

Lake, just ruffled by the breeze enough to shew it is alive, reflecting rocks, woods, fields, & inverted tops of mountains[233]

Radcliffe literalises the 'jaws of borrowdale' with her anthropomorphised description and is clearly influenced by Gray's chaotic imagery. Gray's Borrowdale evokes 'beauty lying in the lap of horror' with the contrasting 'chaos of mountain' and 'the shining beauty of the lake'. However, even the lake is weirdly 'alive', animated by the wind and reflecting back a Gothic doubling of the terrors above, reaffirming Parker and Poland's earlier description of Gothic nature as 'chaotic…and, perhaps most disturbingly, *alive*.'

This ecophobic rhetoric aligns with a Romantic-era fascination with natural disasters, which reorients nature as volatile and destructive and positions the non-human as an enemy to the human. Borrowdale resembles the devastation left by an earthquake 'splintered, shivered, piled, amassed' (351). Its glacial carvings are topographical signs of trauma that survived an intensive process of becoming – something that human civilisation could not endure. These emotions are intensified when Radcliffe approaches the foot of Skiddaw and sublime terror becomes interlaced with horror. This is made explicit by an evocative metaphor, which marks a shift in Radcliffe's comparative imagery: 'Skiddaw, with its double top, resembling a volcano, the cloudy vapours ascending from its highest point, like smoke, and sometimes rolling in wreaths down its sides' (315). The foreboding threat that Skiddaw poses is analogous to a smouldering volcano, which was especially pertinent to eighteenth-century tourists and artists who frequented Naples in the pursuit of Mount Vesuvius. The volcano was a popular destination on the Italian leg of the Grand Tour since Thomas Nugent's recommendation in his guidebook, *Grand Tour: Containing an Exact Description of most of the Cities, Towns and Remarkable Places of Europe* (1743).

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[233] Thomas Gray, *Thomas Gray's Journal of His Visit to the Lake District in October 1769*, ed. by Robert Williams (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), p. 161.

During the year of Radcliffe's tour, a major eruption in Vesuvius's history occurred. The impact of this eruption on Radcliffe's imagination first appears in her depictions of the Lakeland mountains, which is reiterated by the central role that Vesuvius plays in *The Italian* (1797). The volcano is foregrounded in the opening pages, which describes the peaceful Bay of Naples disrupted 'by the hollow murmurs of Vesuvius which threw up, at intervals its sudden flame on the horizon, and then left it to darkness.'[234] The awful Vesuvius juxtaposed with the serenity of the surrounding Naples perfectly captures the contrast between sublime nature and picturesque domesticity, which inspired many artistic representations at the time beyond Radcliffe. It certainly had a lasting effect on Gothic literature as the iconic Varney the Vampire commits suicide by throwing himself into Vesuvius, ensuring that his incinerated body would not be able to revive itself. Radcliffe was fascinated by Italy, to the extent that she chose it as the setting of what would be her final novel published whilst she was still alive. As she never travelled to Italy, popular opinion, science, art, and fellow travel writers frame her representation of the Italian landscape. Radcliffe's approach to Skiddaw particularly resonates with Joseph Wright's painting entitled *Vesuvius in Eruption, with a View over the Islands in the Bay of Naples* (c. 1776-80). Wright's Vesuvius dominates the canvas and towers ominously over the starkly serene bay under the brightly lit lava-filled sky. His expert use of chiaroscuro shadows some retreating villagers. At first glance, their shading and composition partially blends them into the rocky outcrops: a foreshadowing of their fate should they fail to escape, exemplifying the insignificance of human life in the face of sublime nature. Not unlike a volcanic eruption that engulfs its surroundings, Radcliffe claims that Skiddaw 'shut out all prospect, but of its own vallies and precipices' (332). The more of the mountain that Radcliffe

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[234] Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents, A Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 10. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses after the quotation.

ascends, the more the world disappears. Skiddaw is actively eclipsing the rest of existence from view, almost apocalyptically.

Wright's frightful scene became reality in 1783 when a group of volcanoes erupted in Iceland, which had a devastating impact globally. A poisonous fog spread across Europe and persisted for several weeks turning the sun red, effusing sulphur, scorching crops, burning eyes, throats, and mouths, inducing coughing fits, raining ash in Scotland, producing suffocating heat, violent storms and severe winters with high fatality.[235] Later earthquakes in Italy, responsible for the deaths of 30,000 people, would also be connected to the mysterious haze as well as shooting 'fireballs' in the sky.[236] Whilst scholars like Benjamin Franklin connected these strange occurrences with the Icelandic volcanoes, the supernatural presided over rural communities signalling a sure sign of 'God's displeasure or that the world was coming to an end'.[237] The eruption had far-reaching and prolonged fatal consequences that were reported in media outlets, which 'fuelled a mood of terrible dread'.[238] Charles Simeon reports when he returned home to Cambridge that, 'Many whom I left in my parish well are dead; and many dying'.[239] The fearful devastation of volcanoes was bound up with both scientific and supernatural causality that had such unprecedented worldwide impact years later. Radcliffe wrote at a time when the dangers of volcanoes were known and still being fully realised. As Burke proclaims, any object which 'excited the ideas of pain, and danger', anything that is 'terrible […] or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime'*.[240] Radcliffe's comparison of Skiddaw to a volcano makes the mountain analogous to terror,

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[235] See, Alexandra Witze and Jeff Kanipe, *Island on Fire: The Extraordinary Story Of Laki, The Volcano That Turned Eighteenth-Century Europe Dark* (London: Profile Books, 2013).
[236] Witze and Kanipe, *Island on Fire,* p. 21.
[237] Witze and Kanipe, *Island on Fire,* p. 150.
[238] Witze and Kanipe, *Island on Fire,* p. 152.
[239] Witze and Kanipe, *Island on Fire,* p. 152.
[240] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, p. 58.

implicitly exciting fear, pain, danger, and fatality by way of association. The volcanic Skiddaw becomes engaged with natural objects capable of having a devastating and destructive effect on human life rendering the subject powerless in the natural world.

Radcliffe's summit of Skiddaw – her allegorical encounter and summit of a volcano – justifies how she downplays the dangers of Vesuvius in *The Italian*. Whilst the volcano remains a sublime spectacle in the novel, it is without any pressing sense of danger that Radcliffe experienced whilst climbing Skiddaw. Without a trace of terror, Paulo greatly admires the 'blazing' mountain that sets the waves 'on fire' (159) and Ellena appreciatively 'wept' at the sight of Vesuvius because it signalled she was home (288). Paulo echoes her reaction, rejoicing 'giorno felíce!' at the welcome sight of 'that old mountain […] spouting up fire' (413). The volcano is an integral topographical feature of Naples that symbolises the centrepiece of their home, their personal identity, and community. Radcliffe's lived experience of the sublime represents Skiddaw as unnervingly transformative, shifting, and inconstant. She observes the 'shivered slate, which threatened to slide down with them with every gust of wind' (335). Her animation of the slate emphasises the mountain's instability, a natural ruin that is physically crumbling and threatens to take them with it. It is not just the physical danger that the loose scree poses, as Radcliffe continues, 'the broken state of this slate makes the present summits seem like the ruins of others' (335). This collapsing of the mountains into one another multiplies their scale infinitesimally and links their destruction with regeneration. Eve Sedgwick stresses the importance of thresholds in Gothic literature, explaining that 'the strongest energies inhere in the surface'.[241] Radcliffe's perception of Skiddaw's trembling, shivering and quaking surface is self-annihilating, volatile and a superficial symbol of totalising instability. Mountains, despite their solid and venerable appearance, are geologically always in

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[241] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, (New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 12

motion and subject to erosion so can be interpreted as symbols of transmutability. Wordsworth also shares this sentiment when he steals away on the boat, but the cliff 'upreared its head', rising 'up between me and the stars', and 'with measured motion, like a living thing strode after me' (409-412). Wordsworth places the mountain in a liminal position between him (earth, the human world) and the stars (celestial, spiritual), which elevates nature above the poet and emphasises their fluidity. Both Wordsworth and Radcliffe mobilise mountains as empowered beings that threaten their mortality and haunt their existence.

This transgression of physical forms is amplified by the use of atmospheric sound and silence, which foreground the fears of the material environment. After Wordsworth stole the woodcock, he 'heard among the solitary hills / low breathings coming after me' (1705, 49). When breaking the raven's eggs, he hears a 'strange utterance' in the blowing wind (1705, 64) and 'mountain echoes' pursue him on the hijacked boat (1705, 101). Joan Passey asserts that 'The Gothic is, ultimately, a genre founded upon excess - of feeling, sensation, experience, pain, passion and for Radcliffe, sound.'[242] However, there are instances of the sublime that rob Radcliffe of these sensations, which she articulates in *Mysteries of Udolpho* when Emily attempts to describe the Alps and its 'scenes of sublimity', but 'no colours of language dare to paint'.[243] This reflects Burke's description of 'astonishment', which is 'caused by the great and sublime in nature…that state of the soul, in which all motions are suspended, with some degree of horror'.[244] When this occurs, the subject is entirely preoccupied with the object that arrests attention. This horrifying stupor 'is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree'.[245] Radcliffe experiences astonishment during her ascent of Skiddaw. She attempts to describe the

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[242] Joan Passey,'Sound and Silence: The Aesthetics of the Auditory in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe', *Horror Studies*, 7.2 (2016), p. 190.
[243] Radcliffe, *Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 163.
[244] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* p. 95
[245] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* p. 96.

mountain's topography, but admits it is 'a circumstance as extraordinary in appearance as difficult to be accounted for' (*Observations*, 335). The sheer sublimity of these scenes is not only physically paralyzing, but linguistically too. Fear, for Burke, is the superior quality that 'robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning'.[246] The paralysis of fear and closeness to danger influences the degree of self-control. Radcliffe maintains 'their situation was too critical' to appreciate such sublimity — the single-track 'ledge' barely accommodating one horse — so they 'followed the guide in silence and…had no leisure for exclamation' (*Observations*, 334). Determining her experience too 'critical', Radcliffe is too close to the sublime object which eclipses its positive effects and induces only horror.

This experience of the sublime supersedes terror with horror, which repulses Radcliffe in her lived experience but attracts Emily. Emily's female companion, Madame Montoni, 'shuddered' and Emily 'recoiled', looking down the 'precipices' that they skirted along, but Emily's fear mingled with 'delight, such admiration, astonishment, and awe, as she had never experienced before' (*Udolpho*, 166). Emily's experience is reminiscent of Wordsworth's 'troubled pleasure', things that he would do impulsively for enjoyment that are often marred by punitive consequence (1705, 91). Emily experiences all of the characteristically positive attributes of sublime encounters that Burke illustrates. Meanwhile, Radcliffe describes Skiddaw's streams that 'are sublime from the length and precipitancy of their course, which, hurrying the sight with them into the abyss…and to save ourselves from following, we recoil from the view with involuntary horror' (*Observations*, 332). Whilst both Emily and Radcliffe's descriptions are explicitly sublime in language and affect — which prompts both women to recoil from the sublime object — their subsequent responses differ. Emily is fascinated by the awe-inspiring cliff faces, whilst Radcliffe withdraws 'with involuntary horror'. The paradoxical nature of the sublime is clearly evident here as Radcliffe is drawn towards the

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[246] Burke, *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* p. 96.

streams, but instinctively forces herself to recoil from the edge 'to save ourselves from following'. The horrifying aspect of the sublime summit presents both a physical and psychological danger.

The latent ecohorror of Radcliffe's sublime experience suggests that nature is an uncontrollable entity to be feared by humans. Tuan proposes that landscapes of fear produce 'two powerful sensations', the first of which is 'fear of the imminent collapse of his world and the approach of death – that final surrender of integrity to chaos'.[247] This is evoked by Skiddaw's volcanic imagery that signifies ultimate chaos, reiterated by the loose scree and jagged peaks, perpetually reminding Radcliffe of her own mortality and the destructive potential of the mountain. Tuan's second observation is that of 'personalised evil, the feeling that the hostile force, whatever its specific manifestation, possesses will'.[248] On Skiddaw, Radcliffe reveals that her fear originates from the impulse towards self-annihilation, a desire for death provoked by such dramatic and overawing scenery. Both Wordsworth and Radcliffe animate mountains as landscapes of fear that can manipulate their thoughts and actions. Emily's crossing of the Alps contrasts with Radcliffe's summit experience, as her heroine's multi-day adventure more readily facilitates inspiration demonstrated by the sonnet she writes in response, whereas Radcliffe's summit is a 'literal and figurative high point'.[249] Radcliffe's Skiddaw ascent is a 'miniaturised version of Emily's Alpine crossing, compressing into a single day, the sights and emotions that her heroine had over several'.[250] Therefore, the physicality of the journey actively influences her corresponding creativity. Radcliffe's lived experience of the sublime reveals that inspiration is not always immediate, as her description of the summit states: 'the air on this summit was boisterous, intensely cold and difficult to be inspired'

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[247] Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, p. 7.
[248] Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, p. 7.
[249] Bainbridge, *Mountaineering and British Romanticism,* p. 208
[250] Bainbridge, *Mountaineering and British Romanticism*, p. 207

(*Observations*, 340). Her personal discomfort and danger of lived experience impedes her ability to imaginatively create in the way that fiction can. The metafictional digressions in *Udolpho* were poorly received by critics and so they did not appear in her later novels. Although, the intertextuality of the *Journey* reveals how closely intertwined Radcliffe finds landscape and literary imagination, especially as they enable her to belatedly respond to moments that, at the time, fail to incite creativity due to their physical demands.

Radcliffe implies mountainous regions are inhospitable spaces, accessible only to the non-human world, and navigable by select rural figures. In *Udolpho*, Emily proclaims that the Alps 'exhibited a wonderful mixture of solitude and inhabitation, of cultivation and barrenness' (164). Her oxymoronic phrasing exposes tensions within the formulation of this space, a struggle between the human and non-human existence in the Alps. She continues: 'the haunt of man could now only be discovered by the simple hut of the shepherd and the hunter, or by the rough pine bridge thrown across the torrent…but for this vestige of man, it would have been believed only the chamois or the wolf dared to venture' (164). It is easy to imagine Byron's chamois hunter in this solitary landscape placating the despairing Manfred, illustrating the impulse for authors to populate austere places with people and literary associations, remedying Fisher's earlier affirmation of the 'eerie' in unpopulated places. In 'The Value(s) of Landscape: The Sublime, the Picturesque, and Ann Radcliffe', Garland Beasley attempts to instate a binary between Radcliffe's sublime landscapes, 'which are patriarchal spaces that seek to control, dominate, and subjugate both women and nature, and picturesque landscapes, which seek harmony between genders and balance between humans and nature'.[251] Emily's construction predicates on polarities; humans are either shepherds or hunters, one desires to protect nature whilst the other possesses it, whilst animals are either prey (chamois) or

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[251] Garland Beasley, 'The Value(s) of Landscape: The Sublime, the Picturesque, and Ann Radcliffe', *Gothic Nature*, 1 (2019), p. 181.

predators (wolf). Emily then writes a sonnet to imagine what might happen to visitors that attempt to cross this inhospitable place and transgress these polarities, featuring a 'weary traveller', who navigates the 'wild forms of danger', the 'tremendous steeps' and 'pathless precipice' of the sublime Alps (165). Emily imagines the 'forlorn' traveller hesitating before the pine bridge above the 'wild impetuous roar' of the river in the 'hideous chasm' below (165). He 'fears to return, nor dares to venture o'er', but 'desperate' he begins to hedge along the 'tottering plank' (165). The sonnet bleakly concludes 'his weak steps slide, he shrieks, he sinks – he dies!' (165). Emily's pathetic portrayal of the traveller shows his pitiful demise as the result of the overpowering, sublime strength of nature. Radcliffe reaffirms nature's power with her description of Skiddaw's summit that is 'dreadfully sublime' (333). Whilst Emily is able to describe each individual sublime aspect of her scenery, accentuated by 'the reposing beauty of the Italian landscape below' (166), Radcliffe, however, can see nothing else but the sheer mass of Skiddaw. They skirted 'along the ledge of a precipice' – echoing the weary traveller – that fell with 'swift descent' in to the 'heart of Skiddaw' without anything to break the fall or diminish 'the fear it inspired' (334). The extreme bleakness of Skiddaw immobilises creative inspiration. Their situation was 'too critical' to appreciate 'such sublimity' (334). Dumbstruck with fear, they proceeded with their single-file ascent in silence. Eventually, the path widened causing Radcliffe to be 'bold enough to wonder' if she had needed to be so anxious (335). This fleeting thought perfectly demonstrates the transience of horror and the complexities of fear. The pleasures of the sublime are belatedly experienced once in a position of safety. Emily is able to ascend to a higher level of consciousness in *Udolpho* like Wordsworth's 'spiritual elevation' and is overwhelmed with 'new emotions' that the 'astonishing scenery awakened' (163). She 'seemed to have arisen into another world', leaving every 'trifling' care behind; she was occupied by 'grandeur and sublimity', which 'dilated her mind, and elevated the affections of her heart' (163). Emily experiences a characteristic sublime experience that is transcendental

and self-affirming. Contrarily she also feels 'melancholy regret' at the setting sun 'while these lonely feelings were heightened by the spreading gloom, and by the low sounds, heard only when darkness confines attention' (164). Emily's emotional overwhelm mimics the theoretical application of the sublime perfectly, which expands the mind and heightens emotion.

Wordsworth's experiences of the sublime relate more to Radcliffe's lived experience and expand on the punitive, threatening aspects of the natural world. Wordsworth's 'spots' root memories to a form of temporal place that can be located geographically and psychologically. Each recollection is fixed in a physical place, but Wordsworth is both 'disorientated and re-orientated in his location', states Michael Wiley.[252] This is evident in the stolen boat sequence, which is ambiguously located in 1799, discovers itself 'by the shores of Patterdale' in 1805 and is placeless once again by 1850. Wiley argues that Wordsworth's relationship with space-time is relational depending on the poet's own 'shifting temporal perspectives' as he matures.[253] Wordsworth's interpretation of metaphorical place exists topographically, temporally, and psychologically. Clifford Siskin identifies Wordsworth's 'spots' as marking an 'intersection of the poet's physical journey across the landscape and his mental wanderings'.[254] Thus, Wordsworth's experience of place is also premised on fiction, imagination and realism. Despite the revisionary differences concerned with locating the 'spots', each account is topographically specific to natural imagery if not geographically. The boat is situated in its 'usual home' tethered to a willow tree; he glides along the lake surrounded by mountains under the 'grey sky', moon and stars. These elements of a physical location are characteristic of a scenic landscape, which offer comforting constancy throughout his

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[252] Michael Wiley, 'Wordsworth's Spots of Time in Space and Time', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 46.1 (2015), p. 56
[253] Wiley, 'Wordsworth's Spots of Time', p. 56
[254] Clifford Siskin, 'Wordsworth's Gothic Endeavor', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 10.2 (1979), p. 169.

recollections. However, as his terror builds this familiar imagery of the natural world is gripped by the supernatural taking on an alternative form of signification that is 'undetermined' and 'unknown' (1799, I, 121 & 122). Wordsworth then anthropomorphises the cliff with agency as it appears to pursue him. The positioning of the mountain between himself and the stars pointedly signifies a chastising of the poet's ego, acting as a grounding presence standing in between Wordsworth and spiritual elevation.

Mountains epitomise the Burkean sublime and are recurrent emblems of fear and terror in both Radcliffe and Wordsworth. They are an iconic feature that best evokes Cumbria's Gothic topography within the natural landscape. Their shifting signification is dependent upon the opinion of popular aesthetics at the time and this is communicated by Radcliffe's lexicon of topographical inconstancy and instability that figures mountains as symbols of perpetual change and transformation. Radcliffe represents their transmutability in her lived experience and fiction, which demonstrates the contrast between an ideal sublime experience informed by terror and the horror of a short-lived summit. Their natural magnitude makes mountains incomprehensible motifs of the nonhuman world, which are positioned as a threat to the human in terms of ecohorror and phobia. Whilst mountains are the predominant Gothic feature of the natural landscape, I will now argue how ruins are the presiding force of the cultural landscape that contributes to a Cumbrian Gothic.

Revenant Ruins

The mountainous sublime had a profound physiological effect on Radcliffe, but it is her ruin writing in *Observations* that involves her most creative engagements with place, contributing towards the consolidation of a Cumbrian Gothic topography. Radcliffe's representations of mountains and the natural environment are communicated in terms of abundance, constancy and permanence. However, her descriptions of the cultural, human landscape are often

presented as decaying, fragile and ruinous – like the aforesaid state of Kendal Church. Radcliffe thus reserves her most powerful imaginative writing to reanimate and reclaim ruins with fictional and historical associations which preserve the regional landscape and identity. Townshend asserts, 'the power of Radcliffe's writings was such that they imbued Gothic buildings with a new set of literary associations, and therein was thought to lie the proof of her original genius' (132). Townshend coins the term 'topographical Gothic' to describe the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century shift away from fake ruins, follies, and fictional 'castles in the air', and instead move towards more 'authentic', grounded and antiquarian impulses (136). Radcliffe's ruin writing engages with the eighteenth-century tradition of encouraging picturesque travellers to seek out the timeworn ruins of their ancestral past. Uvedale Price writes in *An Essay on the Picturesque* (1796) that 'A temple or palace of Grecian architecture in its perfect entire state, and with its surface and colour smooth and even, either in painting or reality, is beautiful; in ruin it is picturesque.'[255] Like the increasing appreciation of mountains in this period, the aesthetic re-evaluation of ruins increased tourist interest in their visual irregularity, but more so because of their narrative associations. In *Gothic Tourism,* Emma McEvoy notes that Romantic-era travellers would often view 'the ruin as an expression of place'.[256] Ruins are harbingers of the past that enable the viewer/reader to encounter history in situ, offering an intimate connection with a place's historical identity that they can imaginatively reincarnate. However, how the ruins are reimagined is dependent on both personal subjectivity and national context. For example, in Britain, monastic and feudal ruins are generally perceived as a progressive symbol 'from superstition to bright modernity' and

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[255] Sir Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque: As Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the use of studying pictures for the purpose of improving real landscape* (London: J.Robson, 1796), p. 62.
[256] Emma McEvoy, *Gothic Tourism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 145.

towards better leadership.[257] These nationalistic beliefs influence personal values, such as those of Anna Barbauld who, 'as a good Protestant', viewed Catholic ruins as the 'haunts of ignorance and superstition'.[258] Thus, ruins are apposite settings for Gothic expression; the ruined Abbey immediately connotes Catholicism and old castles convey the feudal past wherein the Gothic abounds.

Whilst ruins literalise the destruction of a dark past that offers comfort to Barbauld, the reassuring imagination of this past in turn brings them into the present. As my second chapter explores in greater detail, revenant histories emerge when they can no longer be contained because the social violence they represent is unresolved or reoccurring. To visit a ruin is to visit a haunted site and become haunted by its history. Hamish Mathison and Angela Wright observe that a feudal ruin presents the 'prospect of encountering the restless ghosts of its former inhabitants', the ephemeral manifestations of those 'unjustly treated', or spectral 'embodiments of awful tyranny' informing us of a past 'infinitely more terrifying than the present'.[259] Radcliffe confirms Mathison and Wright's assessment at Brougham Castle, which despite its dilapidated state still displays 'symptoms of the cruelties, by which their first lords revenged upon others…dungeons, secret passages, and heavy iron rings remain to hint of unhappy wretches, who were, perhaps, rescued only by death from these horrible engines of a tyrant's will' (280). Tuan writes that there is 'a perverse streak in human nature that appreciates cruelty and grotesquerie if they pose no immediate danger to self', referring to the fourteenth through to the sixteenth-century fascination with public executions and of picnicking 'under the shadow of the gibbet' making 'spectacles of suffering and pain'.[260] Relics of this remain in the

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[257] Michael Carter, Peter Lindfield and Dale Townshend, *Writing Britain's Ruins* (London: British Library Publishing, 2017) p. 242.
[258] Carter, Lindfield and Townshend, *Writing Britain's Ruins*, p. 250.
[259] Carter, Lindfield and Townshend, *Writing Britain's Ruins*, p. 225.
[260] Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, p. 10.

Cumbrian landscape, exemplified by Wordsworth who recalls getting lost as a little boy in the hills and stumbling upon a place where 'a murderer had been hung in iron chains' symbolised by the remains of a 'mouldered…gibbet mast' (290). It is important to note that the structure had rotted away, so Wordsworth revives the ruin's history and materialises it through storytelling.

The paraphernalia of past imprisonment, according to Mathison and Wright, is supposed to reassure the reader of their less fearful present. The reality of ruins and the various histories that are projected onto edifices are designed to encourage readers to 'tease apart the voice that tells a story from the truthfulness of the tale'.[261] Radcliffe's travelogue, however, is inspired by the material intertextuality of ruins and employs similar polyphonic characteristics evident at Walpole's Strawberry Hill and the following chapter's Cumbrian folklore. Unlike Mathison and Wright's assertion of easily separable tones, there is no dualistic voice in *Observations* allowing the reader to identify what is fact and fiction denying them the reassurance of their reality. Instead, Radcliffe writes in a miscellany of voices by inserting intertextual references and blending various fictions, histories and realities, making it impossible to extrapolate truth from tale. Radcliffe's representation of unstable and crumbling ruins, both literally and temporally, presents conflicting imagery that elides freedom with imprisonment. In Radcliffe's account, the incarcerated victims of Brougham Castle who were freed from captivity by their deaths are still spectrally contained by the ruin. Just as the next chapter's revenant Calgarth Skulls damned themselves to perpetually haunt the site of their abuser, so too do these victims of feudal tyranny turned folkloric figures. As long as the ruins remain, their permanence on earth is assured. Their perpetual recovery by touristic discourses continue to appropriate their 'history' in order to bear relevance to their present. Radcliffe's

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[261] Carter, Lindfield and Townshend, *Writing Britain's Ruins*, p. 226.

ruin writing creates a destabilising labyrinthine narrative that waywardly interweaves time and space in fiction and reality.

Wordsworth's revisions of the visionary dreariness 'spot of time' similarly represent ruins as discursive sites, which is exemplified by his conflation of two murder stories across the 1799 and 1805 versions of *The Prelude*. In 1799, the hanged man is a 'murderer of his wife', which refers to Thomas Lancaster who poisoned his spouse and was hung in Hawkshead in 1672 near the home of Wordsworth's landlady.[262] The only remnant was the 'mouldered' gibbet and a 'long green ridge of turf' that resembled a 'grave' (1799, I, 310-313). In the 1805 edition, Wordsworth recounts the murder that actually happened at Beacon Hill in Penrith in 1767. According to Wordsworth's account, the victim had now been erased but 'the murderer's name' appeared on the nearby turf (1805, XI, 293). This is another inaccuracy as the inscribed initials belonged to the victim, T.P.M (Thomas Parker Murdered), and not the murderer named Thomas Nicholson. Consciously or otherwise, Wordsworth merges two physical places by conflating the folkloric associations attached to them. He involves himself in the non-touristic practice of memorialising a site of local tragedy into an object of superstitious wonder, a tourist attraction, despite his own factual inaccuracy.

Radcliffe's description of Brougham Castle is simultaneously set in the landscape whilst spilling out from it, its 'ruined masses of pale red stone…appeared between groves of fir, beech, oak and ash' (277). This reclamation of culture by nature is reiterated by the 'sturdy mastiff' that now stands sentinel as a 'good effigy' to the porters of a 'former age' (277). The bathetic dehumanization of the past porter comically comments on the castle's diminished stature whilst signifying the displacement of humans via the infiltration of nature. Unlike the preened preserves of modern-day ruins, these eighteenth-century ruins were left to nature. The architectural fragments are literally living walls, usurped by vegetation that is parasitically

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[262] Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, p. 9, footnote no. 8.

growing amongst the remains. Townshend observes that Gilpin 'celebrated the verdancy of Gothic ruin' for symbolizing the 'triumph of the natural order over the world of culture' and for contributing a picturesque prerequisite of roughness to the scene.[263] Wordsworth's mouldered down gibbet mast expresses a retaliation of this as a result of the 'superstition of the neighbourhood', which requires the routine removal of the vegetation so that 'the letters are all fresh and visible' (296-8). This exemplifies the preservation of folkloric history and the maintenance of the ruin as a social reminder to uphold justice. Contrarily, Townshend qualifies that Gilpin rejected the storytelling potential of ruins and preferred to superficially view them as flat, two-dimensional images only commenting on a ruin's history if it was essential.[264] Wordsworth and Radcliffe prefer representational ruins that they enrich with associative narratives. Townshend identifies Gilpin's approach as 'studiously ahistorical, and lacking in all traces of imaginative response', which clearly demarcates Gilpinian picturesque from Radcliffe's revivified ruins.[265]

Radcliffe's verdant ruins are animated with plant-life and living legends, exemplified by her description that states, 'of the walls around us every ledge, marking their many stories, was embossed with luxuriant vegetation' (288). The fabric of the building is textured by the tales attached to it and enhanced by the traces of nature embedded in its walls. Wordsworth acknowledges that each time he revisits his 'spots' he attaches different 'feelings' to the memory, so they 'exist with independent life, and, like their archetypes, know no decay' (287). Wordsworth's continual remembering materialises the memory into existence, immortalising the imaginative experience, albeit autonomously from the original event. Although intended reassuringly — like foklorism's intention to preserve provincial identities — there is a latent Gothic register to Wordsworth's suggestion of resurrection and his memories' independent

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[263] Carter, Lindfield and Townshend, *Writing Britain's Ruins*, p. 96.
[264] Carter, Lindfield and Townshend, *Writing Britain's Ruins*, p. 97.
[265] Carter, Lindfield and Townshend, *Writing Britain's Ruins*, p. 98.

immortality. Radcliffe also implicitly explores immortality in her allusion to one of the castle's 'finely shattered' towers that has a 'flourishing ash, growing from the solid walls.' (285). This contrast of cultural decay and flourishing nature signifies nature's vitality that grows from the waning of the human world, exemplifying the notion that nature will not only endure long after humanity but that it will actively prosper from it. In some cultures, ash trees are known as 'The World Tree', which, Della Hooke argues, 'linked the underworld to the heavens and the gods to mankind, the living to the dead'.[266] The mythological bridging of worlds is made more explicit as Radcliffe ventures further into the ruin:

> slender saplings of ash waved over the deserted door-cases, where, at the
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> transforming hour of twilight, the superstitious eye might mistake them for
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> spectres of some early possessor of the castle, restless from guilt, or of some
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> sufferer persevering from vengeance (288)

The significance of the saplings represent new life, multiple beginnings that juxtapose the crumbling ruins whilst nature abundantly proliferates. The symbolism of ash trees combined with the imagery of open doorways exaggerates their liminality in that the mythological ash tree bridges worlds whilst the half-formed doorways signify an open portal between these spaces. Radcliffe posits that in the transformative, bewitching hour of twilight, a liminal temporality that replaces logos with mythos, these objects embody their symbolic properties and facilitate the passage of the supernatural into reality. Spectral predecessors are able to return to the present in order to re-enact their past, kept alive by their historic guilt or vengefulness that is integral to the fabric of feudal ruins. Radcliffe's characteristic disavowal of the Gothic defers these images on to the 'superstitious eye', yet it is her imagination that vividly entertains the possibility of such a performance that is not easily erased.

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[266] Della Hooke, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England: Literature, Lore and Landscape* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), p. 3.

The defining characteristic of Radcliffe's ruin writing is totalising instability; each phrase, image, allusion is fluid, fractured, slipping into something else, evading categorisation. Everything is in a transformative state, like the saplings and the crumbling edifices, and so is continuously on the verge of becoming something else. The symbolism of the trees ascribes a dual meaning beyond the physicality of trees meaning that they are always something beyond what they appear. The reversion of nature to mysticism unlocks its magical history predicated on long-standing folkloric beliefs, which links the natural world with the supernatural. In a region that is characterised for its unruly wilderness and excessive naturalness, this presents an unnerving state whereby the supernatural dominates the Lakeland landscape. The magical properties of nature therefore present an environment of the supernatural that is entirely immersive and pervasive throughout the region.

Verdant ruins extend to monastic remains too, as exemplified during Radcliffe's visit to Furness Abbey. She marvels at the 'deep retirement of its situation, the venerable grandeur of its gothic arches, and the luxuriant yet ancient trees, that shadow this forsaken spot' filling 'the mind with solemn yet delightful emotion.' (389). The abbey is known as the 'glen of deadly night-shade' abounding in 'romantic gloom' (389). In place of painted glass windows, there are 'wreaths of nightshade' (393). She imagines the choir whose 'strain still echoed feebly along the arcades and died in the breeze among the woods' (396). There is a 'solitary yew-tree, a black funeral momento to the living of those who once sat below' (397). The Yew tree is central to Christian iconography as a symbol of 'death and resurrection' according to Hooke.[267] Yew shoots were often attached to the shrouds of the dead to aid with their passage to the next life.[268] Their hardiness, longevity, and evergreen properties are responsible for deifying the Yew tree as an emblem of resilience, immortality, and resurrection whilst being intricately

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[267] Hooke, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 41.
[268] Hooke, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 44.

bound to death rituals and motifs, especially considering that they are highly toxic to humans. The pulpit no longer forms the centre, but the solitary Yew tree, decentring human life from these classical ruins. Radcliffe's entire description of Furness Abbey relies on fatal signifiers of mortality. Dawn Keetley's research investigates 'plant horror' and argues that beyond fears of their unruly wildness, plants embody 'the mortality intrinsic to all natural beings, to our *own* nature' their cyclical regeneration reminding us that 'life (in general) will be renewed, we (in particular) will die'.[269] These manmade ruins reclaimed by nature confront the viewer with the transience of their existence and transform the ruins into harbingers of human death. Sitting down to reflect, Radcliffe focuses on the partial remains of the altars that 'assisted the religious pomp of the scene; the images and the manner of times, that were past, rose to reflection' (396). Radcliffe resurrects a 'midnight procession of monks clothed in white and bearing lighted tapers' (396). She imagines the 'deep chanting of voices' and the 'solemn peal of an organ'; its disembodied 'strain still echoed feebly along the arcades and died in the breeze among the woods' (397). She reflects how 'It is easy to imagine the abbot and the officiating priests seated beneath the richly-fretted canopy of the four walls, that still remain entire in the southern wall' (397). Rendering an entire image through her recollection of the past Radcliffe then intersects the two temporalities by inserting the 'solitary yew-tree' that interrupts the scene hanging above the congregation, 'a black funeral momento to the living of those who once sat below' (397). This is reiterated in Caspar David Friedrich's painting 'Abbey among Oak Trees' (1809-10) depicting a collection of monks returning to their ruined abbey encircled by wizened oak trees. The Gothic painting depicts the trees as a watchful coven over the darkened monks returning like a funeral procession, an image of darkness, death, and decay. Here the image of

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[269] Dawn Keetley and Angela Tenga, *Plant Horror: Approaches to the Monstrous Vegetal in Fiction and Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) p. 1.

plant-blindness is inverted, it is the trees that are watching over humans, no longer the backdrop

of the landscape artist but brought to the fore.

Cumbrian Gothic Folklore: Making Monsters of the Marginalised

Cumbria's folkloric history, passed down through oral tradition, is prolific in witches, wizards, fairies, giants, ghosts and miscellany of mythical creatures. The region therefore has a long-standing cultural tradition of Gothic, or proto-Gothic narratives, that forms a natural idiom of everyday life and pre-dates the Lake Poets and tourism. In this chapter, I analyse two case studies of Cumbrian folklore to demonstrate that Cumbrian Gothic is defined not just by its sublime landscape and topographical Gothic, but also by its lived experience relating to its people and their lore. The previous chapter challenged the Romantic hegemony of the Lake District by recognising Ann Radcliffe as Wordsworth's predecessor, whilst also challenging the reductive romanticisation of the poet's Lakeland canon that erases his profoundly Gothic tendencies. The telos of that argument revolved around the physical environment's role in producing and inspiring a specifically Cumbrian Gothic. This chapter explores how printed lore uses oral histories to invent a Gothic tradition within Cumbria that imagines it as a deeply haunted space. The proliferation of printed lore, most popularly in the nineteenth century, takes inspiration from the abundance of oral tales circulating in Cumbria and imagines the landscape as an anachronistic space that entertains the notion of a Gothic realism which is present and prolific in rural communities. This anachronistic geography conflates temporality and spatiality, producing a landscape whose synonymity with older customs and behaviours is presented as a receptacle of the past overrun with outdated ideologies and folkloric monsters.

My folkloric examples represent the rural Cumbrian community and its links to past traditions and beliefs as primitive, outdated and ultimately Gothic by the standards of the more educated, well-travelled documenter. Traditionally heroic characters are aligned with the modern values of their readership, as Clara F. McIntyre observes of Radcliffe's characters who,

despite living 'in deserted abbeys or wild castles, have the manners and customs of eighteenth-century England'.[270] Such anachronism is present in printed Cumbrian folklore where the heroic characters align with their contemporaneous readership and are distinguished from local minority figures who are 'othered' by their provincial behaviours. Published folklore appropriates alterity and makes monsters of the local people. In the previous chapter, Cumbrian Gothic was produced by the landscape of fear; however, the following analysis suggests that terror is also inspired by the native (lower-class) community and their difference to visitors and the upper classes. By concentrating on the intersections between Gothic and folklore, this chapter investigates the cultural clashes between modernity and antiquity during this developmental period of Cumbrian representation in the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century. Furthermore, I will argue that the sustained influx of the modern tourist during this time results in the pathologisation of the past with specific regional intonations.

The inescapable and pervasive presence of the Gothic, intricately bound to the natural environment, topographical ruins and its people, produces a Gothic holism in the region that is prominent in its folklore. I will begin by contextualising the development of Cumbrian folklore that emerged in various literary modes, examining how it was shaped by the socio-political environment of the eighteenth century. The main body of the chapter, however, is divided into two subsections that explore specific examples of Cumbrian Gothic folklore. The first case study is the vampire of Croglin Grange, a folkloric figure subsumed by Victorian medicalised Gothic that supplants lunacy – a collective term used in the text and in the nineteenth century to refer to a miscellany of conditions assigned to asylum inmates – with monstrosity. The creature is produced by the medical and social landscape of the region and so is a striking example of Cumbrian Gothic peculiarity, which is inextricable from this particular landscape.

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[270] Clara F. McIntyre, 'Were the "Gothic novels" Gothic?', *PMLA* (1921), 36, p. 666.

The second case study is a Cumbrian adaptation of the British Screaming Skull tradition and relates to two indestructible and irremovable skulls that haunt Calgarth Hall. Their discursive history and provenance is symptomatic of the oral tradition, yet the permanence of the skulls illustrates the enduring presence of Gothic narrativisation. I analyse the polyphony of accounts inspired by the skulls, which mimics a frame narrative device wherein each author attempts to control and contain the Gothic unspeakable and inexplicable, albeit unsuccessfully. My study of the various accounts considers the historical, political and legal motivations for Gothicising marginalised identities. However, the final account reorients villainy and suggests that the skulls can arrogate the markers of their monstrosity, making them Gothic heroes less susceptible to further acts of suppression.

Folklore: Cumbria's Gothic Foundations

The associations of Cumbria with the past, primitivism and preternaturalism abound in oral folklore traditions, but such beliefs were further compounded by printed lore that began circulating from the 1780s, inspired by an antiquarian impulse to preserve history. Antiquarianism made way for the fashionable era of folklorism in Britain after William J. Thoms coined the term 'folk-lore' in 1846, which formally acknowledged the increasing fascination with folk and fairy tales. Etymologically, folklore has Germanic roots — 'volk' meaning people — which nods towards the European cultural influences that similarly brought us the Goths and influenced the Gothic mode. It is unsurprising that the use of 'volk' coincided with the emergence of nationalism that used folklore to group disparate people together into a collective identity. Furthermore, folklore is attributed to a particular kind of people, commonly rural and poor, who are often 'other' to the people who engage with folklore, for example, tourists and the literate. Despite oral traditions originating from the lower classes, socioeconomic factors determine that the printed folklore more widely known is typically

mediated by a non-native viewpoint and, even in the exceptional circumstance of a local narrator, rarely does it come first-hand from the 'folk' it concerns. Thus, exploring local folklore is instrumental to the study of regional Gothic as it showcases the lived experience of that community, but more commonly it shows how that local culture is perceived.

Observing the cross-fertilisation of Gothic, folklore and antiquarian studies, Peter Ackroyd writes that 'Gothic literature itself is a rancid form of English antiquarianism' and the antiquarian's revival of ruins 'mimics the haunted residences of the Gothic imagination', which, 'in their proliferation across the countryside…spawned a living or tangible Gothic.'[271] Despite the negative bias, Ackroyd's observation is itself Gothically coded as we imagine a self-actualising Gothic landscape haunted by the exhumation of its own history. Similarly, Carina Hart observes that folklore collecting started with 'a nostalgic attempt to recover an imagined past… animated by an antiquarian drive similar to that of early Gothic writers'.[272] Hart alludes to nationalist discourses that attempt to patriotically preserve provincial identities, but in regional Gothic literature I argue this becomes a defamiliarising and othering process when cultural differences inevitably are exposed. Gothic folklore reworks everyday experiences of local life in a Gothic fashion by exaggerating tropes that are already present within folklore but to Gothic excess. As Hart confirms, 'Gothic folklore refers to gothic adaptations and appropriations of folkloric figures, such as the vampire, the vengeful ghost and later the werewolf.'[273] Cumbrian Gothic folklore appropriates these folkloric figures to express fears of their fractured national identity, further demarcating marginalised locals as monsters in their narratives. Whilst some writers, like Radcliffe and antiquarian enthusiast James Clarke,

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[271] Peter Ackroyd, *Origins of the English Imagination*, p. 374.
[272] Carina Hart, 'Gothic Folklore and Fairy Tale: Negative Nostalgia', *Gothic Studies*, 22.1 (2020), p. 7.
[273] Hart, 'Gothic Folklore', p. 3.

are intrigued by revenant ruins and the feudal past, Cumbrian folklore imagines a landscape peopled by everyday Gothic monsters living a Gothicised experience.

In my previous chapter, I demonstrated how both Radcliffe and Wordsworth infuse their depictions of the physical landscape with intertextual associations that amplify the terrible and sublime. The following analysis exemplifies that they also take inspiration from the oral histories that already abound in these places. Whilst growing up in the similarly rural landscape of the Scottish Highlands, the Wanderer in Wordsworth's *The Excursion* has no need for books, because an abundance of tales

round the mountains hung,

and many a legend, peopling the dark woods,

nourished Imagination in her growth.[274]

The Wanderer demonstrates how intricately and intimately connected narratives are with the natural topographies of rural regions. Furthermore, the exchange of these narratives is facilitated by his perambulations, just as Radcliffe, Wordsworth and the folklore collectors in this chapter gathered much of their creative inspiration. The circulation of folklore relies on the ability to navigate the physical landscape in order to encounter rural cultures. Oral narratives migrate with travellers across the nation, which is why various iterations of similar tales exist (like the many screaming skulls). However, they find individual expression via the place and particularity of its transmission. Thus whilst folklore shares commonality within a larger tradition, I focus on the way in which these Cumbrian iterations give this landscape meaning and further nuance the regional Gothic mode. As the Wanderer suggests, these tales symbolically 'people' the woods, suggesting that narratives are an embodied extension of the people and their culture, taking on an independent existence that can immortally represent their

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[274] William Wordsworth, *The Excursion, and the Recluse* (Penrith: Humanities-Ebooks, 2014), p. 100, II. 182-184.

ancestry and literary heritage. Participation in the re-telling and reading of the printed iterations of these oral tales grants access to a creative reconstruction of this community – living and dead, past and present – which gives an immortal quality to folklore that for readers and tourists acts as a kind of cultural clairvoyance.

The materials in this chapter graft on to Radcliffe's creation of Cumbrian Gothic – motivated by aesthetics, altitude and antiquarianism – a mid-Victorian fascination with folklore, which use oral narratives in their printed lore to invent a long-standing Gothic tradition. The effect of this is a nineteenth-century representation of a Cumbrian 'living Gothic', a term coined by Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Maria Beville 'as a means to envisioning the many ways in which the Gothic functions as a living culture in its own right, through its intersections with the everyday, and with the communication and expression of shared experience.'[275] As I will examine, the purpose of folklore is to preserve the past yet its mediation in these case studies involves elements of reinvention, framing a version of a Cumbrian past based on Victorian perception.

Radcliffe and Wordsworth – who I previously argued are the main influences on Cumbria's cultural legacy, especially in this period – are susceptible to the inescapability of everyday Gothic. Barbara Gates argues that Wordsworth was 'deeply interested in local oral history', exemplifying his and Dorothy's frequent encounters with local people who then fictitiously populate his *Lyrical Ballads*.[276] This fascination, Gates argues, centres around the locals' embodiment of a 'remembered history', accrediting Wordsworth's inspiration to these people who fuse past and present and are 'deeply attached to their region'.[277] Gates's language echoes Piatti-Farnell and Beville's notion of a 'living history', signifying a shared discourse

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[275] Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Maria Beville, *Gothic and the Everyday: Living Gothic* (Basingstoke: Pan Macmillan, 2014), p. 1.
[276] Barbara T. Gates, 'Wordsworth's Use of Oral History', *Folklore*, 85.4 (1974), p. 254.
[277] Gates, 'Wordsworth's Use of Oral History', p. 255.

between Gothic and folklore study. Wordsworth's re-telling of folklore immortalises the past and records provincial practices that frequently have recourse to superstition and preternatural mysticism, which are inextricably linked to the landscape. 'The Somnambulist' (1833), for example, is inspired by the tragic ghost stories of Aira Force (a waterfall near Ullswater) that — with its strong affiliation to the landscape, stylisation of the past, terror and tragedy — typifies the Cumbrian Gothic chronotope of 'adventure-time in sublime space'.

Radcliffe's fairy-tale influences in her novels also include folklore following her lived experience of Cumbria and interaction with local figures. Hart observes that 'the cross-fertilisation of Gothic, folklore and fairy tale continued throughout the 1790s, with Ann Radcliffe developing the traditional fairy-tale narrative of the persecuted heroine', comparing *The Romance of the Forest* and *A Sicilian Romance* in particular with French author Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's seventeenth-century fairy tales.[278] Radcliffe's antiquarian depiction of Brougham Castle is punctuated with supernatural conjecture and pieces of local trivia, which we can assume are provided by their only company, 'a young woman from a neighbouring farm-house' (280). Radcliffe intersperses historical details of Sir Philip Sydney envisioning 'Arcadia' amongst this landscape, its custodianship over the centuries and a visit from James the First with ghosts, lingering descriptions of the paraphernalia of torture and local lore. Radcliffe uses local terminology to refer to 'what was called the Sweating Pillar' and desires to explore a 'ruinous passage… lost in darkness' but is 'told that no person had ventured to explore the end of this' because it now houses 'dens of serpents and other venomous reptiles' (284). These inflections of local lore add an element of sensationalism, suspense and spatial specificity to the historical pre-eminence of the site.

As both Radcliffe and Wordsworth show, the integration of Cumbrian oral tales into their respective travel narrative and poetry enriches their representations of the landscape and

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[278] Hart, 'Gothic Folklore', p. 9.

recreates a stylised regional identity based on their perspective as auditors. Eric Hobsbawn accredits the invention of the Scottish Highland tradition, in part, to the Romantic movement's reconfiguration of the perception of noble savages who 'combined the romance of a primitive people with the charm of an endangered species'.[279] Wordsworth similarly romanticises marginal figures in his *Lyrical Ballads*, which I explore further in my final chapter specifically relating to 'The Idiot Boy'. This romanticisation shows an increasing desire to preserve a particular perception of the provincial past, exemplified by the two main written accounts of Cumbrian folklore in this chapter. Both case studies are published in the mid-Victorian era when increasing modernisation and urbanisation encouraged the recording of rural traditions. Furthermore, despite associations of this period with rational thought, the popularity of folklorism suggests a propensity for the irrational recognised by what Thomas Waters has described as 'a growing body of scholarship [that] has reinforced the point that Victorian Britain was far from a disenchanted space'.[280]

I will firstly explore the account of 'The Croglin Vampire' and its unusual intersection of folkloric monstrosity and Victorian vampirism. This narrative overlays elements of oral tradition with medicalised Gothic and the topical treatment of insanity in the mid-Victorian era. I explore the resulting pathologisation of 'lunacy' within the context of regional medicine that makes madness monstrous. Since I started researching this subject in 2018, the Croglin Vampire has achieved a newfound notoriety in regional news outlets and blog posts demonstrating a renewed interest in reviving the Croglin narrative.[281] However, most pertinent

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[279] Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 25.

[280] Thomas Waters, 'Magic and the British Middle Classes, 1750-1900', *The Journal of British Studies*, 54.3 (2015), p. 632.

[281] See David Castleton, *The Vampire of Croglin Grange – a Genuine & Ancient British Bloodsucker?* (2020) <https://www.davidcastleton.net/vampire-croglin-grange-cumbria-england/> [accessed 2 January 2022]; Les Hewitt, *The Croglin Grange Vampire of Cumberland* (2021) <https://www.historicmysteries.com/croglin-grange-vampire/> [accessed

are the authors' assertion of the tale's veracity, which exposes a modern impulse to revive and reify alternative traditions, narratives and customary beliefs. In *Britain's Haunted Heritage* (2019), John West undertakes an attempt to legitimise the vampire narrative and its seventeenth-century origins, demonstrating a contemporary trend of materialising folktales.[282] These contemporary revivifications of the legend and their claims of authenticity speak to a desire to be haunted by history, manifesting Cumbrian monsters of old and making true on the Visit Lake District's promise that the landscape will 'never leave you'.

Folkloric Vampires and Victorian Medicalised Monstrosity

In a small hamlet named Croglin in the North Lakes, there was rumoured to be a vampire that terrorised the local people and who remains one of the few folkloric figures locally infamous today. The first published version of the tale appeared in Augustus Hare's autobiography *The Story of my Life* (1896-1900) and takes the form of a journal entry dated 24th June 1874.[283] Twentieth-century critics, however, disregarded the legend due to its similarities to previous vampire narratives and perceived unoriginality. Despite subsequent discoveries from paranormal enthusiasts that re-situate the setting of the legend to the seventeenth century, this underrated tale has still evaded critical attention. Despite this critical neglect, the story reveals surprising nuances under closer, regional scrutiny. By reading the vampire narrative within the context of folklore and local history, it is possible to identify the Croglin creature as the first British-born vampire legend.

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2 January 2022]; MJ Wayland, *WHO WAS THE CROGLIN VAMPIRE?* (2021) <https://www.mjwayland.com/mysteries/the-croglin-vampire-explored/> [accessed 2 January 2022]; Paul Adams, *VAMPIRE OF CROGLIN GRANGE: A PARANORMAL GUIDE* (2014) <https://www.spookyisles.com/the-vampire-of-croglin-grange/> [accessed 2 January 2022].
[282] John West, *Britain's Haunted Heritage* (Nottingham: JMD Media, 2019).
[283] Augustus John Cuthbert Hare*, The Story of My Life*, vol. 4 (London: George Allen, 1896-1900) Subsequent references to this text will appear in parentheses following the quotation.

My historical reading of local lore and provincial practices reveals convincing resemblances between 'The Croglin Vampire' and similar undead creatures that emanated from rural villages across Europe. Such European tales formed the figure of the folkloric vampire that would be assimilated into the Gothic mode as an archetype of monstrosity, but my analysis suggests that Cumbria also contributed its version of vampirism to mythology. I will explore the relationship between the seventeenth-century folkloric characterisation of the creature and its nineteenth-century signification in Hare's printed narrative. Hare's account appears to subsume pre-existing oral narratives within his contemporaneous context of Victorian vampirism and medicalised Gothic. The Croglin Vampire is deemed an escaped lunatic, which is a determination especially pertinent to the Cumberland community in the latter half of the nineteenth century as it also marked the opening of the first county asylum. The Cumberland and Westmoreland Joint Lunatic Asylum, later known as Garlands, opened in Carlisle in 1862, which is conspicuously just thirteen miles from Croglin Grange. The second half of this case study will analyse the role of psychiatry in a rural region, which actively relies on Gothic themes and superstition to both comprehend and treat mental illness. As such, Lakeland psychiatry pathologises asylum inmates and makes madness monstrous.

A British-Born Vampire

The author of the single surviving account of the legend, Augustus Hare, led a sensational life. He was born in Rome, renounced by his parents, adopted by his aunt and Oxford-educated. His earlier writing consisted of conservative memoirs and conventional travel journals that bypassed the colourfulness of his history. Hare's six-volume autobiography, however, divulges his extraordinary experiences, creating a suitable medium for the indulgence of Gothic tales. The text is a compilation of letters, journal entries and contextual narratives that revel in supernatural tales told to him over the years by his unusual travel companions. The discursive

autobiographical form facilitates multiple voices through Hare's documentation resulting in a disembodied narratorial presence that stylistically preserves the storytelling nature of its content. The text's discursiveness replicates the diverse, albeit untraceable, nature of the folklore passed on to him and published in his autobiography. These tales shared by his travel companions and chance encounters delight in Victorian sensationalism and Gothic consumerism; Hare recalls a lunch date with Madame du Quaire where they discussed her recent spiritualist encounter hosted by the medium Mrs Gregory; and Cumbrian-born Captain Fisher tells elaborate tales of banshees, omens and prophetic deaths. The most captivating of Fisher's tales is concerned with an old family legend surrounding the mysterious creature of Croglin Grange, which, customary to nineteenth-century folklore collecting, is relayed to the reader via Hare (a middle-class, well-educated, non-Cumbrian).

Hare proceeds to document the narrative, establishing the credentials of Fisher's 'ancient lineage' and asserting the Captain's local credibility as a long-term resident of a 'very curious old place in Cumberland, which bears the weird name of Croglin Grange' (203). Having piqued the reader's interest with an immediate air of peculiarity unthwarted by the authenticity of the orator, he explains that the Fisher family outgrew Croglin Grange and let the house to the locally known Cranswell family: two brothers, Michael and Edward, and their sister, Amelia. The single-storey dwelling to most would have been a 'trial', but not to the new tenants: 'in every respect Croglin Grange was exactly suited to them' (204). The Cranswells live happily at Croglin Grange until a hot summer's night prompts Amelia to leave her windows open. Unable to sleep, she gazes out on the moonlit lawn and sees 'two lights which flickered in and out in the belt of trees'; as these lights emerge, she notes they were 'fixed in a dark substance, a definite ghastly *something'* (205). The creature makes its agonisingly suspenseful approach, revealing its 'hideous brown face' and 'flaming eyes' (205). Eventually, it breaks through her bedroom window and attacks Amelia who is transfixed with horror to her bed. The

monster 'twisted its long bony fingers into her hair, and it dragged her head over the side of the bed, and it bit her violently in the throat' (206). Hearing their sister's screams, Michael and Edward rush into her room and pursue after the fleeing creature into the neighbouring churchyard.

Despite their sister's seemingly fatal wound she was thankfully 'not given either to romance or superstition', so that when she regains consciousness she rationalises that 'it will turn out that a lunatic has escaped from some asylum and found his way here' (206). After a medically prescribed trip to Switzerland, Amelia appeals to her brothers' logic and then offers the reassurance that 'lunatics do not escape every day' (207). Amelia returns to her fateful bedroom, whilst her brothers equip themselves with pistols and retire to their rooms. The winter passes without event, but as spring approaches a familiar scratching wakes Amelia. Looking to her window, she sees the revenant creature who 'climbed up to the topmost pane of the window' with the 'same hideous brown shrivelled face, with glaring eyes, looking in at her' (207). Hearing their sister's screams, the brothers pursue the fleeing creature. They shoot it in the leg, but it disappears into a 'vault which belonged to a family long extinct' (208). The following day the brothers open the vault and are greeted by a monstrous sight. It was 'full of coffins' that had been broken open and their contents, 'horribly mangled and distorted, were scattered over the floor' (208). Only one coffin remained with its lid slightly ajar. Within the coffin was the 'brown, withered, shrivelled, mummified' and 'hideous figure' with a recent gunshot wound (208). The brothers did 'the only thing that can lay a vampire – they burnt it' (208).

There was a flurry of folkloristic intrigue in the twentieth century that dispelled Hare's 'Croglin Vampire' on account of anachronisms and inauthenticity, which – compounded by the author's contemporaneous lack of renown – concealed the Cumbrian Vampire from popular attention. In 1907, Charles Harper republished the tale verbatim in his folkloric anthology

entitled *Haunted Houses*, introducing it as 'what many readers will probably think the most horrible ghost-story ever read', but added his personal addendum that questioned its veracity because, he asserts, 'there is no place styled Croglin Grange'.[284] Harper suggests that Fisher was alluding to Croglin Low Hall instead, although the church was at least a mile away and contains no tombs that resemble Hare's description, therefore determining the story an elaborate fiction. Harper's evaluation of haunted narratives appears to depend on how historically and spatially accurate they are, so as to suspend disbelief and suggest an element of truth to the tale. Valentine Dyall's *Unsolved Mysteries* (1954) asserts the legend originated in 1875, but Hare's primary source dates his encounter with Fisher in a journal entry specifically dated 24 June 1874, which immediately contradicts Dyall's account.[285] Due to Harper's topographical evidence and the tale's nineteenth-century anachronisms, such as the Switzerland retreat, contemporaneous readers were convinced of the tale's Victorian origins. In 1929, Montague Summers compared Hare's Croglin Vampire to James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampire* (1845), which led audiences to believe the Cumbrian vampire was just another fictive imitation of an earlier tale.[286] The speculations of these critics uproot the narrative so that it lacks spatial specificity – making it less significant as a genuine article of Cumbrian folklore – and suggest that it is simply a reproduction of Victorian literary vampire narratives.

Whilst the anachronistic and imitative qualities of 'The Croglin Vampire' are enough to dismiss the tale from paranormal and folklore scholarship, the same are constructive for Gothic studies that consider the printed account as a literary narrative rather than a mystery to be solved. What Summers, Dyall and Harper have neglected to consider are the historical and

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[284] Charles G. Harper, *Haunted Houses: Tales of the Supernatural with Some Account of Hereditary Curses and Family Legends* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1907), pp. 67-74.
[285] Valentine Dyall, *Unsolved Mysteries* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1954).
[286] Montague Summers, *The Vampire in Europe* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1929).

regional factors that reveal telling provincial details and deliberate anachronisms that warrant further investigation. I will firstly explore the Croglin creature's historical pre-eminence and its folkloric foundations before analysing how this intersects with Victorian vampire mythology. As I will show, the chronological discrepancies in the legend are a constructive tool that, combined with its folkloric origins, formulate a distinctively Cumbrian Gothic vampire narrative.

Vampire Folklore: Historicising the Croglin Creature

Francis Clive-Ross – editor of the Spiritualist journal *Light* and avid occult researcher – conducts further investigation into the origins of the legend with particular regional attention and local scrutiny, which proves more productive than the aforesaid, more generic, inquiries into the vampire story.[287] Whilst Clive-Ross is motivated by proving the credibility of the vampire's existence and its paranormal possibilities, his revelations are important to my research as they provide evidence that geographically reaffirms the tale's origination in Croglin. Furthermore, his findings suggest that Hare's account could be informed by oral tales that emanate from as early as the seventeenth century.

Whilst conducting his research in 1962, a local informant, Mrs Parkin, produced estate deeds that show Croglin Low Hall had been formerly registered as Croglin Grange up until 1720. The deeds also affirmed it was a single storey dwelling, which is a significant detail that I return to later. Clive-Ross consulted local maps and conducted site surveys that discovered a private churchyard within the vicinity of Croglin Grange and a vault where the vampire could have housed itself, thus topographically corroborating Captain Fisher's narrative. His combination of archaeological evidence, estate deeds and parish records that document the Fishers' departure suggest that the printed narrative is informed by earlier oral lore that

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[287] Francis Clive-Ross, 'The Croglin Vampire', *Tomorrow*, 11.2, pp. 103-9.

circulated between 1680 and 1690 onwards. This suggests that there is a pre-existing literary foundation of the Croglin Creature in Cumbria that was transmitted prior to Hare's written publication, demonstrating that it is not simply a reproduction of nineteenth-century vampire fiction but a folk narrative in its own right. It suggests that we can read 'The Croglin Vampire' as Cumbrian folklore given its spatial specificity in Croglin, indeed contributing to the regional culture in ways that the previous researchers have not given it credit for.

This regional research suggests that the vampire legend could have begun circulating in the seventeenth century, which means that the existence of the Croglin creature in oral lore predated the first recorded use of the term 'vampire' in English in 1734. This discovery also means that the legend would predate Western accounts of vampire folklore that did not use the word, like Joseph Pitton de Tournefort's account of the Greek 'vroucolacas' in 1702.[288] As a pre-1734 story, the Croglin vampire would not have been identified as such but would have been a person that 'returned' from death to attack the living. Unfortunately, there are no earlier sources to suggest how the creature was originally identified, nor is it possible to exactly pinpoint the moment of the Cumbrian vampire's origination in oral tales. This is a common obstacle in folkloric studies, but in the context of this legend its obscure origin and inarticulable nature are crucial Gothic tropes that allow for re-narrativisation and reassert the tale's Gothicness.

The belated recognition of the Croglin creature as a vampire in the final sentence of Hare's narrative mirrors how vampires have been assimilated culturally with similar delayed appellation. In John Polidori's 'The Vampyre' (1819), he conclusively delays his climactic

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[288] Cited in 'The Travels of Three English Gentlemen, from Venice to Hamburgh, being the Grand Tour of Germany, in the Year 1734' published in *The Harleian Miscellany*, ed. William Oldys, vol. 4 (1744-6) pp. 358-9.

revelation of Lord Ruthven as a vampire until the final sentence of his novella.[289] Prior to their

naming, vampires were unclassifiable and inexplicable creatures that emerged under various

guises. The elusive three gentlemen are responsible for the collective denomination of

'vampyres' in 1734, observing that Hungarians called their vampires 'Pamgri' and Poles

'Upier' and 'Upierzcya'.[290] The three gentlemen recognise regional variances in terminology

and formulate a shared identity of 'vampyres' understood to be 'the bodies of deceased persons,

animated by evil spirits, which come out of the Graves, in the Night-time, suck the blood of

many of the living, and thereby destroy them'.[291] The Croglin creature is an undead, nocturnal,

grave-habiting, blood-sucking source of terror, which fulfils the three gentlemen's criteria

therefore enabling the retrospective classification of the Cumbrian monster as a vampire. By

identifying the Croglin creature in this way, the story can claim to be the first British-born

vampire legend indigenous to this landscape – given that it predates Southey's 'Thalaba the

Destroyer' (1801), Lord Byron's *The Giaour* (1813) and Polidori's 'The Vampyre' (1819). It

is important to mention here that Coleridge's 'Christabel' (1816) is pointedly set in Cumbria,

specifically the Langdale Valley as the poet affirms, 'the Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair, /

And Dungeon Ghyll so foully rent'.[292] He wrote the poem in two parts; firstly in 1797 when he

was living in Germany, then in 1800 when he had relocated to Keswick. As Coleridge had

partially constructed the narrative prior to living in Keswick, I would argue that he took

inspiration from the landscape but 'Christabel' did not originate from Cumbria. Whilst the

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[289] John William Polidori, *The Vampyre; A Tale* (Project Gutenberg, 2002)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/6087/6087-h/6087-h.htm>.
[290] 'The Travels of Three English Gentlemen', p. 359.
[291] 'The Travels of Three English Gentlemen', p. 358.
[292] Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 'Christabel' in *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge Including Poems and Versions of Poems Now Published for the First Time Edited with Textual and Bibliographical Notes by Ernest Hartley Coleridge in Two Volumes* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1912), p. 227, 350-351.

poem is set in Cumbria, I would claim that it is not a British-born legend as it is of Coleridge's creation rather than an adaptation of Cumbrian oral tradition. Thus, Cumbrian folklore offers a possible precedent to western literary vampire traditions that is closer to home than the foundational Eastern European folk-tales.

The nineteenth-century publication of the tale coincides with the literary period that inaugurated and catalysed our fascination with the fictional vampire. However, the characterisation of the vampire in Hare's tale is significantly more comparable to folkloric sources than to the aristocratic and polished visages of the vampires in Victorian Gothic fiction. Clive-Ross's diligent anthropological and archaeological evidence locates the oral legend to the seventeenth century; however, this alone cannot be relied upon as the sole basis of my argument, because the aforementioned oral nature of folklore renders the exact origination of the tale problematic; a later generation with knowledge of the locality could have backdated the setting. Despite this, the creature's appearance and behaviours highlight distinctive features that differentiate it from Southey and Polidori's vampires and later Victorian vampires; Lord Ruthven is British, Polidori makes use of European settings and Southey's vampire is exotically set in the Middle East. This correlates with the spatial distancing of early Gothic fiction, in which the technique was used as a means of dislocation from the domestic centre. The provincial setting of 'The Croglin Vampire' and its depiction of a creature that is firmly rooted to a particular place clearly differentiates from the migratory patterns of nineteenth-century literature. Although I could find no written records prior to Hare, that does not mean the Croglin Creature did not exist in an earlier oral form. Hare's autobiography demonstrates his penchant for folklore recording: he recounts various oral narratives, like his interaction with Fisher, that have occult, supernatural and sensational themes. I will be analysing the characterisation of the Croglin creature within the context of folklore to exemplify its difference to Victorian vampire fiction. Following that, I explore how its rootedness to this

particular locality offers valuable contributions to the construction of a specifically Cumbrian Gothic.

The seventeenth-century origination of the Croglin vampire and its nineteenth-century publication produce a complex tension between the vampire's monstrous appearance and its shifting signification, which is tied to the Cumbrian environment both material and cultural. The Dracula monolith still dominates the cultural imagination despite the diversity of his contemporaneous kin; consider Le Fanu's femme fatale in 'Carmilla' (1872), the aforementioned aristocrat in 'The Vampyre' (1819), and Braddon's English noblewoman in 'Good Lady Ducayne' (1894). Referring to the diverse representation of vampirism, Erik Butler states that "Vampire" is a metaphor run amuck.[293] The metaphorical signification of vampires has resulted in modern criticism constantly reproducing what Baldick and Mighall term the 'anxiety model'.[294] They feel that modern critics read Gothic monsters as sponges that soak up social anxieties and are terrifying because of what they mask as opposed to simply being scary in their own right. The polished facades of Victorian vampires invite this reading as they mask internal evil, acting as a device that contributes to their monstrosity because of their concealment, deception and duplicity. The Croglin vampire, however, further muddies the representational waters as it deviates from the visual coding of Victorian vampirism by making monstrosity externally visible. The terror incited by the Croglin creature is not owed to buried psychic material; its horrifying visage and monstrous body visually identify it as a marginal subject that Gothic narratives can be projected on to.

The unusual characterisation of the Croglin vampire, by modern standards, is owed to its folkloric origination. David Gilmore classifies the folkloric monster by an exhibition of

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[293] Erik Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film: Cultural Transformations in Europe, 1732-1933* (Rochester: Camden House, 2010), p. 5.
[294] Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Madlen: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 291.

these traits: superhuman size and/or strength; equipped for predation usually with sharp teeth or claws; insatiable hunger for human blood/flesh; and hybridity of animal and/or human attributes composed of dead and living parts.[295] The characterisation of the Croglin creature exhibits all of these traits and resembles many European folklore accounts that culminate in a distinctively unique provincial monster. In contrast to the polished, pale-skinned and alluring vampires depicted in popular Victorian vampire narratives, the markers of death are ingrained and made explicitly visible in the monstrous appearance of the Croglin creature. Vampires are expressions of the unknown and are often created as animations of deathly phenomena prior to biological understanding of death processes and decomposition. The Cumbrian creature's bright, 'glaring' eyes 'fixed' within its frame are suggestive of rigor mortis, as opposed to the hypnotising effect of fin-de-siècle figures. Its long, bony fingers and wizened flesh are skeletal indications of a dead corpse, but these elongated appendages are also signifiers of the corpse's undead animation that is similarly described in the three English gentlemen's account, which identified transitioning vampires by their growing nails and hair. The ruddiness of the vampire's complexion is a distinctively folkloric trait that deviates from other fictive vampires and is a clear visual marker that differentiates the Croglin creature from nineteenth-century sources. Vampires of lore are 'florid, or of a healthy colour, or dark, and this may be attributed to his habit of drinking blood'.[296] The Croglin Vampire's 'brown' complexion may mislead the contemporary critic into a racial reading, but given the legend's historical and cultural context it is likely that the creature's colouring has derived from either its blood-sucking behaviours, from disease, or decay; for example, Yugoslavian Gypsies believed that a vampire 'turns black

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[295] David Gilmore, *Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2003) pp. 174-89.
[296] Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 41.

before burial'.[297] Montague Summers' publication of *Varney* and 'The Croglin Vampire' alongside each other convinced readers that Hare had simply copied Rymer. Whilst it is likely that Fisher and/or Hare might have read the popular penny dreadful that may have influenced the way in which the events were recounted, the conceptions of the two vampires are completely different. Folklore pays little attention to fiction's troping of fangs, which was introduced by the iconic description of Varney's snarl that exposed shockingly white teeth. The Croglin vampire's mouth is evaded altogether. The ambiguity of this significant aspect of a vampire makes the Croglin creature even more terrifying as the reader's imagination is stimulated by implicit imagery espoused by a figuratively mouthless monster that contains something lethal enough to bite through Amelia's neck and tear apart corpses.

Unusual eating habits often go further than devouring victims, such as the unnerving mutual feeding shared by Mina and Dracula, but there is a definitively more disturbing tone to the eating patterns of folkloric vampires. Markers of the Croglin vampire's insatiable hunger are physically ingrained in his withered, wizened face and brown complexion, which signify a lack of blood, stale circulation, and corpse-like qualities. However, the withered aspect can also indicate self-cannibalism. Barber references 'The Nachzehrer of Northern Europe' that often had 'tattered' hands and feet due to their habit of 'chewing on [their] extremities'.[298] Nachzehrer graveyards are often described as 'swimming in blood' and disinterred corpses in Prussia regularly had 'ruddy' faces with 'lacerated' bodies due to their excessive cannibalism.[299] This bears a striking resemblance to the Croglin Vampire's appetite depicted in the bloody tomb that was littered with partially devoured, mangled corpses. Rather than the singular bite to the throat, the Croglin Vampire rabidly preys on body and flesh. When breaking into Amelia's window, the vampire animalistically 'scratches' at the window — echoing Emily

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[297] Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death*, p. 41.
[298] Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death*, p. 4.
[299] Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death*, p. 4.

Brontë's spectral Cathy from *Wuthering Heights* (1847) — and then 'pecks' at the lead, which suggests bestial hybridity. Its 'hideous' appearance and animalistic behaviours rouse unequivocal feelings of disgust and repulsion, unlike the fetishization of many contemporary vampire narratives laced with seduction, allure and intrigue. The Croglin vampire is an archetypal monster, whose appearance unambiguously stimulates fear. It draws on a diverse range of folkloric sources and thus forms a peculiarly hybridised creature native to Cumbria.

Anachronistic Victorian Vampires

The Croglin creature, however, does not remain in the folkloric vampire's primordial domain, but in Hare's narrative is relocated to Victorian Cumbria, whose landscape has become infested with societally produced monsters. Vampire lore arises naturally in rural cultures, which Barber argues is partly 'an elaborate folk-hypothesis designed to account for seemingly inexplicable events associated with death and decomposition'.[300] Barber explains that in the absence of medical and scientific rationale, understanding of death and diseases was speculative so folklore tended to 'blame death on the dead'.[301] Popular belief held that to stop the revenant dead they must be returned to their intended resting place or be killed indefinitely, hence the incineration of the Croglin creature that ensures its complete obliteration. Whilst Barber highlights that the pathologisation of death and decomposition contributed towards the creation of vampire mythology –which is a credible explanation for the original conception of the Croglin vampire – the nineteenth-century version of the story, however, pathologises a different condition pertinent to the Croglin community – lunacy.

As the aforesaid twentieth-century critics did not analyse 'The Croglin Vampire' within a literary context, they did not consider the tale's anachronistic representation as a generic trope

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[300] Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death*, p. 3.
[301] Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death*, p. 3.

of Gothic literature that I explain facilitates Hare's construction of Croglin as a temporally regressive space. Baldick and Mighall demonstrate that anachronisms in early Gothic novels transformed southern European Catholic settings – to the 'Protestant mind' at least – into 'temporal [and] geographic realms', exemplified by the English tourist who could 'encounter "Gothic" institutions merely by visiting Catholic countries, travelling in time as well as space.'[302] The anachronistic representation of Catholic places stuck in a religious past as retrogressive reflections of papal iniquities was established spatially, ideologically and temporally distant from the progressiveness of Protestantism. In the folklore studied in this chapter, this anachronistic transformation of Cumbria into a temporal space is induced sociologically rather than religiously and informed by the physical topography. Documented in *A Companion to the Lakes,* whilst walking through Windermere, William – one of the author's travel companions – observes that 'this is precisely the place for a ghost story, so rude and simple are the people'.[303] Prior to the railway, Cumbria was geographically isolated from the rest of the country, which spatially distanced the place and its people from the reaches of modernity. As the infrastructure of England's towns and cities developed, propagating modern industry, technology, and education, Cumbrian people continued with their rural ways of life. When the Lancaster and Carlisle railway was installed in 1846, enabling tourists to more easily visit the Lakes, these visitors encountered Cumbrian locals who were physically disconnected from what they considered to be Victorian progressiveness. Tourists, like William, perceived locals as people living in the past because they represented an old way of living that people from cities and its environs had moved on from. The locals' affiliation with the past renders them 'rude and simple', and it is this temporal disconnect which, for people like William, creates the perfect conditions in which the Gothic can thrive.

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[302] Baldick and Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', p. 291.

[303] Edward Baines, *A Companion to the Lakes* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1834), p. 82.

The terrorizing aspects of 'The Croglin Vampire' centralise around the revenant invasion of an archaic rural monster that irrupts into modern life. Baldick and Mighall describe the Gothic as 'essentially Whiggish' referring to the classic definition purported by Herbert Butterfield in the sense that it 'studies the past with referent to the present'.[304] This does not disregard or diminish either temporality, but fundamentally links the two in a complex tension that is paramount to Gothic narrativisation. Baldick and Mighall write that Gothic modes 'thrive on anachronistic emphases, and their narrative effects derive from the clash between "modernity" and "antiquity"', as exemplified in the previous chapter's analysis of Cumbria's Gothic cusp.[305] Hart reaffirms that Gothic folklore frequently repositions 'ancient folkloric figures in contemporary settings, in a conflation of past and present that seeks both the familiarity of tradition as a way to understand the gothic unspeakable, but also abjects retrograde attitudes that conflict with the aspirations of the contemporary.'[306] In this sense, the folkloric figure of the Croglin creature characterises rural Cumbrian primitivism, which becomes a fitting monstrous body to project contemporaneous, pathological fears of madness on to whilst also being contained within a regional Gothic space.

The visual manifestation of the vampire in Hare's story still retains its earlier folkloric qualities, but its signification has shifted with its historical reception. By the time of its written publication, the legend could have undergone over 200 years of individual and anonymous recitations that have contributed to Captain Fisher's account. The narrative has also physically migrated with the Fishers who moved south in the story originally but ended up in Northumberland where the story is told, providing a suitable setting for reciting the tale that fulfills the Gothic motif of journeying north.[307] Fisher establishes from the outset that though

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[304] Baldick and Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', p. 290.
[305] Baldick and Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', p. 290.
[306] Hart, 'Gothic Folklore and Fairy Tale', p. 12.
[307] See Kirsty Macdonald, '"This Desolate and Appalling Landscape", pp. 37–48.

his surname seems 'plebian', his esteemed lineage could afford to leave Cumbria, thus aligning himself with the progressiveness of modern values and distinguishing himself from the locals in the narrative. The story is also mediated through Hare, a cosmopolitan Euro-traveller, which accounts for the various modernisms in the text, particularly the prescribed trip to Switzerland. Modern appendages have been attached to the antiquated backbone that remains of the original story, which has then been re-framed through a non-Cumbrian viewpoint. This non-local mediation partially accounts for the Gothicisation of the narrative: Hare functions as one of White's touristic quasi-borderers, referred to in the thesis introduction, who ransacks the cultural annals of Lakeland lore and disseminates his version to a wider, literate audience. The hideous, wizened creature has escaped its seventeenth-century grave to invade a nineteenth-century audience fascinated with representations of mental illness. The relocation of the Croglin creature to this historical period reinterprets its signification through medical and social discourses that actively made madness monstrous.

Male Madness and Vampiric Asexuality

Victorian Gothic and Sensation novels revel in the figure of the madwoman: the madwoman in the attic in *Jane Eyre* (1847); the maddeningly ambitious in *Lady Audley's Secret* (1861-2); and the institutionalised mad in *The Woman in White* (1859-60).[308] Both medical and fictional writings of the period stigmatised female madness to the extent that this became almost a symptomatic side-effect of gender, as argued by Elaine Showalter in *The Female Malady* (1987).[309] These popular fictional incarnations of madness, however, are not representative of the social reality. The case files and records kept by Dr Campbell, the medical superintendent

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[308] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1847), Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) and Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (London: Penguin Books, 2012).
[309] Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1987).

of Garlands, show an even proportion of male and female patients. Fictional representations of male madness did exist in the Victorian period, like Anthony Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* (1869), Charles Reade's *Hard Cash* (1863), Renfield in Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), whom I will later return to.[310] However, representations of male madness failed to capture the public imagination in the same way that the aforesaid literary examples of female madness did, potentially because of Victorian society's safeguarding of masculinity. Yet, medical reports from Garlands suggest that male and female patients were almost directly proportionate. 'The Croglin Vampire' centralises the figure of the madman and addresses the underrepresentation of male madness despite its social and literary prevalence. Through the depiction of the Croglin creature, the monstrosity of mental illness is made externally visible as an extension of medical and social discourses that vilified 'lunacy', and gender is particularly central to the deliberate demonization of this character.

The actual identity of the vampire-lunatic remains ambiguous, but its gender specifically makes a purposefully belated appearance and is deliberately revealed. Prior to the vampire's attack, the creature is completely depersonalised and referred to only as an 'it', an 'object', a 'creature', and an indescribable 'something'. It is only after the attack and after Amelia proclaims it an escaped lunatic that she genders her assailant who has 'found *his* way here' (206). This deliberate masculinisation of her attacker after the creature penetrates the feminised space of the bedroom is particularly telling of Victorian sexual politics and attitudes towards male madness. Baldick and Mighall argue that what is actually threatening about vampiric sexuality is not its liberality or promiscuity, but that it is unconventional, 'sexually

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[310] Antony Trollope, *He Knew He Was Right* (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2010), Charles Reade, *Hard Cash* (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2010) and Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1897).

subversive', and ultimately non-sexual.[311] A vampire's bite evades sexual orifices and incises its own entry holes in the body to facilitate 'nonsexual penetration' that is portrayed as a perversion of 'the norms of truly sexual activity'.[312] As aforesaid, the absence of any imagery associated with its mouth further symbolises a non-sexual act and deviant behaviour beyond the norm, which is reaffirmed by the creature's unfulfilled appetite and his hasty retreat that emphasises the failure of this act.

The eroticisation of vampires was instilled in the nineteenth century and dominates contemporary vampire fiction, yet Mighall's and Baldick's observation warrants reconsideration of this now popular paradigm. Romanticised vampire narratives, such as the popular television series *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017) and the film quintet *The Twilight Saga* (2008-2012), feature heteronormative vampire boyfriend/human girlfriend dualisms whereby the male vampires reluctantly abstain for fear of losing control. This abstinence is often then misread as excessive desire and sexual frustration, but I propose that what they actually want is not vaginal sex but nonsexual penetration bound up in the vampire bite. Rather, it is the heroine and audience's human desire for this sexual gratification that is mistakenly projected on to the vampire. The sex, when it is eventually achieved, is frequently sadistic and violently destructive thus replicating and standing in for what the vampires want to do, which is not a mutually pleasurable act but an act of consumption and violent physical assault. Hart argues that contemporary Gothic's appropriation of folkloric figures increasingly romantically involves the monster and heroine in order to 'critique the characteristic happy-ending marriage plot of fairy tale, while still nostalgically preserving it'.[313] This alleged redemption of monstrosity by sentimentalising the relationship between vampire and human fails to acknowledge that the dynamic of non-human/human is rarely sustained, as both Ellena

[311] Baldick and Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', p. 282.
[312] Baldick and Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', p. 282.
[313] Hart, 'Gothic Folklore and Fairytale', p.5.

(*Vampire Diaries*) and Bella (*Twilight*) are turned into vampires, evoking Hart's theory of negative nostalgia that subverts the transformation of beast to man.[314] The attraction is directed towards the vampire and the human's becoming-vampire. The sexualisation of vampires is socially produced and projected on to vampire attacks; vampires are not inherently sexual but are actively sexualised through discourse.

If vampiric sexuality actually represents asexuality, the fetishization of vampires in fiction and society is not simply deviant sexuality retaliating against Victorian prudishness. Baldick and Mighall argue that it is not the past that troubles Victorian society, but the arrival of a future of 'emancipated sexualities'.[315] The Croglin Vampire's attack arouses the same sexual signifiers that are common in vampire narratives. The creature violently invades the sacred space of the female bedroom, attacks the sleeping or just-roused female in the sanctity of her bed, pulls her hair back in typical erotic fashion, and proceeds to bite into her neck accompanied by wild screams and gasps. Conventionally, this would be interpreted as sexual deviancy and hypersexualised masculinity. However, despite the presence of sexual signifiers and the continual fetishization of vampire bites, these episodes in vampire fiction are failed sexual attacks. The hybrid bestiality of the Croglin vampire aligns him with animalistic behaviours, which are intended for consumption emphasised by the part-eaten corpses in the tomb. His actual behaviour is not sexual, but the erotic elements of this scene are implied through the narration, which manifests in the mind of the reader. There is a strange instance where the Croglin vampire stops coming towards Amelia, and 'she never could explain why afterwards' (205). For a character whose rationality is repeatedly affirmed, it is significant that the creature's momentary lack of interest is incomprehensible to her. Amelia capitalises on the

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[314] Although this does eventually get fulfilled in *Vampire Diaries* after eight seasons when Ellena and Damon reverse their vampirism and become human, but this just reaffirms the impossibility of sustained non-human/human relationships.

[315] Baldick and Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', p. 283.

creature's distraction to escape her bed, but it is in this exact moment of escape that the creature begins breaking in to her bedroom. When the victim is in her bed the creature does not approach her, yet when she leaves the sexual space it reverts back to its original course. It is then that the victim 'rushed back to her bed'; therefore the location of the attack was not initiated by the vampire but was actually determined by the unwitting victim (205). Amelia's automated actions operate beyond her control; she seems powerless to external presumptions that have codified the sexualisation of vampires. The readers and creators of vampire fiction have eroticised vampire encounters to the extent that their invasions are written within a framework of sexual anticipation and expectation. In 'The Croglin Vampire' these predetermined sexual assumptions are not met, and it is precisely the asexuality of the vampire that is the problem. The belated gendering of the vampire with his diagnosis as an escaped mental patient occurs simultaneously. The ambiguous identity of her attacker prior to this diagnosis is literally unspeakable – there are no words to attribute to a man unmotivated by sex. By diagnosing her attacker with a mental illness, and therefore not 'normal', the man's abnormal sexual behaviour becomes a symptom of his lunacy and not failed masculine virility.

Making Madness Monstrous

Amelia's first resort to diagnose and identify her attacker is symptomatic of the Victorian social and scientific gaze that emphasised the need to visually classify and categorise unruly bodies. J. Halberstam writes that 'the emergence of the monster within Gothic fiction marks a peculiarly modern emphasis upon the horror of particular kinds of bodies'.[316] Early Gothic criticism favoured psychological readings but contemporary criticism is increasingly drawn towards material analysis, which is partly motivated by Sedgwick's foregrounding of surfaces

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[316] Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 1995), p. 3.

that she describes as 'the most characteristic and daring areas of Gothic convention'.[317] The Victorians' comprehension of illness externalises and physicalizes symptoms which resulted in the demonization of affected bodies; a body that appears infected or defective becomes a visual tool for identifying what cannot be seen, is difficult to diagnose, and ultimately, in this case, unable to be treated. Visual signifiers of the vampire have been connected with numerous diseases like porphyria, plague and rabies; the invisibility of mental health, however, and the popularity of psychoanalytical approaches, makes the link between madness and vampirism more complex.

Valerie Pedlar in *The Most Dreadful Visitation: Male Madness in Victorian Fiction* connects vampirism with madness, but only through Dracula's indexical relationship to the lunatic Renfield.[318] Pedlar's argument is premised on the fact that Dracula's behaviour mimics Renfield and vice versa and deduces that Dracula is insane simply because of their shared behaviours. However, when read within the historical context of Victorian psychiatry and the social construction of vampires during that period, madness and vampirism are profoundly interrelated. In Mighall's chapter entitled 'Making a Case: Vampirism, Sexuality, and Intertextuality', he observes how vampirism was actively constructed and then re-narrativised by clinical sexology demonstrated in his study of Sergeant Bertrand, a 'real' vampire.[319] In 1847, Bertrand began digging up bodies from graveyards in Paris and mutilating them earning him the title of 'Le Vampire' in the media. When Bertrand was discovered and executed two years later, psychiatrists re-assessed the cultural representation of his character and attempted to scientifically reformulate the inexplicability of his monstrous acts. Mighall's analysis of notable commentators on the case at that time confirmed that Bertrand was undoubtedly insane,

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[317] Sedgwick, *Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, p. 12.
[318] Valerie Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation: Male Madness in Victorian Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006).
[319] Mighall, 'Making a Case: Vampirism, Sexuality, and Intertextuality', *Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction,* pp. 210–247.

but the issue that continued to perplex psychiatrists was what *type* of lunatic he was. In the absence of classificatory knowledge, Mighall found that multiple scientific publications, such as an 1847 paper entitled 'Impulsive Insanity – The French Vampire', exploited the 'Gothic potential' of the case and were often indistinguishable in tone from the journalistic articles that catalysed such perceptions.[320] Bertrand retained his sensational vampire label until sexology intervened and reoriented these Gothic narratives determining Bertrand a 'necro-sadist' at the end of the century.[321] After studying Bertrand and his various fictional offspring, Mighall deduces that sex and its perversions explained 'these monsters scientifically, replacing evil with sickness, and mystery with perversion'.[322] Bertrand's culturally constructed vampirism is scientifically suppressed and contained by medical classifications.

The Victorian shifts in psychiatry and medicine resulted in the gradual re-interpretation of Bertrand from sensational Gothic vampire to the clinically diagnosed mentally ill. Mighall argues, however, that what has been achieved in reality is denied in fiction, exemplified by *Dracula.* He argues that Dr Seward 'attempts to contain the (epistemological) threat of the monstrous by representing it according to current sexological praxis'; the novel's success as horror fiction derives 'from the failure to sustain this discursive containment'.[323] Seward exhausts medical methodologies to explain away the phenomenon of Dracula's existence, but ultimately science fails to disprove the supernatural and the vampire is confirmed and eradicated according to the customs of superstition. 'The Croglin Vampire' initially appears to follow the same methodology. However, an understanding of Cumbrian psychiatric care demonstrates that there were significant regional variances in mental health, which requires 'The Croglin Vampire' to be read alongside this specifically Cumbrian practice.

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[320] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*, p. 215.
[321] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*, p. 222.
[322] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*, p. 227.
[323] Mighall, *Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*, p. 227.

The publications of the first two medical superintendents at Garlands, Dr Clouston (1863-73) and Dr Campbell (1873-1897), are suggestively Gothic in tone. Their understanding of insanity is framed by superstition, which clearly deviates from the medical modernity of Seward and the scientific sources that re-narrativised Bertrand. When the monstrous creature attacked Amelia, she firstly cannot articulate the 'extraordinary' and 'inexplicable' event (206). This representational void and lack of knowledge during this increasingly scientific period can be perceived as fundamentally more fearful than the actual creature. This is reflected by Amelia who self-assuredly asserts that 'that there *is* an explanation', and as she is not 'given to romance or superstition', she medicalises his monstrosity and reorients the narrative from supernatural to scientific. However, to make this linguistic leap Amelia is associating what she saw – an abhuman form with a shrivelled face, flaming eyes, and carnal appetite – with lunacy. Borrowing the term from supernaturalist author William Hope Hodgson, Kelly Hurley summarises the 'abhuman' as 'a not-quite-human subject, characterised by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself, becoming other'.[324] The process of becoming abhuman suggests that the subject has moved away from human identification into a non-classifiable, liminal space, marking a transition towards becoming something else.

This abhumanising process adheres to psychiatric discourse. In the following examination of psychiatric papers in conjunction with 'The Croglin Vampire', I will argue that to be certified insane is to become abhuman. Amelia defers the signification of monstrosity onto the regional representation of insanity, but her diagnosis does not have the desired effect because of the time and place of the legend's setting. Both re-characterisations of Bertrand and Dracula were able to engage with fin-de-siècle developments in psychiatry, enabling them access to sexological terminology and a nuanced understanding of the different types of

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[324] Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin De Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 4.

insanity that had begun to emerge, which provided points of reference to reinterpret evil as sickness. Despite Dracula's concluding assertion of the supernatural, there is still a sustained period wherein Seward conducts sophisticated psychological hypotheses in an attempt to epistemologically contain the monstrous. 'The Croglin Vampire' precedes this psychiatric shift and the following evidence of Cumbrian healthcare at the time demonstrates the indeterminacy of psychiatric treatment within the region.

Cumbria's Gothic Medicine: A Science of Superstition

In 1868, the first medical superintendent of Garlands, Dr. Clouston expresses his exasperation with psychiatry's indeterminacy by declaring that the 'scientific, and statistical age will not allow the present state of utter doubt to continue'.[325] In this statement, Clouston ideologically separates psychiatry from science. He implies that psychiatry is lacking the knowledge and empirical backing that is at odds with the current period defined by its scientific advancements. This sense of doubtfulness is reaffirmed in a later admission by Clouston who describes insanity itself as a 'fallacy' that varies from county to county; 'a harmless simpleton might well wander about a country district and receive relief as an ordinary pauper who, in a more frequented locality, would certainly be put down among the list of lunatics'.[326] This depiction of psychiatry and mental illness as multivalent and interpretative demonstrates the lack of scientific consistency and highlights the fictive and manipulatable narrative of this medical discourse. This difficulty in determining insanity lends itself to the non-classifiable nature of the abhuman, which is reiterated in 'The Croglin Vampire' appearing as a terminological absence when Amelia struggles to identify who and what her assailant was. The tension between Gothic and Science is frequently navigated in Victorian fiction; generally, science either explained the Gothic away or failed in its attempts to disavow the Gothic, exemplified

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[325] T. S. Clouston, 'Experiments to Determine the Precise Effect of Bromide of Potassium in Epilepsy', *The Journal of Medical Science* (1868), p. 2.
[326] Clouston, 'Experiments', p. 14.

in *Dracula*. The application of psychiatry in Cumbria, however, forms a pseudoscience framed by associative narratives of superstition and mythology resulting in a hybridised medical discourse reliant upon Gothic expression. Therefore, Amelia's use of Cumbrian pseudoscientific praxis to refute and reorient the supernatural existence of the Croglin vampire actually consolidates and contributes to the Gothicness of the creature by its entrance into this regional science of superstition.

As Andrew Scull rightly observes, madness underwent a significant metamorphosis in the Victorian period: the madhouse became the asylum, which became the mental hospital, and the mad men and women became mental patients.[327] The Croglin vampire's diagnosis as a lunatic enters him into this abhuman-like state of transition, continually evolving into something else. As psychiatry developed as a field, it began to be regulated by parliamentary doctrine such as the 1845 Lunacy Act, which is often commended by critics for legislatively improving psychiatric care. Harriet Goodman, for example, praises the amelioration of mental illness throughout the nineteenth century claiming that 'the eclectic range of often disastrous treatments' had been disbanded and replaced with 'enlightened', 'non-restraint' methods following a series of government induced reforms.[328] These developments have been critically regarded as positive shifts but, as Scull states, it is 'a grave error to confuse semantics with reality'.[329]Clouston's previous observation proposed insanity as a variable construct that was influenced by geography. His observations are supported by government initiatives that financially incentivised physicians to diagnose lunatics and admit them to county asylums. This commercialisation of mental illness was recognised as the 'trade in lunacy' that contributed to

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[327] Andrew Scull, *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen: The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

[328] Helen Goodman, 'Madness and Masculinity: Male Patients in London Asylums', *Insanity and the Lunatic Asylum in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Thomas Knowles and Serena Trowbridge (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 151.

[329] Scull, p. 36.

widespread misdiagnosis as physicians were eager to claim their commission. The second medical superintendent of Garlands and central figure of the following analysis, Dr Campbell, questions the effectiveness of this and quotes fellow alienist Dr. Maudsley who declared that:

> Just as in olden times a reward of so much for each wolf's head led to the rapid extinction of wolves in England, so we may expect that this premium on lunacy will tend to diminish materially, and perhaps to render gradually extinct, the race of sane paupers in England[330]

This capitalisation on madness rendered sanity unprofitable and so created a socioeconomic climate that actively produced degrees of 'madness'. The definition of madness broadened to encompass all manners of eccentricities to the extent that sanity itself was questionable.[331] Increased legislative measures are contemporaneously viewed as progressive changes on the whole. However, in an understaffed rural asylum experiencing exponential rises in the number of inpatients, administrative duties were deemed 'incessant and endless' by Dr Campbell that left him with 'little time for medical treatment or research'.[332] The central governance of Victorian psychiatry often failed to reach or consider the regional vagaries of rural outposts, which led to varying levels of care that fell short in Cumbria.

Prior to Garland's opening, the mentally ill of Cumberland and Westmoreland were privately cared for at home or dispatched to neighbouring county asylums. When their county asylum opened in the 1860s, the extent of mental illness in the region was realised and what had previously been a private matter became a public epidemic. Insanity was at its unruliest during the latter half of the century in spite of increasing legislative measures. During his early

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[330] Dr J. A. Campbell, *Four Years' Treatment of Insanity at Garlands Asylum with Remarks* (Carlisle; Steam Printers, 1883), p. 4.
[331] Campbell, *Four Years' Treatment of Insanity,* p. 4.
[332] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland and Cumberland* (Carlisle; Steam Printers, 1896), p. 25.

days at Garlands, Campbell admitted 'treatment in [Garlands] asylum has been pursued under considerable difficulties, the asylum has been overcrowded and its capabilities have been inadequate to admission rate'.[333] Responding to the increasing occurrences of lunacy was a responsibility that many Victorian alienists had to address at some point, but it is clear that Cumbria was particularly overburdened and unequipped to deal with the exponential rise in madness.[334]

Urban alienists identified psycho-geographical patterns between places that were undergoing modernising and industrialising shifts with increased cases of insanity. Speaking at the Annual Meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association in 1896, Scottish alienist R. S. Stewart discussed the increasing rate of general paralysis of the insane (GPI) in England: a devastating neurological condition associated with degenerative dementia and bodily paralysis.[335] Stewart's research figures demonstrated not only that men were significantly more susceptible to GPI than women, but these increases concentrated around large urban centres, sea-ports, coal-exporting and manufacturing towns. Stewart's research concluded that the male working-class labourers and business owners were susceptible to insanity due to the pressures of industry. T. Duncan Greenlees supported this view and asserted that anyone who had 'studied the aetiology of general paralysis are unanimous in the opinion, that it is a disease essentially *the result of modern civilisation*' and a by-product of 'the high pressure at which we live in the present age' [emphasis my own].[336] This etiological evaluation of mental illness

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[333] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 6.

[334] An Alienist was a popular, nineteenth-century term for what we would now refer to as a psychiatrist.

[335] R. S Stewart, 'The Increase of General Paralysis in England and Wales: Its Carnation and Significance', *Journal of Mental Science*, 42.179 (October 1896), pp. 760-777.

[336] T. Duncan Greenlees, 'Recent Researches on General Paralysis of the Insane', *Brain*, 11.2 (1 July 1888), p. 246.

in urban areas directly links insanity to increasing modernity and industry that negatively impacts on the mental wellbeing of city people.

My regional research suggests that the opposite applies to Cumbria; the region's lack of modernity is highlighted as being psychologically detrimental to its inhabitants. In 1896 Dr Campbell wrote, 'I think the North of England epileptic wilder, fiercer, more active in mind and more dangerous than the epileptics I have seen in the Stafford and other more southern asylums'.[337] Campbell highlights the influence that geography has on the symptoms and behaviour of asylum inmates and emphasises the severity of northern lunacy, which should be acknowledged as distinctive from southern statistics and universalising psychiatry. His characterisation of people echoes Defoe's earlier description of the Cumbrian landscape as 'the wildest, most barren and frightful of any in England'.[338] Campbell is both mapping the lunatic onto the Cumbrian landscape, but also suggesting they are symptomatic of one another. This embodied experience of place intertwines the lunatic with their locality and insinuates that the wildness of the Lakeland landscape is influential on the mental health of its inhabitants. Campbell has manifested the region as a particularly loaded space susceptible to and concomitant in the production of the most terrifying 'lunatics'. The identification of northern epileptics as wild, fierce and dangerous constructs the Cumbrian asylum inmate as particularly terrifying, unruly and monstrous.

Cumbrian psychiatric discourse diagnoses environmental factors as key contributors to the mental instability of its inhabitants. In addition to psycho-geographical factors, Dr Campbell argues in his paper 'Lunacy in Westmorland and Cumberland' that Cumbrian

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[337] Epilepsy was a common neurological disorder with visibly violent bodily symptoms that was difficult to treat in the nineteenth century and so became more prevalent and thus distinguishable for Campbell to comment on specifically. Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 25.

[338] Defoe, *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, p. 125.

'lunatics' are mad because they are either inbred, eat too much meat, have massive brains or are bored smallholders.[339] He pays particular attention to smallholders who are restricted to a 'limited patch of ground', which he speculates 'must have a benumbing influence, and prevent mental improvement, if not actually cause mental degeneracy'.[340] Campbell has highlighted one of Cumbria's long-standing agro-pastoral traditions as integral to insanity rates. He actively projects insanity on to smallholders because of what he considers to be 'benumbing', yet he is unfamiliar with local customs and thus the impact that agricultural practices have in shaping the landscape and local identity. Campbell provides a case study of a Cumberland district where the small landowners are mostly 'nearly related, where several of them are now in the asylum, where many more are mentally defective, and where several families are becoming extinct, apparently the result of inter-marriage'.[341] He concludes that smallholdings have been a 'malefic influence in this result'.[342] Campbell's hyperbolic description of smallholdings as a maleficent influence insinuates that Lakeland farming traditions are supernatural and evil to the extent that they are actively debasing their tenants and causing illness.

Campbell's foregrounding of incest and hereditary insanity is implicitly affirmed in 'The Croglin Vampire' during the grotesque vault scene. The vampire lives in the vault that belonged to a 'family long extinct' (208). All of the coffins inside had been broken open and their 'mangled' contents 'were scattered all over the floor' (208). There is only one coffin that remains intact, which belongs to the Croglin vampire. The vampire's dwelling in this vault suggests that he belonged to the ancient family whose disinterred corpses are scattered everywhere. However, if the family was indeed 'long extinct' you would imagine skeletal remains, although they could be mummified, but their description as 'horribly mangled and

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[339] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, pp. 8-11.

[340] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 11.

[341] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 11.

[342] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 11.

distorted' suggests a corporeal element. Their partially preserved bodies ambiguously suggest that they too could have been animated after death. Thus, there are two explanations for their apparent destruction: that the family have cannibalistically fed on themselves as was customary in indigenous vampire folklore, or the Croglin vampire ate his ancestors. Nevertheless, their vampirism is exposed as a hereditary condition that mimics hereditary insanity and insinuates that their familial co-dependency and isolation has resulted in their destruction echoing Campbell's aetiology. Secondly, the alignment of incest with an archaic family reaffirms the notion that Cumbrian mental illness is induced by their connection to a past way of life and their lack of modernisation.

To combat this feeling of stasis associated with the existence of small rural communities, Dr Campbell hoped the rail extension – as the harbinger of modernity's arrival – would help 'the inhabitants of formerly remote, inaccessible regions' to 'mix freely with their fellow men, and have more opportunity for matrimonial selection'.[343] He hopes that 'fearful intermarriage, with the truly awful results of the majority of a family being inmates of the asylum, will in time, I believe, be a thing of the past'.[344] However, the ascension of the railway brought with it Irish labourers who Campbell claims have directly contributed to the rise in insanity and are some of the most 'troublesome patients at Garlands'. It is unclear whether the Irish immigrants arrived insane or if they were infected by the region's rampant lunacy crisis, as alleged by Campbell. Clive Bloom postulates in *Gothic Histories* 'If during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries progress was measured by technological change then it is in gothic literature that the first forms of modern mental alienation concomitant with that change are documented.'[345] Campbell's contradictory argument simultaneously encourages locals to leave

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[343] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 15.
[344] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 15.
[345] Clive Bloom, *Gothic Histories: The Taste for Terror, 1764 to the Present* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010), p. 4.

Cumbria, hoping that eventually industrialisation and better infrastructure will expand the gene pool whilst also inferring that the impact of this modernising process will negatively contribute to the rise in mental patients. If Cumbrian natives are responsible for the high rate of insanity, yet the influx of travellers, tourists and workers similarly exacerbate madness, then Campbell is constructing Cumbria as an infinite source of insanity that becomes impossible to treat. Campbell's rhetorical attempts to rationalise Cumbrian insanity epidemic is undermined by his own contradictions. He constructs a regional madness by highlighting the arbitrariness of his psychiatric science and exposes the irrationality of his methodology through his very attempt to rationalise the unruliness of psychosis. Campbell's lack of resolution creates the appearance of an unbreakable cycle of insanity that seems inescapable and unavoidable.

Campbell is fascinated by hereditary madness, rural isolation and xenophobic prejudices, which are central themes in Gothic literature. His discourse utilises Gothic narratives to frame his understanding of Cumbrian insanity whilst his medical treatments physically produce monsters of asylum inmates. Sara Wasson writes that 'Gothic literature and film has long had an interest in the way medical practice controls, classifies and torments the body in the service of healing'.[346] I will explore how Campbell's manipulation of asylum inmates' bodies 'in the service of healing' is also replicated in 'The Croglin Vampire', which reaffirms the maltreatment of mental illness and the subsequent production of monstrosity. Campbell's case studies describe some of the treatments used at the asylum – the first of which is a 'tonic and blood restorer' concocted of 'iron and quinine'.[347] This demonstrates that his initial instinct to remedy the psychological issues of his patients is to administer physical treatment, prioritising the body over the mind. Campbell also condones supplementing patients with 'malt extract and cod-liver oil' for 'wonderful weight-producing effects', as well as tube-

[346] Sara Wasson, 'Useful Darkness: Intersections Between Medical Humanities and Gothic Studies', *Gothic Studies*, 17.1 (2015), p. 1.
[347] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 8.

feeding.[348] Whilst reaffirming Campbell's preoccupation with the body, it also alludes to the force-feeding of malnourished patients. He refers to stimulants like bass, stout, and whiskey that supposedly helped in some instances and hypnotics like nightshade, opium and bromide of potassium were used in others. These insights into the type of psychiatric treatment administered at Garlands is reflected in the characterisation of the Croglin creature. Iron supplementation, blood-restoration and blood-letting were fascinations of Victorian medicine, clearly favoured by Campbell. This medical emphasis on blood is fictionally translated into the most codified behaviour of vampirism, blood-sucking. Campbell's records show that most patients arrived malnourished, emaciated and with little appetite on admission, hence his preoccupation with dietary supplementation and force-feeding. The association of consumption with violence and force is then mirrored in the vampire's violent eating disorder that witnesses him mutilate, but only partially devour, his victims. The vampire's emaciated figure also mirrors Campbell's patients, whilst his obsessive and unusual consumption habits can be interpreted as a side-effect of medical treatment that violently compelled him to eat.

If dietary supplements failed, Campbell would experiment with topical treatments and physical remedies. He describes how he 'used blisters to the head in five cases, and continuous counter-irritation by tincture of iodine in one case' and a 'morning cold shower bath'.[349] The external mutilation of asylum inmates' bodies became visible markers of their 'madness', thus the scarred and wizened body of the vampire could be linked with these visual signifiers. Numerous malpractice suits and official investigations were conducted against Campbell after patients were discovered with significant bruising, perhaps indicated by the Croglin Vampire's ruddy complexion. One legal case appeared in the Dundee Courier on the 20th August 1898

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[348] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 8.
[349] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, pp. 9-10.

involving a patient named Janet Mooney.[350] Campbell claimed that he was drunk at the time of the attack, so could not defend his actions but insisted on his innocence nevertheless. He was frequently trialled for the physical abuse of patients, which ended fatally in two instances, but he was never convicted due to the testimonies of asylum inmates being deemed unreliable.

The Incurability of Cumbria's Asylum Inmates

The curability of madness was a contentious topic, given the conditions at Garlands run by resident mad-doctor Campbell and the general lack of psychological knowledge at this time. The fear of the 'escaped lunatic' was a common anxiety because the recovery of any discharged patient in the period could not be guaranteed. Campbell writes that over his four-year study, 495 patients were admitted, 235 of which were considered recovered and thus discharged.[351] Therefore, almost half of his patients were considered cured and released back into society with no ongoing care. However, in the same paper Campbell writes that 1182 patients were admitted from 1872-1882, and of these patients 268 were re-admissions. This means that over 20% of patients were re-admitted. This is a substantial figure and certainly enough to stimulate anxiety regarding the curability of madness. Campbell concludes that the recovery rate in 1882, meaning the patients he discharged, was 48.4%. Given the figures based on the ten-year period, it is likely that half of these 'recovered' patients would be re-admitted therefore proving that a significant number of mentally unstable patients were released. Therefore, Amelia's escaped lunatic could easily have been a discharged patient, which, given the statistics, would have been a fairly common occurrence particularly in the areas surrounding Garlands.

However, regarding escapees, Campbell specifically discusses in a paper a case of two recently escaped 'dements' that 'ended fatally from exposure' and numerous more who were

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[350] 'Serious Charge Against a Doctor', *Dundee Courier and Argus* (Dundee: Scotland, 20 August 1898).
[351] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 8.

'fished out of the neighbouring river, another just caught on the bank'.[352] He blames the open-door policies of other asylums for their high rates of escape, despite acknowledging that Garlands does not share this policy but still has high escape rates correlative to their patients. His tactic is to defer blame onto the failures of other asylums, whilst overawing his audience with data. This is demonstrated in a table that compares the number of escapes at four northern England asylums and four Scottish asylums; of the English asylums Garlands has the second highest escape rate of 14 whilst Durham has 20, but he fails to consider that Durham had twice the number of patients. Campbell constructs a regional landscape infested with escaped lunatics roaming the countryside in a similar fashion to the Croglin creature.

Hare's 'Croglin Vampire' narrative represents Croglin Grange in confining and controlling terms, linking it associatively with the imprisoning characteristics of Garlands. From the outset of the narrative, the 'curious, old' Croglin Grange is highlighted as being atypical: the 'great characteristic' being its single-storey structure that is repeatedly referred to as problematic. The narrator emphasises this quality, describing how the Cranswells' rooms were 'on the ground-floor (for, as I said, there was no upstairs in that house)' (207). The singular storey also enforced their return to Croglin, because they would 'always find it difficult to let a house which is only one storey high' (207). Furthermore, they had to return to their previous sleeping arrangement because there was 'no upstairs in the house' (207). The house's unusual structure acts as an incarcerating edifice that they cannot escape, or even modify, forcing them to repeat their trauma. There is also the implication that if they did have another floor, as was common in Victorian urban architecture, they would be more in control of their living arrangements. However, single-storey longhouses were commonplace in Cumbrian farming villages. Hare's repetition implicitly suggests that he perceives traditional Cumbrian customs as conducive to Gothic narrativisation, creating apt settings for terror and trauma. The

[352] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 6.

family's entrapment in a tenancy is also significant, which highlights their liminal status as not-quite-belonging. Tenancy is a feature shared by the 'Calgarth Skulls' case study, which is not uncommon given that more affluent landlords would typically own the farmhouses that they would then let out to lower class locals.

However, Amelia is 'comfortably at home' inside the house, but the opening of the shutters is a transgressive act that catalyses the collapse of the binary relations between inside/outside, public/private. The externally roaming vampire and the internally sleeping female should have been concealed from each other; however, the open shutters remove this demarcation. As Amelia looks outside, she becomes aware of 'two lights' flickering in the trees, which are liminally positioned between the Grange's lawn and the churchyard beyond. As the creature makes its approach, her contented stillness is replaced by an 'uncontrollable horror' which 'seized' her. The window that framed the 'wonderful' nightscape has now become the locus of danger. She no longer felt at home and 'longed to get away, but the door was close to the window and the door was locked on the inside, and while she was unlocking it, she must for an instant be nearer to it' (205). After this realisation, she is 'paralysed' and unable to speak or to scream (205). This description of her as paralysed and seized insidiously echoes the language of GPI that I explored earlier but it is also suggestive of her physical imprisonment and immobilisation in the house. Her locked door and fastened window that were supposed to provide security are now detaining her and eradicating the possibility of escape. The house and its unusual properties that made it 'exactly suited to them' have now become unhomely and threatening to the family.

This assessment is reinforced by the censorship of Amelia's voice and her physical detainment, which emulates that of the institutionalised. The narrative's fascination with the locked window and door resonates with Dr Campbell's arguments against the contentious open-door policies favoured by Scottish asylums. Campbell was an advocate of isolation and

restraint methods and argues that 'restless melancholiacs' were shown to 'subside and settle' when their doors were locked.[353] This sentiment is momentarily shared by Amelia who 'felt a sort of mental comfort in the knowledge that the window was securely fastened on the inside', believing this would protect her from the encroaching threat outside. Campbell rebukes the possibility of an 'open-door' system at Garlands given the multitude of doors that open to the outside, which would require too many attendants should he have to place 'one as a *Cerberus* at each outside door'.[354] Campbell's choice analogy refers to the Hound of Hades, a multi-headed monster that guarded the gates of Hell to prevent the dead from escaping. In this instance, Campbell analogises Garlands as Hell, the patients as dead sinners, and his surveillance staff as monstrous beasts. Not only is this an instance of Campbell relying on mythological monsters to articulate psychiatric care at Garlands, but he also deflects monstrosity away from the patients. Instead, he demonises his staff that police the patients and patrol the boundaries, literally and symbolically. This analogy applies to 'The Croglin Vampire', as Amelia becomes the mental patient, Croglin Grange becomes the asylum and the vampire becomes psychiatric staff.

Hare's rendition of 'The Croglin Vampire' interpolates the perceptions of primitivism in rural communities reaffirmed by its monstrous folklore with Victorian vampirism, which pathologises mental illness as monstrosity. Furthermore, my research into the region's mental healthcare implies that various medical, bureaucratic and social factors created conditions in Cumbria for insanity to become inescapable and inseparable from the county. One of the threats of *Dracula* is the international mobilisation of the monster that pursues after its victims, whereas the Croglin Vampire remains rooted in its Cumbrian locality. This is implicit within the narrative's sense of imprisonment that only becomes relevant when read in the context of

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[353] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 7.
[354] Campbell, *Lunacy in Westmoreland*, p. 8.

regional medical discourse that reaffirms the restrictive and restraint methods that urban and mostly southern institutions had moved away from.

III: Social Death and the Screaming Skulls of Calgarth

Unlike the elusive nature of 'The Croglin Vampire' and its singular primary source, the legend of the Calgarth Skulls is one of the most popular and widely documented legends of Cumbrian lore. Its popularity is likely influenced by its South Lakes setting, which is more frequented by tourists – in part due to easier accessibility, conventional attractiveness and Romantic affiliation – than the perceived rugged remoteness of northern Cumbria. Certainly grander and more picturesque than Croglin, the screaming skulls are located on the Calgarth Estate overlooking Windermere Lake. Calgarth Hall in the legend was originally the manorial home of the estate owned by the Philipson family from the early sixteenth century but its subsequent owner, Dr Watson, disliked the archaic Hall and built a grander Georgian property in 1790. Watson's manor house has an interesting history in itself, repurposed as a hospital in World War One, a children's orthopaedic hospital in the 1960s and is now a retirement village. Displaced by the new build, Calgarth Hall became a glorified farmhouse, a tired symbol of its former stateliness kept alive by its later Grade I listing and notoriety as a haunted house. This history of repurposing the estate analogises the nature of its folklore that is similarly refashioned to remain relevant, but the indestructibility of the skulls suggests a permanence in spite of the changes of use. I will explore how the Calgarth Skulls are born out of the modernisation and social transformation of the Lake District that has been gaining impetus since the late eighteenth century and, unlike ephemeral ghosts, these irremovable skulls are materialisations of the past that refuse to be forgotten or suppressed.

Numerous written accounts of the legend appear in various formats, historical contexts and offer different interpretations of the permanent residence of two skulls in Calgarth Hall. In

Haunted England, Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson accredit the 'earliest form of the story' to James Clarke's *Survey of the Lakes* (1787).[355] Whilst Clarke's interpretation is useful, and one I visit later, this recognition is actually owed to the third edition of Thomas West's *A Guide to the Lakes* (1784), where it appears in a footnote added by William Cockin.[356] Cockin elaborates on the 'popular tale of the two skulls' and confirms that they belonged to 'two poor old people, who were unjustly executed for robbery.'[357] Cockin's account claims that 'some ghost' assisted the skulls, relocating them in Calgarth Hall, so they could take up their immortal habitation there in order to 'perpetuate their innocence' (63). As an immemorial reminder of their unjust treatment, the skulls could not be destroyed; every time they were moved they always returned to their resting place in the house. Cockin reports the skulls had been 'buried, burnt, powdered, and dispersed in the winds and upon the lake', but to no avail and 'certain it is these human remains still exist' (64). This version, although shrouded in ambiguity, lays the foundations for later sources. The first section of this chapter explores how travel writers incorporate this Gothic folklore for commercial appeal, antiquarian fascination and to subjugate marginal identities. The latter half, however, analyses an account from a local author that personalises the skulls and reclaims their Gothicised identities. This example of heroic Gothic embraces the skulls' markers of monstrosity and empowers them in death with the visibility they were denied in life. The first section of this case study demonstrates how emergent tourist discourses began to appropriate folklore for commercial and political purposes. The second section addresses many of the misrepresentations that dehumanise the victims. Using a dialect poem by Cumbrian-born Alexander Gibson, I utilise Avery Gordon's

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[355] Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson, *The Penguin Book of Ghosts: Haunted England* (London: Penguin, 2010) p. 66.

[356] Cockin's source is unknown.

[357] Thomas West, *A Guide to the Lakes, in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire*, 3rd ed. (Kendal, 1784), p. 62. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses following the quotation.

theory of social death to investigate the empowerment of the persecuted peasantry's death grants them that was denied in life.

The Creation of the Tour Guide(book)

The first written appearances of the legend occur in two guidebooks, which is no coincidence. Travel writing became increasingly popular as British domestic travel flourished from the 1760s onwards. Katherine Turner credits the rise in domestic tourism to 'practical contingencies', such as the difficulty of war-time foreign travel, 'but also to powerful cultural factors such as the rise of middle-class leisure and consumerism, and a burgeoning interest in Britain's own historic attractions and picturesque resources'.[358] West's and Clarke's guidebooks respond to the rise in domestic travel and offer an anglicised form of the Grand Tour. Their guides are directed towards a middle-class readership that expects picturesque vignettes alongside informative historical and cultural contexts, which combine in an enlightening, educational experience in a similar fashion to the European tours.

Both guides engineer this classical experience by structurally separating Cumbria into a selection of respectable viewpoints, appealing to the aesthetic interests of the budding traveller. In his prefatory introduction, West explains that his formulaic guidebook is designed to 'heighten the pleasure of the tour', but to 'relieve the traveller from the burthen of dull and tedious information on the road, or at the inn, that frequently embarrasses, and often misguides' (3). Preceding the era of fashionable folklore, West's distaste is for a particular kind of local information emanating from the Cumbrian working class. Despite living in Cumbria and describing his expertise as 'local knowledge', West was born in Scotland, travelled the Continent and clearly hierarchizes his experience above that of his allegedly onerous Cumbrian

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[358] Katherine Turner, *British Travel Writers in Europe 1750-1800: Authorship, Gender, and National Identity* (Oxon: Routledge, 2001), p. 3

neighbours (3). These conscious navigations of class and tone are evocative of early domestic tourism that requires a respected tour guide who can relate to their readership but can also uniquely access local information without appearing too local so that they alienate themselves from their audience. West's erasure of Cumbrian natives and subjugation of the working classes in his preface attempts to remove, or at least marginalise, local encounters from the tourist experience. The marginalisation of local voices and othering of lower classes is already present even before the entrance of Cockin's folkloric footnote. Furthermore, the absence of Lakeland locals in these early tourist texts also suggests why they become such alien figures in later folklore narratives, as their systematic suppression and avoidance results in them remaining alien and unknown to the tourist.

Contradictorily, the publishers' biographical notes in the second edition attempt to bolster West's authority as a guide by asserting his first-hand experiences and local reconnaissance whilst maintaining the author's separation from other locals. West 'frequently accompanied genteel parties on the Tour of the Lakes', collecting first-hand experiences, which are complemented by local information from 'neighbouring gentlemen' intended to equip his reader with a more complete experience 'authentic in the principal articles of local information'.[359] There is a clear commercial tension between authentic authorship derived from 'local information' that West has appropriated from locals and the presentation of this knowledge to his 'genteel' audience. West's remarks and the publishers' revisions recognise the commercial necessity of local lore, which is needed to enrich the experience of place both for authenticity and entertainment but only when it is transmitted by an author that shares the values, class and taste of their readership.

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[359] Thomas West, *A Guide to the Lakes, in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire*, 2nd ed. (Kendal, 1780), pp. iv-v.

The economic and social implications of class and control are inherent in travel writing discourse. With the rise of modern travel and inaccessibility of the Continent, the perception of the British landscape changed as previously unpopular parts of the country became more accessible and opened up to facilitate this national exploration. Domestic trips offered the aspirational middle-class 'imaginary access to prestige and property' as they are guided through private landscapes previously owned by landed gentry and witness first-hand the waning seats of 'hard-up aristocracy'.[360] The reclamation of privatised places as public spaces with a right to roam unveiled the physical landscape and the changing social and political landscapes of Britain. Ralph Cohen, researcher of eighteenth-century art and aesthetics, writes that 'the aesthetics of landscape fulfilled important ideological functions'.[361] This evolving sub-section of classes are being negotiated during this era of travel writing, which has already illustrated the demarcation of locals from tourists and landed gentry from the touring middle class. It is an ideologically loaded practice reserved for particular people, not simply a pleasant pastime. West alludes to the implicit power and performativity that travelling through these landscapes invokes when describing the landscape that the folklore footnote corresponds to. He represents the corresponding viewpoint overlooking Windermere and its mountainous environs as an 'amphitheatre' (63). The metaphorical suggestion of the landscape as a performative, theatrical space consequentially positions the lofty guide traveller as the god-like director deciding what their audience should marvel at and how to do so. Furthermore, it imagines the inhabited valleys beneath where everyday local life is playing out as entertainment for the visiting tourist. This suggestion mimics how Cumbrian oral traditions are often

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[360] Turner, *British Travel Writers,* p. 3.

[361] Ralph Cohen**, *Studies in Eighteenth-century British Art and Aesthetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 53.

appropriated by nineteenth-century folklorists that, at least in these case studies, Gothicise local figures and their lived experience for Victorian entertainment.

This experience of place is represented as an empowering practice that conflates physical ascent with social power. We can easily imagine West as the 'Wanderer in the Sea of Fog', exemplifying the power of the Romantic subject in nature. However, this is a transient and subjective experience of the sublime that can also make one feel trivially insignificant in comparison with the vastness of nature. Cohen reaffirms that the 'assertion of control over one's surroundings' often paradoxically coincides with or exposes 'one's loss of control', which 'characterises much of the writing on landscape in the eighteenth century'.[362] This tension and fragility between control and chaos is represented by the main body of West's text and Cockin's counternarrative. Cockin's account of the Calgarth Skulls represents people's powerlessness to the supernatural, which trivialises West's imagined feeling of dominance over the natural landscape. West's formulaically constructed travel guide with its organised viewpoints is a structural representation of his symbolic dominance of nature, which is undermined by the subversive marginalia that undermines the message of the main text. West's structuring of a Romantic travel experience, which is designed to reaffirm individual subjectivity, is undercut by the suggestion of a Gothicised tourist experience. The folkloric footnote reveals an unknown and alien side to Cumbria that challenges notions of the Romantic self and fragments the totalising principles of national identity by the suggestion of regional irregularities and difference. In the following analysis, I investigate how allusions to the Calgarth Skulls in the following travelogues are characterised by a form of detour that promote divergence from the main path of their trajectory. I will explore how their diversion catalyses a temporary dissolution of self and a loss of control shored up by self-conscious attempts to regain and consolidate a fragile command of their environment and their place within it.

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[362] Cohen, *Eighteenth-century British Art,* pp. 56-57.

Discursive Detours

Cockin's account of the Calgarth Skulls makes a belated appearance in the third edition of West's guide in 1784, so is posthumously published. However, it is important to acknowledge that the authorship of the footnote is uncertain. It could exist as a spectral trace of West's authorial voice reanimated by Cockin's revision of the author's notes; however, it is more likely that the editor introduced the footnote as the style is concordant with his other additions. Furthermore, Cockin is Cumbrian-born – like Gibson whom I analyse in due course – and considering West's distancing from locals it seems more appropriate that Cockin would be more familiar with, and favourable towards, folklore prior to its popularisation in the nineteenth century. In either case, West's death created an opportunity for this discursive reorientation and alternative tone, style and voice to invade. The Calgarth footnote did not appear in the second edition, however, when the footnotes were originally published. This is no coincidence given the incongruity of the footnote's content in comparison to the classical nature of the guidebook, plus it actively contradicts West's defamatory remarks about local whimsicality that he committed to save his readers from. However, when Gothic themes became more popular the footnote surfaced in the text. In terms of literary Gothic, critical consensus locates the first wave of the genre as beginning in 1764 with the publication of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. By the 1780s, Gothic narratives had risen in popularity. The German School of Horror was flourishing with their Schauerroman (shudder-novel); in the same year that the Calgarth footnote arose, Fredrich Schiller published his novel *Der Geisterseher* (The Ghost-Seer). Clarke's *Survey of the Lakes* was also published in this decade when English authors started embracing Gothic narratives, from the integration of Gothic elements in Charlotte Smith's sonnet 'Written on the Sea Shore' (1784) and Hannah Cowley's 'Invocation to Horror'

(1788) to explicit Gothic novels such as William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1783-5) and Radcliffe's *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789).

The publication of both the Calgarth footnote and Clarke's account coincides with the Gothic's increasing popularity and Cumbria's own Gothic cusp, which accounts for the alternative aesthetic and tone that emerges in the respective guides. West's guidebook engages with Romantic-era ideologies that reclaimed landscapes of fear and reoriented their perception using the sublime, picturesque and the beautiful. In the main body of text, the entry on Windermere with its corresponding Calgarth footnote is replete with hyperbolic poeticism that describes the 'magnificent' lake's 'crystal waters' and compliments the environs for having 'the grandeur of Alpine scenes' (57-59). This style and tone, however, is starkly juxtaposed with the intrusion of Gothic folklore in the footnote. Fred Botting describes the Gothic itself as a 'counternarrative displaying the underside of enlightenment and humanist values.'[363] It is a common trope in Gothic narratives to contrast an idyllic scene with a shocking event, just like Hare's description of the Cranswells enjoying a peaceful summer before the vampire's return. Not only does this heighten terror with the sudden contrast in affect, but the Calgarth Skulls marginalia structurally symbolises the alternative literary history of Cumbria that coexists alongside romanticised experiences of the landscape.

Furthermore, West's Romantic vignette and the Gothic footnote demonstrate the interconnectedness of the physical landscape and its folkloric associations. In the guidebook, Calgarth Hall is the object of attention that prompts the folkloric intrusion and so functions in a similar way to Radcliffe's ruins that inspire intertextual insertions. When West observes Calgarth, he also notices Rayrigg, another nearby house, yet it is Calgarth in particular that arrests attention. Cockin encourages the reader to remain at Calgarth, causing both a literary digression with the footnote that diverts from the main text whilst also physically guiding the

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[363] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 4.

tourist away from their planned route. Clarke also detours in his *Survey of the Lakes*, so that when we arrive at Calgarth the author commands the 'landscape-painter' to remain at the viewpoint where West left off and invites the 'antiquarian to the farm-house'.[364] The result in both guides is an alternative dialogue, a Gothic counter-narrative, which subversively challenges and overrides the main text.

When visitors depart from the figurative footpath to take a closer look at Calgarth, the various accounts are inspired to rework the legend according to their individual responses to the Hall. Cockin incorporates a medley of folkloric, medical and social discourses, Clarke approaches from a historical perspective and Gibson imitates oral traditions with a local speaker and addresses the voices of the victims. The discursive nature of Calgarth can be explained by Botting, who writes that physical locations manifest 'disturbance and ambivalence in spatial terms' as they often recall 'feudal times and power'.[365] Botting is referring here to the archetypal institutions of power such as churches, castles, and monasteries: structures that are extended metaphors of monarchy, aristocracy, and religion. Whilst the structures in rural communities are slightly different to these archetypes, the preeminence of the manorial home raises rural associations of gentrification, wealth, and power. Although it is not simply physical structures that manifest disturbance in this instance, but the Lakeland landscape itself - especially when the familiar footpath is lost. Calgarth's various portrayals certainly conform to these views; West describes Calgarth as an 'old mansion' that has 'gone out of repair', devoid of its former stateliness, which has resulted in a 'melancholy appearance' (62). In its decaying and derelict state, Calgarth is a physical remnant and harbinger of the past.

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[364] James Clarke, *A Survey of the Lakes of Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire Together with an Account, Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive, of the Adjacent Country. To Which Is Added, a Sketch of the Border Laws and Customs.* (London, 1789), p.133. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses following the quotation.
[365] Botting, *Gothic*, p. 4

In former years, the house had been the controlling mansion of the estate, but presently it exists as a nostalgic emblem of its past status. In a similar fashion to how the paintings and sculptures at Strawberry Hill incite various historical and fictional narratives, Calgarth's long-standing history also inspires discursive debate. I will now explore the diversity of Calgarth's readings in terms of its personal, local, political, social, and historical contexts according to the perspective of its narrator.

Clarke takes the historical approach to Calgarth and resurrects its feudal past. Clarke begins by describing how Calgarth had been the seat of the Philipsons for over five hundred years and expands on the chivalrous episodes of one Philipson proprietor nicknamed 'Robin the Devil' (134). Clarke describes a siege in which Robin 'gallantly defended' his homestead (134). Days later, Robin seeks further vengeance on his attempted invaders, but was unhorsed by the opposition and his girths were slashed. However, he astonishingly mounted his horse, valiantly defeated his enemies and returned home. Clarke then detours from his chivalric reverie to discuss the elusive Calgarth skulls. Like West, Clarke contends there are 'many strange stories' attributed to them, but his preferred tale features the skulls as Robin's conquests (134). John Pagen White takes inspiration from Clarke's account and resurrects chivalric romance verse for his portrayal of Robin the Devil in *Lays and Legends of the English Lake Country* (1873), which I alluded to in my thesis introduction. The poet reiterates the same heroic deeds of the eponymous Philipson as Clarke does in his guidebook. Whilst Clarke's account assumes objectivity, there are political inferences in White's rendition. Both Clarke and White refer to the siege of Carlisle – with further allusions in White's ballad to Cromwell – which situates the oral folklore in 1645. The Philipsons were royalist supporters, although 'Robin was true to his own' (White, 284). White's account politicises the antagonism between Robin and the raid he led on the church, as he attacked Colonel Briggs, a 'troublesome Whig at his prayers' (White, 288). Robin's notoriety won him his nickname 'Robin the Devil' by

'Oliverians of those parts' (White, 290). Following the theme of divergence, White's poem does not refer to the skulls until the endnotes and even then they are subject to further marginalisation. In brackets, White writes that Robin 'who has also, though unjustly, been calumniated and accused of having murdered the persons to whom the skulls at Calgarth belonged' (291-2). The supernatural nicknaming of Robin and the acceptance of the skulls' existence – the only contested aspect is their provenance – demonstrates how Gothic is a natural idiom in local lore. The supernaturalisation of local identities because of their valiance, violence and/or victimisation echoes Campbell's science of superstition in which Gothic narrativisation and the presence of the inexplicable are emblematic of the everyday nature of Cumbrian 'living Gothic'.

Clarke, however, acknowledges the existence of the skulls but rebukes their paranormal possibilities. Concordant with West, Clarke suggests the skulls 'could not be removed' and if they were, 'they always returned', but dismisses these rumours as 'ridiculous falsehoods' (134). He contributes to their mythology by proposing that 'some person, however, has lately carried one of them to London' and because it 'has not yet found its way back again' he declines to say 'nothing more on so very trivial a subject' (134). This perfunctory dismissal does little to entirely disavow the skulls. In a similarly dismissive fashion, Cockin proposes a 'more rational account of the matter', claiming the skulls belonged to a 'famous doctress'; a former proprietor who, 'for the usual purposes of her profession', had skeletons in her custody (65). Cockin does not seem to take this suggestion seriously, but its ridiculousness – given that women were not practicing medicine and anatomy generally was rare at this point – further compounds the mysticism of the skulls. Cockin's concluding retort states that whatever origin the skulls may have, 'their legend is too whimsical and improbable to deserve being recorded, otherwise than as an instance of the never-failing credulity of ignorance and superstition' (63).

Cockin and Clarke's sardonic attempts to rebuke discussion of the skulls is blatantly hypocritical and is undermined by their own acts of writing. Even their dissemination of this lore is an active participation in the folklore tradition and its associative superstitions. This paradoxical condition reverts back to Cohen's earlier observation concerned with the travel writer's command of the environment coexisting with the loss of control. As the writers detour from the path of reason and venture into superstition they lose their way and resort to a defensive recourse of rationality to place them back on track. Thus, the form and structure of the narratives mirror the theme of its content. The Calgarth skulls are exhumed from their folkloric graves, dispossessed, transposed into an alternative generic setting, before they are unsuccessfully re-buried only to reappear later in different literature. After all, it is Clarke himself who presents this possibility. His theory of the singular migratory skull, which has been excavated by the metropolitan traveller and relocated to the cosmopolitan centre of England, analogises the appropriation of local lore and rural superstition by summer tourists. I will now explore how Gibson's account attempts to reclaim the Calgarth narrative for Cumbrian representation. His dialect poem gives an immediate impression of local authenticity, which is further demonstrated by the reorientation of victimhood to the skulls instead of the affluent landowners.

Heroic Hauntings

The various portrayals of the skulls perpetually reanimate them and renew Calgarth's haunted histories. Avery Gordon writes in *Ghostly Matters* that 'haunting is one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life'.[366] This is especially true when abuses of power are outdated and when these systems are denied. What

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[366] Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. xvi.

is distinctive about haunting is that it animates 'repressed or unresolved social violence' and makes it known, either explicitly or implicitly.[367] When spectres appear it is because the social violence they represent is no longer 'contained or repressed or blocked from view'.[368] For Gordon, ghosts are not intangible or ephemeral beings, but have a real and material presence that need to be addressed. This is especially true of the skulls whose physicality cannot be denied; they are not ectoplasmic ghouls but actual bodily remains, which are immune to degradation and perpetually materialize. Gordon argues that hauntings occur when the repression is no longer working and the resultant trouble creates 'conditions that demand re-narrativisation'.[369] This narratological demand is exemplified by the legend's discursiveness and provides one explanation as to why the re-telling of the Calgarth Skulls emerges repeatedly in the 1780s, is buried again for a time, and resurrected in the mid-nineteenth century in a multiplicity of intermedial narratives. The resurrection of that which has been repressed or historically concealed, Gordon suggests, is 'very much alive and present'.[370] The revenant skulls are the living dead; they are the material exhumation of social, political or cultural disturbances demanding revision and attention.

In 1869 the skulls are disinterred once again, but unlike the historical and political emphasis of the antiquarian-influenced eighteenth-century accounts, Alexander Gibson's tale foregrounds personal and social aspects of the legend that previous accounts have avoided and suppressed. Gibson's version, which appears in his dialect poetry collection entitled *Folk-speech Tales & Rhymes of Cumberland,* epitomises Gordon's theorisation of haunting as it

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[367] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters,* p. xvi.

[368] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters,* p. xvi.

[369] Avery Gordon, 'Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity', *Borderlands*, 10.2 (2011), p. 3.

[370] Gordon, 'Some Thoughts on Haunting', p. 2.

exposes abuses of power and social injustice and calls for something to be done.[371] Although Gibson was born in Workington on Cumbria's western coast, he still mediates his narrative through the Windermere ferryman who is more local to the South Lakes. This makes Gibson's account appear more genuine as it acknowledges there are degrees of belonging and being local that enables the proper communication of local customs and culture. Unlike Hare who relies on Captain Fisher's Cumbrian knowledge, Gibson bolsters his own local expertise with references to various landlords of the Windermere ferry and he oscillates between 'Wynander' and 'Windermere' – Wynander being the Old Norse name for the lake that had fallen out of use, but which is resurrected here and used concurrently with the contemporaneous Windermere. Gibson is disturbing linear time and blurring the lines of local history, which results in an obscure temporality and creates a timeless sense of place from which he is narrating. This ethereal temporality is mirrored in the depiction of the lake, described as being 'potent' in its 'fairy charm', which emitted a 'spell' that allured the poet (76). Published during the popular period of folklorism, Gibson recreates the Calgarth Skulls as a Cumbrian Gothic chronotope, revelling in the story's sublime spatiality and anachronistic temporality that infuses past and present. In the 'deepest, darkest, dreamiest nook of bay-fringed Windermere' as 'the shadows deepened', the speaker asks the ferryman John Long to tell him a 'mournful tale or legend, of the far departed time' (77-9). Unlike the guidebook entries that seemed to unconsciously adopt a Gothic register, Gibson is intentionally Gothicizing the landscape but in a way that is reciprocated by the scenery. His depictions are devoid of analogy; Windermere *is* full of mystical charm. Its supernatural qualities enticed the poet providing the creative

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[371] Alexander Craig Gibson, *The Folk-speech of Cumberland and Some Districts Adjacent: Being Short Stories and Rhymes in the Dialects of the West Border Counties,* 4th ed. (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1891) Subsequent references will appear in parentheses following the quotation.

stimulus to produce the poetic imagery that reflects back the Gothic ethereality of the location that inspired it. This also extends to the people that inhabit the area, as demonstrated in the characterization of the ferryman John Long, who is described as 'grizzly' and 'wild' with 'elf-locks' (77). Gibson is exaggerating the contrast between himself as the educated poet-speaker and his mediation of Long's voice, whom he captures to strengthen the illusion of authenticity and outreach to a wider readership. The use of dialect is both an implied tool to effectively communicate the voices of everyday Cumbrian figures, such as Long and the Cooks, but also engages with picturesque regionalism that revels in rural identification. The poet reinforces elements of 'living Gothic' that acknowledges the Gothic qualities of the landscape, people and their lore.

The inextricability of landscape, people and poet produces a Gothic holism, which is embedded in and consolidated by its folklore. Gibson begins his account of the skulls by describing the Calgarth mansion in the 'oomer dark' with wide and prominent 'chimla-heeads', a 'crum'lin' roof, 'wedder-gnãwn an' weed-be-grown' (80). This discourse of decay and dereliction that describes Calgarth in looming darkness engages with archetypal Gothic imagery. Long introduces the 'Phillipsons o' Windermer': the affluent landowners and proprietors of Calgarth (80). For years, their 'manors spread ooer forest, field, an' fell', yet they were 'strivin' still for meear'; they acquired many a 'pooer man's grund […] by means nit ola's fair' (80). Gibson has deviated from the heroic discourses associated with Robin Phillipson and has provided the first critique of the Phillipson family. The unsympathetic critique functions as an alternative villainous narrative of the Phillipsons and hints towards a history of illegal and improper repossession of land. The poem then introduces Dorothy and Kraster Cook who owned a smallholding near the Phillipsons' estate that Myles had continuously pressured them to sell. One Christmas, the villagers were invited to Calgarth, but Myles used this to set up the Cooks, planting a silver cup at their home and accusing them of

stealing. They were convicted for theft and 'condemn't to dee' (82). On receiving their sentence, Dorothy glowered at Myles 'hard i' t' feeace' and shouted their land had not been acquired 'for nowte', and that it will actually be the 'dearest grund a Philipson hes ayder stown or bowte' (83). Dorothy curses Myles and spat 'yee sall prosper niver meear, yersel' nor yan o t' breed', future schemes with 'widder I' yer hand', and in spite of their greed, 'a time 'ill come when t' Philipsons wi n't awn an inch o' land' (83). In regards to the Hall itself, her parting shot declares that they'll 'ha'nt it neet an' day', never to 'git shot on us, whatever way ye tak'' (83). On the first anniversary of their deaths, as per the conditions of Dorothy's curse, two skulls appeared in the 'wide stair heead' as a 'warnin' to others (84). Regardless of the means of destruction or disposal, the skulls returned. For hundreds of years, 'fooak ha' seen 'em theear' until the next proprietor, Dr Watson the Bishop of Llandaff, covered the hole, but the speaker insists the skulls are still there and just before they were boarded up he had seen them himself. The Philipsons suffered various misfortunes until their 'neeam hes vanish't', and presently there was not a single Phillipson with an 'inch o' land' (85).

In Gibson's version, the affluent Philipsons are converted from perpetually haunted victims to villains, representing the landed gentry who abuse their status to subjugate the lower classes. They violently territorialise the landscape and forcefully remove those who maintain traditional uses of the land. Gibson anachronistically resurrects the Calgarth legend as it conveys Cumbria's contemporaneous waning of tradition, land and heritage. Thus, Gibson's engagement with folklore is not simply an antiquarian act of preservation, but it reanimates and exhumes 'repressed or unresolved social violence' that needs to be addressed. Gibson's depiction of the Cooks and the abuses of the Phillipsons invites an alternative reading of the legend through applying Orlando Patterson's theorisation of 'social death'. Social death is explained by Gordon as 'the process by which a person is socially negated or made a human

non-person'.[372] Until the publication of Gibson's poem, the Cooks had been either anonymised, trivialised or entirely negated by all previous sources; if alluded to, they appeared simply as 'two poor old people'. The Cooks had been de-subjectified, culturally and personally devoid of any individuality, and are instead collectively acknowledged by their controlling social markers; which categorises them as a social minority on two counts firstly because of their poverty and secondly for being elderly. Despite being alive, their marginal position in society means that they are legally and culturally dead.

Gordon further analyses her social re-interpretation of the living dead by referring to capital punishment prisoners who exchanged their death sentences for a life of slavery. She writes that 'the language of death is an idiom of power, a symbolic and ritualistic representation, but it begins for the enslaved as a literal substitution'.[373] The prisoner's enslavement is tainted with a sense of salvation, which is also permanently linked to their death because death's evasion enabled their life imprisonment within the slave system. Thus, their escape from death is never fully achieved as they have still sacrificed their life, which now belongs to the slave owner. This can be subversively applied to the Cooks who refuse to relinquish their property and instead insist that they would 'rayder part wi' life' (81). This contrasts with the social slaves who relinquish their possessions in order to repossess their lives. As the Cooks are already socially dead, Myles responds to their protests by asserting he would have their land whether they were 'live or deead' (81). Because of the Cooks' social death, their physical lives mean so little that they are not even considered a bargaining tool in this situation; their life cannot be substituted for something else as it has no weight to begin with, so Myles arranges their execution. Even in life, they were marked with death, but their actual death becomes a subversive and transgressive experience which allows them to acquire

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[372] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p.10.
[373] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 11.

power that was not available to them when living. To revisit Gordon's previous statement 'the language of death is an idiom of power', but their physical death acts as a literal substitution for their social enslavement in life that marked them as the living dead.

The Gothicised skulls in Gibson's account are the victims of rural anxieties and social injustice. The poem implies that if local, marginalised identities are denied access to a system in which they have no power in reality, they instead find empowerment in the unreal, the supernatural. Furthermore, White and Gibson's accounts do not deny the existence of the skulls; as aforesaid, their only disputes or differences are concerned with the circumstances as to how the skulls came to be. Such folklore dissemination intertwines rural superstitions with the real and destabilises the boundaries of lived and imagined Gothic. For the skulls in Gibson's account that heroically utilise their Gothicisation, they are able to arrogate this power by terrifying and weakening the beliefs of those that persecute them. The law and its justice system failed them, but despite this lack of agency in life they regain their power in the afterlife or in alternative modes of existence. In this version, the skulls are immortally present in order 'to perpetuate their innocence'. This implies that the perpetually exhumed skulls symbolise their societal wrongdoing that cannot be buried. Their continual presence means that everyone must bear witness to the indefinite reminder of the crime that was inflicted in life by permanently observing their death.

Living Cumbrian Gothic

During a recent visit to Croglin's village pub, The Robin Hood Inn, I found it had decorated its walls with sepia-coloured articles pertaining to the Croglin Vampire and its various iterations in news articles over the years. I sought out the infamous window at Croglin Low Hall where the vampire attacked, which is now bricked up and adorned with lucky horseshoes. Unfortunately, there is no record of when this occurred. Coincidentally, in Gibson's earlier

folklore account, he remarked that the Calgarth skulls had been blocked over after many failed attempts to remove them. This repeated notion of bricking over and blocking off folklore suggestively implies that folkloric objects retain power in even the slightest entertainment of their revenant return. The more extreme the attempt to eradicate them, the more it reifies their existence.

Furthermore, the adornment of the window in Croglin creates a point of interest, providing an opportunity for further narrativisation through physical objects. By pinning oral narratives to a particular point, it gives the folktales materiality. Hobsbawm writes, 'Where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented.'[374] Instead, the monsters are kept alive in memory, by oral and print tradition. Croglin and the wider Cumbrian community cement their regional identity through Gothic narrativisation and folklore. Croglin especially embraces its Gothic history, proudly adorning the village with superstitious symbols and making visible their vampiric affinity. Their horseshoe custom harks back to the previous chapter and Wordsworth's observation that locals would habitually remove the moss from the initials of the mouldered-away gibbet mast. This sustained presence of superstition in Cumbrian culture preserves the living memory of the past, ensuring its permanence in the present.

Following on from my previous chapter that analysed the physical characteristics of Cumbrian Gothic connected to the natural and cultural environment represented by Radcliffe and Wordsworth, this chapter has demonstrated the pervasive presence of the mode that is both intrinsic to and associated with Cumbrian people. It reaffirms the reference to Spooner's 'Northern Gothic' in my introduction, which argues the construction of Gothic regionalism is not simply 'through landscape, but also through the accumulation of legends and folklore that

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[374] Hobsbawn, *Invention of Tradition*, p. 8

inform local identity'.[375] These case studies have displayed how Gothic discourses of monstrosity, supernaturalism and superstition were interwoven into medical, legal, historical and social practices in printed folklore in the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. This shows how pervasive Gothic was during the 'Rage for the Lakes' and the consecration of the literary Lake District in the nineteenth century, demonstrating that the cultural landscape of Cumbria was built on the foundations of various interrelated modes.

The Croglin vampire and Calgarth skulls speak to a wider network of folkloric figures operating within Cumbria, such as the witch Long Meg, the wizard Michael Scot, Windermere's Tizzie Whizzie and Björn the Styhead Ghost to name just a few.[376] The titles of folkloric legends often incorporate where the stories emanate from, emphasising the importance of landscape in the production and transmission of folk tales. The geographical pinning down of folklore encourages the reading of literature within their regional context and through a spatially specific critical lens. However, it also ensures the stories are traceable and can always be accredited to their point of origin regardless of how far the tale has travelled. Thus, the miscellany of folkloric figures perpetually roaming the Cumbrian landscape are irremovably implanted into its Gothic topography, where - even bricked over - they maintain a revenant presence through their ongoing notoriety.

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[375] Catherine Spooner, '"Dark, and cold, and rugged is the North"', p. 27.

[376] *The Concept of the Goddess*, ed. by Miranda Green and Sandra Billington, (London: Taylor & Francis, 2002) pp. 79-89; H. C. Iveson, *Supernatural Cumbria, (*Stroud*:* Amberley Publishing Limited, 2010), pp. 65-66; Clive Kristen, *Ghost Trails of the Lake District and Cumbria, (Luton:* Andrews UK Limited, 2014), p. 42; The Lake District, 'Folklore and the Lakes: Six Mysteries to Explore this Summer' <https://www.thelakedistrict.org/blog/folklore-and-the-lakes-six-mysteries-to-explore-this-summer/> [accessed 8 April 2022]. The Tizzie Whizzie is a hybrid creature (resembling both a mouse and a hedgehog with insect wings, a distinctive squeak and a squirrel tail) that allegedly pickpockets unsuspecting tourists. Björn is a thirteenth-century headless outlaw that haunts Styhead Pass in the remote, frequently fog-laden Borrowdale fells. He's often cited carrying a bag of live cats.

As I earlier quoted in this chapter, Hart finds that 'Gothic narratives exaggerate such elements in order to critique the characteristic happy-ending marriage plot of fairy tale, while still nostalgically preserving it'.[377] In her folklore examples, she shows how monsters are redeemed and married off by the end. Yet neither nostalgia nor resolution apply to Cumbrian folklore's lack of closure; both case studies are inconclusive, immaterial and irresolute, which are characteristics that arguably make them more Gothic. In present-day Cumbria, however, there is no desire to ceremonially burn or bury Gothic folklore just yet. The following chapter explores how these stories still retain their power today. It is precisely this prevalence and power of the Gothic mode in Cumbria that contemporary novelists are now addressing and drawing on to amplify important ecological issues.

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[377] Hart, 'Gothic Folklore', p. 5.

CHAPTER THREE

Rewilding: Cumbria's Gothic Ecology

Despite the diversity of Cumbria's literary history evident in the previous chapters and many modern commercial successes – such as M. W. Craven's award-winning Cumbrian crime fiction series – within popular culture and tourism, Romanticism is still perceived as the dominant aesthetic. Alluding to this cultural hegemony, Sarah Hall self-consciously calls the region 'Romantic Country' in *Wolf Border* (2015), a stereotype that her novel then challenges.[378] This cultural hegemony is maintained by Cumbrian tourism's re-affirmation of a pastoral utopia on gates, signposts, benches and museums dedicated to maintaining the tourist façade that promises, and often delivers, a romanticised return to nature. In this chapter, I will be exploring the two fundamental problems that arise from this sustained romanticisation. Firstly, it fails to acknowledge the de-naturalisation of the landscape and associative environmental damage. Secondly, nostalgia clouds the inherent elitism of accessing nature – originally a white, male, able-bodied, middle-class pursuit of individual power – that excludes marginal identities and is enshrined in ecophobia that positions humans above non-human life. In *I Hate the Lake District* Charlie Gere criticises how the landscape is 'fetishised and sacralised as some kind of "unspoilt" paradise, a consolatory Eden'.[379] Such fetishisation creates a false impression of an abundant natural landscape, which impedes environmental action. Contemplating a shampoo named 'Faith in Nature', Gere notes how a 'covert spirituality is implicit in the most material descriptions of the environment', transforming it into some kind of 'salve for sick souls' to remedy the disenchantment of urban life.[380] He

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[378] Sarah Hall, *Wolf Border* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), p. 409. Subsequent references to this text will appear in parentheses following the quotation.

[379] Charlie Gere, *I Hate the Lake District* (London: Goldsmiths Press, 2019), p. 1.

[380] Gere, *I Hate the Lake District*, p. 5.

considers the post-enlightenment effects of soaking in nature as a soothing balm standing in for religious beliefs. Thus – one of the questions that this chapter investigates is – if modern spiritual salvation depends on an idealised, representational expectation of how nature should be and feel then what happens when nature is dead?

I will be exploring two contemporary Cumbrian texts, Hall's *Wolf Border* and Benjamin Myers' *Beastings* (2014), that reprise the romanticised return to nature as a journey further back in to the wilderness where wolves and wild children roam. As a literary genre obsessed with the past, Spooner argues that modern Gothic is 'profoundly concerned with its own past, self-referentially dependent on traces of other stories, familiar images and narrative structures, intertextual allusions.'[381]These Cumbrian novels are self-aware of the region's literary legacy that has been shaped by the Romantic, Gothic and folkloric influences examined in this thesis. Hall encapsulates these aesthetic contradictions in her writing about Cumbria for *The Guardian*: 'There's dissonance between the image of this particular territory, its elegy and artistic inheritance, and its contemporary realities.'[382] As a first-generation Cumbrian – her parents relocated in the 1970s – and prolific regional author, Hall is well placed to enlighten readers on the reality of living in the rural uplands, presenting a more balanced representation of Lakeland life informed by her personal experience. Myers, who was born in Durham and currently lives in West Yorkshire, is similarly well-versed in recording the regional north; *Pig Iron* (2012) is set in Newcastle, *The Gallows Pole* (2017) in Yorkshire and *The Offing* (2019) in Durham. He displays a Gothic deftness of representing monstrosity, alterity and grotesqueness to confront the less attractive lived experience of natural landscapes. Both novels

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[381] Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*, p. 10.
[382] Sarah Hall, 'Sarah Hall on Cumbria', *The Guardian* (September 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/sep/01/made-in-cumbria-sarah-hall> [accessed 10 October 2021].

use Cumbria's literary history, engaging with pre-existing wolf, wild children and ecological narratives, to convey contemporary environmental debates that have regional and international relevance. Set in a region entrenched in Romanticism, *Wolf Border* and *Beastings* intentionally utilise Cumbrian Gothic to unearth and explore the tensions between its cultural perception, contemporary reality and a 'darker side to nature'.[383]

Wolf Border tracks zoologist Rachel Caine's return to her native Cumbria after her mother's death and how she simultaneously reintroduces wolves to the region whilst navigating her own transformation into a mother. She is headhunted by the extravagant landowner, Lord Pennington, after hearing about her rewilding success in Idaho, to oversee the Cumbrian project. The evocative title signals multiple borders: the physical border of the wolves' confinement to public land; Rachel's own domesticated captivity on the private estate; the recurring binary of civilisation and wilderness; the geographical and political border played out between Cumbria and Scotland; and the border between human self and inner wolf. Hall's sophisticated exploration of Lakeland's literary heritage has Rachel critiquing and engaging with both Gothic sensationalism and the idealisation of Romanticism. In addition, the parallel experiences of motherhood shared by Rachel and Merle, her wolf counterpart, engage with a transformation narrative central to werewolf fiction whilst written in a realist register.

Myers' text is set in the late nineteenth century when the legacy of the Lake Poets was culturally ingrained, but also the affordability of train travel in the 1890s welcomed the working classes to the Lakes and increasing numbers of British mountaineers began to seek out 'the recreational hinterlands of the industrial cities of the north'.[384] *Beastings* begins with a mute

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[383] Tom J. Hillard, '"Deep Into That Darkness Peering": An Essay on Gothic Nature', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 16.4 (2009), p. 688.

[384] The dating of the novel is implicit yet alluded to in a number of references. Firstly, the Wordsworthian tourist uses a Primus stove, which was launched in 1892. The medicinal use of cocaine and reference to it as 'marching powder' indicates towards its Victorian setting,

girl who is sent away from her violent family home and given a religious upbringing at St. Mary's church under the despotic dominion of the Priest.[385] When she is old enough to venture into the 'outside world', she is assigned to the Hinckley family, assisting a sickly mother and a disengaged husband with the care of their young baby. The Girl is convinced of their ineptitude and designs to run away with the baby to save her from the same childhood traumas she had growing up. After Hinckley informs the Priest of the kidnapping, the novel quickly develops into a hunt narrative as the Priest enlists the help of a Poacher to retrieve the runaway children now frantically navigating the Lakeland wilderness. *Beastings* is characterised by a sense of extreme isolation, scarcity, absence, lack, ambiguity and laboriousness accentuated by the austere language, non-linear timeframe and comma-less prose. The characters in the novel are virtually nameless, referred to primarily as Priest/Father, Poacher, Girl. In a review for *The Guardian*, Alfred Hickling identifies this 'austere' anonymity as a key characteristic of the 'primal and denuded' prose.[386] By extension, the dialogue is sparse and perfunctory; the mute protagonist's outward silence is instead vocalized by a narrative stream of consciousness. As Myers' title suggests, *Beastings* – a colloquial term for a cow's colostrum – collapses the complex binary between human and non-human existence. The novel challenges ecophobic terminology that alienates and others non-human life, accrediting this polarisation of human/animal to romanticism and religion primarily, and subverts monstrosity so it is humanity that is fearful, terrorising and evil.

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which is reaffirmed by the walking clothes of the tourists and influence of Darwin. Jason Wood, John K Walton and Professor Brian Graham, *The Making of a Cultural Landscape* (Farnham: Routledge, 2013), p. 155.

[385] Benjamin Myers, *Beastings* (West Yorkshire: Bluemoose Books, 2014). Subsequent references to this text will appear in parentheses following the quotation.

[386] Alfred Hickling, *Beastings by Benjamin Myers review – austere and brilliantly shocking* (August, 2014) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/08/beasting-benjamin-myer-review-austere-brilliantly-shocking> [accessed 09/01/2020].

Myers and Hall address the present problems of ecophobia and environmental damage by returning to the past, engaging with Gothic discourses of primitivism and wilderness as a model for future existence. In 'Ecocriticism and the Genre', Alder and Bavidge explain that as a mode which is 'adept at transgressing boundaries and creating monsters without pretending such moves aren't scary or unproblematic, Gothic can go where other aesthetics cannot'.[387] Representing a Cumbrian Gothic ecology can awaken readers to environmental action through terror, shock and horror, forcing a confrontation with the natural environment beyond the picturesque. Alder and Bavidge observe that ecoGothic texts can convince audiences of:

the intrinsic value of non-human life, the agency of inanimate things of nature, our complicity in the problems, the imperfections and vulnerability both of ourselves and of the seas and landscapes we once imagined as pristine and durable [and] the irreversibility of environmental brokenness.[388]

In my analysis of *Wolf Border* and *Beastings,* I evaluate their representations of non-human life: how the novels participate in debates on the 'imperfect' perceptions of nature; and the complicity of humanity in the environmental and ecological problems; and how this relates to broader national and global crises. Both texts utilise Gothic discourse to negotiate these complex debates, although to different effects. I firstly outline the theoretical context that underpins both novels, explaining ecocriticism and approaches to rewilding as an alternative existence to the cultural construction of nature in Cumbria. Both novels examine the intersection between wilderness and civilisation and the explosive events that occur, physically and ontologically, when one infringes upon the other. I apply this initially to *Wolf Border,* arguing that the novel embraces heroic atavism to encourage an acceptance of humanity's

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[387] Clive Bloom, *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Gothic* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p. 232.
[388] Bloom, *Contemporary Gothic,* p. 232.

innate kinship with animality. The novel is straightforwardly about the problematic rewilding of wolves in Cumbria, but the harder challenge is reintroducing the wild woman to modern society. I then investigate the wild child of Myers' *Beastings*, whose impairments are a result of sociocultural dis-abling that define and determine the limitations of her disability. A rewilded future could risk excluding disabled bodies, yet this novel uses Gothic to represent both the suffering and survival of alternative subjectivities.

I: Back to the Wilderness

The nuances of Lakeland Romanticism and its Gothic counternarratives have been eclipsed by the joyful strains of 'I wander'd lonely as a cloud' and the youthful optimism of *Peter Rabbit,* selectively presented to perpetuate the idealism of harmless, wholesome adventures in the hills. The regional economy is enshrined in the preservation of this particular literary heritage. However, this is not an accurate reflection of the sources themselves, but an act of erasure by touristic discourses; Bowness's whimsical *The World of Beatrix Potter Attraction* bears no trace of Peter Rabbit's father being killed and eaten in a pie.

The selective snapshot of Lakeland Romanticism (wisteria, dancing daffodils, docile Herdwicks and dry stone walls) has created an idealised experience of nature that is unrealistic, illusory and in some instances actually damaging to the environment and counterproductive to activism as it suppresses the perceived ugliness of ecology. Wordsworth was also concerned about environmental damage and was known to protest against things that he considered harmful like his opposition to the railway expansion into Cumbria. Now, the once foreboding fells are pocked with human interference, not least the plenitude of cairns, footpaths and trig points, but also a ski lift on Raise, the skeleton of a Halifax bomber on Great Carrs and the Helvellyn monument dedicated to the death of Romantic-icon Charles Gough that is engraved with lines from Wordsworth's 'Fidelity'. In *Beastings,* the bathetic Romantic literary tourist, Donald, sentimentalises the memory of Gough and his loyal terrier Foxie calling it a 'heroic

pairing of man and beast', quoting Walter Scott: 'faithful in death – his mute favourite attended – the much-loved remains of her master defended' (43). Romanticising the death overlooks its tragic reality, which his wife appears to enjoy telling the Girl – 'what the silly Scotsman neglected to mention was that his loyal dog Foxie ate the flesh right off his bones' (43).

Cumbrian tourism's perpetuation of the Lakes as a pastoral utopia fictionalises nature, posing a representational dilemma for environmental action. The lived experience of nature is at odds with the imagined experience of the expectant tourist, so it becomes difficult to represent the negative reality of environmental crises and ecological ruin in a commercially romanticised setting. Cumbria's selective literary tourism reinforces the spatialisation of a particular Romantic subjectivity that reinforces this fictionalisation of nature on gate posts, benches and illustrative maps for tourist commodification and consumption. Ironically, Romanticism is often understood as a mode that explores humanity's affinity with nature and Gothic is perceived as a mode that deviates from and distorts reality. As such, Tom Hillard accredits 'the Gothic's frequent lack of strict adherence to the probable or possible' as one of the main reasons why the conservatism of early ecocriticism avoided engaging with the genre, because it 'likely dissuades scholars who are drawn to more realistic and accurate depictions of nature and environment'.[389] However, this chapter argues that Cumbrian contemporary literature has embraced Gothic discourses and imagery to reveal what has been repressed by sustained romanticisation. Thomas Pennington, Hall's aristocratic champion of rewilding, describes the difficulty of getting his project passed because '[The British] Government has become extremely adept at legislating urban squeamishness' (33). There is a disparity between the reality of rural communities and its representation in politics, culture and society. Not only does the Gothic enable a cultural reclamation, but it opportunistically presents itself as

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[389] Tom Hillard, 'Gothic Nature Revisited: Reflections on the Gothic of Ecocriticism', *Gothic Nature*, 1 (2019), p. 25.

constructive tool for environmental action. Hillard suggests revealing the repressed is the purpose of 'ecoGothic', which is to ask 'What has ecocriticism been burying? What has it been keeping out?'[390]
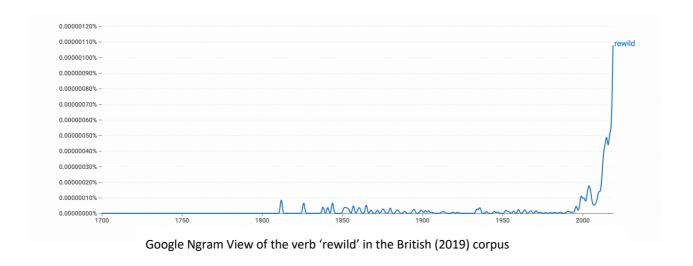
Unnatural Nature

Rather than analysing the Gothic's adaption of 'returning to nature', my contemporary examples of Cumbrian Gothic consider the potential of 'rewilding' as a cultural reversal that reveals what has been repressed since the ascension of Romantic ideologies. Nature has become denaturalised through romanticisation, making nature itself a contentious term that is more of an aesthetic, a cultural construct that codifies our expectations and imagination of what nature is. In *Wolf Border*, when Rachel was a child she thought the landscape 'so wild that anything might be possible', remembering the 'haunting' moors that 'hid everything and gave up secrets only intermittently' (29). The Gothicised wilderness of her imaginative youth eventually dissipated, because 'In reality it was a kept place, cultivated, even the high grassland covering the fells was manmade' (29). Rachel's adult discovery of Cumbria's manufactured aesthetic dissolves her Gothic fantasies when she realises the extent of human control and management of nature that leaves little room for wilderness and the obscurities it shrouds. Both texts in this chapter consider the problematisation of 'nature' by highlighting, challenging and often dismantling such anthropocentric constructs. Furthermore, in Gothic fashion, these texts delve further into the past, going beyond the Romantic construction of nature, often harkening back to pre-human and evolutionary origins. They embrace the characteristics of the Cumbrian landscape that proclaim it uncivilised, uncanny and wild. Both novels evaluate wilderness as

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[390] Hillard, 'Gothic Nature', p. 28.

an ontological aspiration, seeking to restore an aesthetic beyond the organising principles of the beautiful, picturesque and even the sublime.

Ecocritical literary studies is a relatively new field; however, Hillard notes that as our knowledge increases, 'the diversifying canon of texts about humans and nature (overtly Gothic or otherwise) reveals that such things were always there, *haunting us all along*'.[391] Even ecocriticism is Gothically coded, demonstrating the primordial fear that seeks to separate humans from non-human life. Ecological fears are not unique to modernity, which is exemplified by the etymology of rewilding. Dolly Jorgensen references that the 'OED (2014) lists the first usage of *rewild* as 1990'.[392] However, the verb 'rewild' first emerged around 1810 and gained more consistent traction from the 1840s onwards, which coincides with the increasing popularity and awareness of Romantic literature in the nineteenth century:

Google Ngram View of the verb 'rewild' in the British (2019) corpus

Broadly looking at the spikes in the graph, rewilding popularity coincides with periods of modern progress that biases the industrial over the natural. For example, Hugh Crossley, the current Earl of the Somerleyton Estate in East Anglia, is trying to reverse the effects of his

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[391] Hillard, 'Gothic Nature', p. 30.
[392] Dolly Jørgensen, 'Rethinking Rewilding', *Geoforum*, 65 (2015), p. 482.

'overgrazed and overfarmed' land that he traces back to the 1840s when this manicuring began.[393] Managing the estate extends as far back as the 'Danish and Norse homesteaders', but its manicuring occurred in the 1840s by 'royal gardener William Andrews Nesfield'.[394] At the height of industrial development in Britain's cityscapes, Joseph Strutt commissioned the creation of 'Derby Arboretum to cut through the smog of the industrial midlands town and give its workers somewhere to experience nature.'[395] At the beginning of the 1800s, London was at risk of overdevelopment; even Hyde Park entertained planning applications for eight mansions. By 1852, the Crowns Land Act had made Royal Parks publicly accessible and twelve green spaces existed in the city in an attempt to counteract urbanisation. This Romantically influenced era was aware of the importance of nature in an increasingly urbanised and industrialised period, but its 'rewilding' efforts were anthropocentrically motivated. The British government cultivated green spaces to counteract human activity, not for ecological purposes, but to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of urban people. Hall parodies this in an exchange between Rachel, Thomas and his daughter Sylvia who proclaims her dislike for Paris due to its lack of greenery stating, 'Our city parks are bliss', to which Thomas responds, 'nature is in the British soul […] we must recreate it wherever we can' (89). Thomas characteristically alludes to the man-made construction of nature and a Romantic notion of spiritual salvation that echoes Gere's aforesaid 'faith in nature'. Rachel contrarily snubs the 'few boating lakes and stretches of shorn grass', for whom nature must be organic, vast and uncultivated (89). However, although the graph demonstrates the relatively sustained use of 'rewild' from the nineteenth century to now, its exponential popularisation only began in this

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[393] Nikki Ekstein, *These Luxury Hoteliers Are Trying to Return Britain to the Beasts* (April, 2020), <https://www.bloombergquint.com/businessweek/these-luxury-hoteliers-are-trying-to-return-britain-to-the-beasts> [accessed 21 May 2020].
[394] Ekstein, *Return Britain to the Beasts.*
[395] Alice Vincent, *Rootbound: Rewilding a Life* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2020), p. 215.

century, suggesting its increased importance in contemporary culture.

However, despite the different approaches to reinstating or preserving nature, the interest in rewilding has had a modern resurgence in the past thirty years as *Wolf Border* explicitly demonstrates. The Cumbrian materials in this chapter engage with contemporary issues such as the Anthropocene, ecophobia, fearful collapse of human and non-human binaries, denaturalisation of nature, modernisation, industrialisation and the exclusion of particular bodies in nature. These sentiments are shared by or can be traced back to the Gothic cusp, Romantic and folkloric legacies featured in earlier chapters. For example, James McKusick writes that 'much Romantic writing emerges from a desperate sense of alienation from the natural world and expresses an anxious endeavour to re-establish a vital, sustainable relationship between mankind and the fragile planet on which [we] dwell'.[396] I will explore how contemporary Cumbrian literature and media respond to the sustained presence of pastoral and romantic imagery that has distorted the natural world. This chapter examines how the texts seek to reclaim and re-narrativise the Cumbrian landscape, demonstrating what is truly entailed in rewilding oneself in the Lakes. Not only do they shed light on the regional specificity of environmental concerns, but they engage with larger national and global crises that raise public consciousness on ecological matters and demand action.

'You and I are just fake pigs': Faking Nature[397]

Whilst 'rewild' is a relatively new verb only in recorded use for approximately 170 years as

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[396] James McKusick, *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000), p. 110.

[397] George Monbiot, *Let's make Britain wild again and find ourselves in nature* (July, 2015) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/16/britain-wild-nature-rewilding-ecosystems-heal-lives> [accessed 21 May 2020].

illustrated above, 'rewilding' is certainly a neologism. It was pioneered by environmental activists and initially associated with the Wildlands Project in 1990, which aimed to recreate North America's 'core wilderness areas without human activity that would be connected by corridors' thereby creating more suitable habitats for 'large carnivores'.[398] The term rewilding has since been used more broadly in ecological discourse and as a particular subdiscipline of restoration ecology, which aims to restore ecosystems to their natural state prior to human intervention. This process involves restoring native species (plants and animals), but it can also require removing non-native breeds, land boundaries and manmade waterways in an attempt to reverse human interventions in natural ecosystems. The reintroduction of wolves in Hall's novel is an example of this process of rewilding in Cumbria, but it also engages and is aware of larger national and global projects that seek to or have successfully rewilded predators that have previously been hunted to extinction.

In 2015, rewilding gained significant traction in the UK pioneered by the formation of *Rewilding Britain,* a charity designed 'to reverse ecological decline and help tackle climate breakdown'.[399] There are numerous case studies that have successfully rewilded areas of British countryside. Knepp, for example, a 3,500-acre rewilded farm in Sussex, replaced fencing with hedgerows, enclosed pastures with wild roaming grazing and traded labourers for ecologists.[400] Instead of sacrificing their farming business, the owners have profited from the rich biodiversity their rewilding venture propagated and now thrive off ecotourism and sustainable wild farming. Human interventions are kept to a minimum; their cows, for example,

[398] Jørgensen, 'Rethinking Rewilding', p. 483.
[399] Rewilding Britain, *Rewilding* <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/rewilding/> [accessed 21 May 2020].
[400] Patrick Barkham, *The magical wilderness farm: raising cows among the weeds at Knepp* (July, 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/16/britain-wild-nature-rewilding-ecosystems-heal-lives> [accessed 21 May 2020].

need no supplementary feeding and can 'self-medicate' by intuitively grazing on medicinal plants.[401] Despite their successes, the Knepp owners are aware of their project's limitations. They have no apex predators; their modest estate lacks any large-scale future and public amenity restricts further innovation. They believe external criticism comes from perceptions of the farm as 'challenging an aesthetic', which provokes preconceived expectations of what nature should look like.[402] Critics of rewilded landscapes are likely accustomed to nature as gardens, greenery, manicured paddocks neatly partitioned by dry stone walls or uniform fencing containing a singular species.

These expectations of what 'nature' should or even does look like are unnatural. Paul Lister, owner of the Alladale estate in the Scottish Highlands, believes we have 'sanitised the landscape'.[403] Despite Alladale's notable efforts to rewild the highlands, this rugged landscape is lacking key species. Lister enthusiastically supports the reintegration of wolves in England inspired by the successful rewilding of Yellowstone in 1995. Wild boar and beavers have been reintroduced to Britain after their extinction, albeit problematically, yet the reinstatement of Apex predators, such as wolves and lynx, is still publicly resisted as *Wolf Border* explores.[404]

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[401] Barkham, *The magical wilderness farm.*

[402] Barkham, *The magical wilderness farm.*

[403] Juliana Shallcross, *This Man Wants to Bring Back Scotland's Wild Past -- Starting with Wolves* (March 2019) <https://www.thrillist.com/travel/nation/alladale-wilderness-reserve-scotland-wolves> [accessed 21 May 2020].

[404] By 2018, the wild boar population soared and culls were organized by the National Trust mainly because of the fear of them spreading African swine flu endangering the pig farming industry. See Sky News, *'Out of control' wild boar to be culled in the UK as numbers soar* (August, 2018), https://news.sky.com/story/out-of-control-wild-boar-to-be-culled-in-the-uk-as-numbers-soar-11561926 [accessed 21 May 2020]. Before their protection in 2019, beavers were often culled by farmers as they radically reinvent the infrastructure of farmlands causing flooding and destroying woodlands. See, Auslan Cramb, *Farmers' warning over beaver damage as new report praises the 'water engineers'* (July 2017) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/18/farmers-warning-beaver-damage-new-report-praises-water-engineers/> [accessed 21 May 2020].

Rachel disdains politicians as 'urban-centric and ecologically conservative. The pockets of English countryside are broken apart and seem to be regarded as gardens for the city' (161). This sanitisation of nature by sustained human intervention and resistance to rewilding efforts has transformed many of our rural regions into touristic theme parks. George Monbiot echoes similar sentiments in *The Guardian,* declaring 'We are surrounded by such broken relationships, truncated natural processes, cauterised ecologies'.[405] Monbiot illustrates the absence of most keystone species in England and how humans have rendered some animals extinct whilst unnaturally preserving the survival of others. He refers to the robin, which used to sustain itself on the grubbing behaviour of wild boars. When humans hunted boars to extinction, we removed a valuable chain in the ecosystem, depriving robins of their symbiotic existence. Monbiot refers to people as 'fake pigs' because we transplanted ourselves – household gardeners with our bird baths and decorative feeders – in place of the wild boars, forever changing the behaviour of robins and this ecosystem.

Monbiot and Lister share this view of nature as unnaturally domesticated, fragmented and fractured. Conservation efforts to preserve landscapes are a 'parody of the natural world'.[406] When tourists visit National Parks in the pursuit of nature, they are encountering a simulation. Even agriculture is a form of rural industry. People are performing animality, stepping into vacant roles that have been created by environmental damage in an already fragile ecosystem. Rewilding is both a cultural and social response that recognises this discord and attempts to reconcile humans with the nonhuman world and restore some form of ecological balance. Rewilding has predominantly been taken up as an anti-modern ideology promising an escape from globalist capitalism via a return to nature.

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[405] Monbiot, *Let's make Britain wild again.*
[406] Monbiot, *Let's make Britain wild again.*

It is this notion of returning to or bringing back a past existence that is problematically enshrined in nostalgia by such conservationists. If we consider Monbiot's compelling argument, for example, we uncover the limitations of environmental rewilding discourse, which is evident in the parodic title 'Let's Make Britain Wild Again and Find Ourselves in Nature'. The timely publication of the article in 2015 coincides with Trump's presidential campaign, mimicking his iconic slogan 'Make America Great Again'. Irrespective of satire, this engages rewilding with nostalgia and the recreation of a glorified past that is implicitly politicised, mirroring Thomas Pennington's hobbyist, sentimental and political motivations for rewilding his wolves. Secondly, this idealistic return to the wilderness unoriginally promises a recovery of the self, an anthropocentric motivation that has little to do with restoring ecological balance. These rewilding narratives are intricately linked with Romantic notions of nature, so I will now explore Gothic discourse as a mode to represent an alternative experience of nature and embracing wilderness.

Gothic Ecocriticism

> 'I'd rather be a zombie than a tree hugger' – Timothy Morton[407]

Ecologist Timothy Morton suggests an alternative discourse to environmental narratives like those of Monbiot and Lister that are tinged with sentimentalism, nostalgia and idealism. Morton's 'Dark Ecology' acknowledges the impossibility of reversing modernity or returning to an idea of nature. His dark ecology stems from the notion that 'nature' is already dead – certainly romanticised notions of nature or nostalgic pastoralism are – but rather than escaping

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[407] Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (London: Harvard University Press, 2009) p. 188.

or ignoring this reality he implores that we endure the 'sticky mess' that we're in, learning to identify 'with ugliness'.[408] Morton's ecological discourse uses visceral language to evoke the monstrous and grotesque, which are devices of Gothic affect and a counter-aesthetic to Monbiot and Lister's Romantic imagery. Xavier Aldana Reyes asserts that the purpose of Gothic affect is to 'scare, disturb or disgust', to reaffirm 'corporeality or non-cognitive (somatic) or instinctive human reactions'.[409] Both *Wolf Border* and *Beastings* use terror, loathing, repulsion and disgust in relation to ecology and human/non-human bodies to remove biological separations and link various bodies (injured, pregnant, disabled, wolf, animal, child) with the body of the reader.

Morton's ecology verbalises the often unsaid and unseen aspects of both environmental studies and cultural representations of nature. Crucially, Morton's ecology understands that ecological balance requires the removal of something else. Morton anecdotally refers to the endangerment of bees linked to pesticide use as an example of the 'unexpected fallout from the myth of progress: for every seeming forward motion of the drill bit there is a backward gyration, an asymmetrical contrary motion'.[410] This discourse of recovery and loss is integral to rewilding processes. To reinstate native species, restore balance and rejuvenate ecosystems something else must be eliminated. Rachel also refers to this darker side of re-wilding when her plans to sterilise the wolf cubs upsets Sylvia, who was under the illusion that the scheme was a 'boil-in-the-bag Eden' needing no further human intervention (339). Revenant pasts are central to Gothic fiction, yet rewilding is driven by a desire to return to a past ecological

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[408] Morton, *Ecology without Nature,* p. 188.

[409] Xavier Aldana Reyes, 'Gothic Affect: An Alternative Approach to Critical Models of the Contemporary Gothic', *New Directions in 21st Century Gothic: The Gothic Compass*, ed. by Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Donna Lee Brien (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 11.

[410] Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 7.

existence that requires a shift in the current state.

Morton's argument replicates the representational complexity of ecocriticism, which relies on Gothic terms to articulate its meaning. He elegiacally describes that 'dark ecology':

> is ecological awareness, dark-depressing. Yet ecological awareness is also dark-uncanny. And strangely it is dark-sweet. Nihilism is always number one in the charts these days. We usually don't get past the first darkness, and that's if we even care.[411]

His sobering tone strips away the sentimentalisation of earlier ecocriticism and communicates the disparaging nihilism of nature in crisis devoid of the spiritual salve earlier discussed. This lack of care and the difficulty of confronting even 'the first darkness' suggests why Romanticism presides over Cumbria, because it is easier and more acceptable. For Morton, ecological awareness is Gothic: depressing; uncanny; dark; paradoxical; nihilistic.

William Hughes and Andrew Smith's *EcoGothic* (2013) offers a response to the lack of critical attention explicitly relating Gothic fiction and the natural world. The essays in the collection claim to reposition critical analysis from Gothic edifices to the environment. Yet, Gothic has always been about the environment, the landscapes in which the edifices are positioned, the cultures and belief systems associated with certain places. The role of nature has always been central to Gothic fiction, so this ecological and environmental blindness is not a product of the texts but is owed to the lack of critical attention and reader awareness, at least until this century. Hughes and Smith's endeavour is to apply existing ecocritical debates to Gothic narratives 'in order to help draw out their often dystopian ecological visions' that seek to 'reinvigorate debate about the class, gender, and national identities that inhere within

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[411] Morton, *Dark Ecology*, p. 5.

representations of the landscape'. [412] However, like the linguistic complexity of 'dark ecology', the absence of a critical definition of 'EcoGothic' in the introduction renders the diversity of the essays too broad to underpin a critical idiom that is neither specific nor convincing enough to apply to future studies as a mode of reading Gothic texts. Instead, the essays follow the pattern of the portmanteau title simply piecing together Gothic fiction and nature themes. The volume fails to answer what properties the natural environment/ecology has that makes it inherently Gothic or easily Gothicised.

In *Ecogothic in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2017), Dawn Keetley and Matthew Wynn Sivils define 'ecogothic' as a 'literary mode at the intersection of environmental writing and the gothic, and it typically presupposes some kind of ecocritical lens'. [413] Their understanding is that ecocriticism is about the relationships between humans and non-humans and 'adopting a specifically gothic ecocritical lens illuminates the fear, anxiety, and dread that often pervade those relationships'. [414] A fundamental problem with 'ecogothic' criticism that arises from this is that scholars have established a binary between Gothic fiction and the environment as if they are separate things. Critical discourse refers to 'adopting' or 'applying' Gothic *to* nature. Keetley and Sivils believe that 'ecogothic' lies *in between* the two separate entities of environmental writing and gothic fiction. Jennifer Schell's 'ecoGothic' reading of Mary Shelley and Nathaniel Hawthorne opens by asserting that the authors '*adapt traditional Gothic imagery to environmental contexts*'. [415] Schell perpetuates the notion that Gothic is a literary toolkit to be applied to the environment in order to construct dystopian

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[412] Hughes and Smith, *EcoGothic*, p. 4.

[413] Dawn Keetley and Matthew Wynn Sivils, *Ecogothic in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Milton: Routledge, 2017), p. 1.

[414] Keetley and Sivils, *Ecogothic*, p. 1.

[415] Jennifer Schell 'The Annihilation of Self and Species: The ecoGothic Sensibilities of Mary Shelley and Nathaniel Hawthorne' in *The Gothic and Death*, ed. by Carol Margaret Davison (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p. 103.

and/or apocalyptic, alternative versions of reality. In contemporary Cumbrian literature, the novels challenge, reinforce and reposition the idea of Gothic as the lived experience, which is part of the everyday discourse of Lakeland locals.

Schell contends that 'Over the past five years, the use of the term "ecoGothic" has proliferated among scholars interested in environmental writing that addresses the more terrifying/horrific aspects of the natural world.'[416] The entrenchment of Romanticism in Cumbria means that these aspects – the gruesome, unsightly, unpleasant – are overlooked and ignored. Confronting them in Cumbrian ecoGothic literature is unsettling and culturally disruptive, but often such aspects are anthropogenic, which elicits guilt and blame that prompts self-reflexive denial. David Del Principe argues that 'an EcoGothic approach poses a challenge to a familiar Gothic subject – nature – taking a non-anthropocentric position to reconsider the role that the environment, species, and nonhumans play in the construction of monstrosity and fear'.[417] Whether criticism can adopt a non-anthropocentric viewpoint is a contested idea, especially in ecocriticism, because it is impossible for human critics, authors and readers to understand and interpret this perspective. Furthermore, Cumbrian literature challenges Del Principe's notion that nonhumans construct monstrosity and fear as often it is humans that appear monstrous, which is exemplified in both *Wolf Hall* and *Beastings*. Simon Estok refers to 'ecophobia' as a 'recognisable discourse' that vocalises 'contempt for the natural world'.[418] It is 'an irrational and groundless hatred of the natural world, as present and subtle in our daily lives as homophobia and racism and sexism'.[419] He compares the beauty industry that profits

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[416] Schell, 'The Annihilation of Self and Species', p. 106.

[417] David Del Principe, 'Introduction: The EcoGothic in the Long Nineteenth Century', *Gothic Studies,* 16.1 (May 2014) p. 1.

[418] Simon Estok, 'Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 16.2 (2009), p. 204.

[419] Estok, 'Ecocriticism and Ecophobia', p. 208.

from correcting nature's flaws and businesses that regulate 'pest' control, declaring that 'self-starvation and self-mutilation imply ecophobia no less than lynching implies racism'.[420] Cumbria Tourism is not dissimilar to the beauty industry in the way it selectively remodels and refashions the landscape to make it more appealing to the sensibility of the tourist. Despite growing ecological awareness, Estok laments the 'pathological inability' to detect ecophobia exemplifying the labelling of 'the natural world as an angered Mother Nature' and the 'scapegoat for social problems'.[421]

EcoGothic approaches to environmental action and writing, as I have illustrated, can counteract the nostalgia and sentimentalisation of conservation discourses, which aim to preserve and protect, often avoiding the stickier, unsightly and uncomfortable aspects of ecological crises. 'Dark ecology' and ecoGothic criticism are useful methodologies to unearth what environmental and natural aspects have been repressed in the region by its history of idealising Romanticisation. *Wolf Border* explicitly engages with rewilding narratives, whilst *Beastings* represents the Cumbrian wilderness as opposed to the Romantic construct of nature in the national park. I begin my literary analysis by considering how the novels reconcile human and non-human. *Wolf Border* is particularly invested in the animal/human binary and attempts to de-Gothicise the wolf by consciously critiquing folklore, fairy tale and real cases of rewilding. *Beastings* critiques the cultural construct of civilisation and the wilderness by demonstrating how fluid the binary is between human/non-human in often grotesque, violent or abject ways.

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[420] Estok, 'Ecocriticism and Ecophobia', p. 208.

[421] Estok, 'Ecocriticism and Ecophobia', p. 211.

II: Heroic Atavism: Accepting Animality

Historically animals have been hierarchically ordered below human life. Aristotle ranked animals above plants but below humans, specifically asserting that animals are in service to humanity. Descartes perceived that animals are little better than machines; they lack cognition or conscious awareness of their automated responses. They are 'non-sentient automata' incapable of thought, which grants permission for humans to treat animals as they see fit.[422] Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) collapsed the fragile boundaries between humans and animals by acknowledging our shared evolutionary ancestry. Consequently, the Victorian period was fascinated with theories like devolution and atavism, ideologies that compounded fears of regression back to our non-human form. Some critics pinpoint Derrida as a turning point for the way we think about animal subjectivity in Western culture. Derrida conducted a series of lectures advocating the interrelatedness of humans and animals, which Anne-Emmanuelle Berger and Marta Segarra suggest highlights the 'limit of the Enlightenment project in its Cartesian version: for man to become the master and owner of nature'.[423] In Chantal Bourgault du Coudray's, *The Curse of the Werewolf*, she also traces the separation of humans from animals back to the Enlightenment and more specifically the concomitant emergence of humanism. The Enlightenment prioritised personal subjectivity reinforced by philosophies such as the Cartesian dualism *Cogito ergo sum* ('I think, therefore I am'), which separated mind and body.

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[422] Peter Harrison, 'Descartes on Animals', *The Philosophical Quarterly (1950-)*, 42.167 (1992), p. 219.

[423] Anne Emmanuelle Berger and Marta Segerra, *Demenageries: Thinking (of) Animals after Derrida* (New York: Rodopi, 2011), p. 3. Derrida published an essay following his 10-hour lecture at the Cerisy-la-Salle Conference in 1997 entitled 'The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)', *Critical Inquiry*, 28.2 (2002), pp. 369-48.

The division between nature and culture is reinforced by criticism and a society that strives to maintain this separation. As Slavoj Zizek explains, the oppositional logic between nature and culture produced monstrosity as a 'fantasmatic appearance of the missing link' between them.[424] Discussing monstrosity more generally, he explains that monsters are evidence of how 'the Enlightenment project has gone wrong'.[425] The Enlightenment division of nature (non-human life) and culture has demonised any kind of overlap between the two. In an attempt to instil the purity of the human subject, Zizek argues a 'fundamental prohibition' arose that warns us not to 'probe too deeply into the obscure origins, which betrays a fear that by doing so, one might discover something monstrous'.[426] As evolution dictates, humanity's 'obscure origins' is its animal ancestry and if we probe beneath the fragility of this nature/culture binary we will discover our primordial kinship that the modern, enlightened subject has absolved.

The Gothic's fascination with animality can often be ascribed to the biological likeness between humans and animals, which exposes the fragility of their cultural separation. 'Animals present a challenge to humans', writes English scholar Erica Fudge in her interdisciplinary critical study *Animal* (2002), because 'they are both similar to and different from us'.[427] The past kinship of animal and human has been distanced by a gradual social and linguistic separation. Our abjection of animality maintains a fragile demarcation between human and non-human, as Kristeva explains, creating 'fragile states where man strays on the territories of animal'.[428] Furthermore, our evident similarities that draw us to communing with our animal heritage are continually denied by the impossibility of ever fully understanding this relationship

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[424] Slavoj Zizek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 136.

[425] Zizek, *Lacan in Hollywood,* p. 136.

[426] Zizek, *Lacan in Hollywood,* p. 136.

[427] Erica Fudge, *Animal* (London: Reaktion, 2002), p. 7.

[428] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (New York: Colombia University Press), p. 12.

given the obvious communication barriers. We cannot acknowledge fully what we do not understand and have now spent centuries repressing. However, *Wolf Border* and *Beastings* illustrate that this primordial relationship persists beyond the realm of reason, and primally pulls us to our innate physiological desire to become or reconcile with the inner animal. I explore how these texts revivify the antagonism between humans and nature, which is a dialogue that did not end with the theory of evolution but which is still socially topical and is continuously re-evaluated in modern culture.

Ruth Heholt and Melissa Edmundson explain in their introduction to *Gothic Animals: Uncanny Otherness and the Animal With-Out* (2016) that the boundaries of humans and animals are always redrawn according to political context. Citing a 2017 news report detailing British MPs' refusal to adopt European protocol in support of the sentience of animals and Trump's support of trophy hunting in the same year, they assert that 'the suggestion of an unbreachable gap between human and animal imposes a binary hierarchy that emphasises the "non-human" essence of the "animal"'.[429] Like Fudge's initial observation, Heholt and Edmundson reaffirm that this determination of animals as 'Alien, Other and unknowable' makes them Gothic.[430] By denying their sentience and imposing a hierarchy of importance that humans reign over, the political context has determined a social distancing of humans and animals that polarise their being. Importantly, Heholt and Edmundson clarify that animals have not changed but the human's relation to and understanding of what an animal is has. It is our perception of animals that has changed.

These polarised and oppositional political and social beliefs are regressive, harking back to a Cartesian approach to human–animal interrelations. This shifting terminological

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[429] Ruth Heholt and Melissa Edmundson, *Gothic Animals: Uncanny Otherness and the Animal With-Out* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) p. 3.
[430] Heholt and Edmundson, *Gothic Animals*, p. 3.

position between humans and non-humans is encapsulated in a debate between the Poacher and the Priest in *Beastings*. Following the Priest's murder of mountain hermit Tom Solomons, a parallel scene occurs in which the Poacher is preparing a rabbit for dinner. The Poacher's gutting and flaying of the rabbit reminds him of Tom's murder, causing him to question the moral implications of killing. The Poacher contemplates the sinfulness of, in a hushed tone, 'murder' (114). To which the defensive Priest retorts, 'Yet you kill animals everyday' (114). The Priest is trying to highlight the hypocrisy of the Poacher who kills animals whilst judging him for killing a person. The Poacher claims his situation is 'different' because 'they're just animals' (114). This argument is reminiscent of Aristotle's persuasion in *Politics:*

> plants are for the sake of animals, and that the other animals are for the sake of human beings, domestic ones both for using and eating, and most but not all wild ones for food and other kinds of support, so that clothes and the other tools may be got from them.[431]

The Poacher represents the polarising belief that animals are subservient to humans. His flippant diminution of animals and inability to provide an explanation demonstrates how prevalent and pre-conditioned this defence is. Their exchange is uncomfortable to read because it debates the value of biological life that humans have culturally evaluated.

In response to the Poacher's assertion that they are 'just animals', the Priest replies 'and humans aren't?' (114). The Priest is trying to deflect his guilt on to the Poacher, yet in doing so he highlights the similarity between humans and animals. The Priest is trying to claim that his murder of Tom Solomons is equivalent to the Poacher's killing of a rabbit. The Poacher replies, 'humans are humans. But animals are animals […] some of them are pests' (114). The Poacher bases his argument on simply repeating what each animal or human is, which

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[431] Aristotle, *Politics*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6762/6762-h/6762-h.htm> [accessed 5 May 2020]. Project Gutenberg.

demonstrates his lack of biological understanding and inability to determine what constitutes an animal or human other than their difference to each other. To complicate matters further, the Priest retorts, 'so are some humans' (114). A further distinction has been made between humans, animals and now pests. There is a subcategory of animal that has been culturally classified as a 'pest', particularly undesirable for human life to the point of encouraged persecution. Yet the Priest has categorised some humans with animals and furthermore some with pests. The unsettling effect of this exchange is threefold: firstly, we are made to consider how privileged human life is over other animate beings; secondly, it self-reflexively triggers guilt at the immediate disregard we have for killing animals versus the outrage we instinctively experience with killing people; lastly, the acknowledgement of these two things has us understanding the Priest and thus empathising with the murderer. The violence, horror and grotesque imagery in both parallel murder scenes (Tom and the rabbit) confronts some uncomfortable questions raised by ecocriticism, challenging ecophobic rhetoric that privileges humans over animals.

Cumbrian Gothic explores the slipperiness of human/animal signification. It embraces the lapses in classification and shared similarities between people that desire to be animal, animals subject to humans and humans subject to animals. Contemplating the human/non-human binary that is reinforced and renegotiated in Gothic ecologies, Heholt and Edmundson ask 'where does the dark side reside?'[432] This question is central to ecoGothic modes that explore the relationship between the human and non-human whilst critiquing anthropocentric hegemony. As Heholt and Edmundson propose, ecoGothic literature reveals that human control is 'illusory and temporary', often hailed by the 'repressed return' of nature and its marginalised creatures.[433] Yet, this representation of the non-human is typically facilitated by

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[432] Heholt and Edmundson, *Gothic Animals*, p. 3.
[433] Heholt and Edmundson, *Gothic Animals*, p. 279.

anthropomorphism: humanising the not-human. In discussing the role of animals in the Gothic, Heholt and Edmundson cite David Punter and Elizabeth Bronfen's contention that 'the uncanny, the disorder, the alien-ness that Gothic appears to *express* might be better seen precisely as evidence of what the genre is seeking to *control*' (emphasis in the original).[434] The examples throughout this thesis support their assessment; the sublimity of nature, the Croglin vampire and the Calgarth Skulls are attempts at familiarising and creatively claiming ownership of the unknown and unruly.

In *Beastings,* the Priest epitomises anthropocentric control and elitism, obsessively trying to impose his dominion on all creatures empowered by his religious right to do so. His excessive ecophobia manifests in his repugnance for Cumbria's entire way of life and proximity to nature. No other character comes close to the disgust, loathing and repulsion he feels towards human and non-human life. Heholt and Edmundson observe that the otherness of animals is 'brought into the human realm and its wildness controlled and restrained'.[435] This is not exclusive to animals, however, as the Priest dehumanises people that he considers baser, primal and beneath him. He believes he is 'physically mentally sexually racially and philosophically advanced' and therefore 'superior to these ingrates illiterates and inbreds' (91). This echoes the derogatory rhetoric of Dr Campbell in the previous chapter, reiterating ingrained discourse that marginalises rural identities. The Priest identifies the classifications of his ordering system, ranking himself as superior to the recalcitrant identities he deems behaviourally, physically and mentally debased. He justifies his service in Cumbria as a spiritual 'test', assessing his ability to 'survive amongst the uncivilised', to 'thrive' in 'these harsh northern lands', and to 'tame the lost wild beasts of his flock' (91-2). Unlike the Romantic notion of healing oneself in nature, the Priest must endure life in the rural uplands. He literalises

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[434] Heholt and Edmundson, *Gothic Animals,* p. 4.
[435] Heholt and Edmundson, *Gothic Animals,* p. 4.

religious metaphors that require him to shepherd his congregation. The harshness of the landscape is symbiotically entangled in the characterisation of the locals, deeming them uncivilised beasts as an embodied extension of the place they inhabit. This is not just a case of the inner animal breaking free, but the rural outside breaking in, expressing what Heholt and Edmundson determine 'a wild, inhuman, monstrous side to the human'.[436] This is reaffirmed by the Priest's description of 'uncivilised idiots. earthy folk' (100). This imagines locals as part of the earth, birthed by it, a natural product of the environment that the Priest's ecophobia has deemed infectious. He reinforces this contamination, calling them 'stricken' – as if diseased by their behavioural and geographical surroundings – pocked by 'adultery poverty incest skulduggery inter-breeding' (100). Finally, the Priest scathingly condemns their 'tawdry animalistic existences in [their] pigsty hovels' (100). For him, Cumbrian locals live like animals, their homes are no more than pig pens polluted by the perceived filth of their customs, culture and physical environment.

However, the Priest's debate with the Poacher concludes that humans are animals and his continual bestialisation of people reasserts this belief. The Priest collapses the boundaries between humans and animals, but in doing so he threatens his own subjectivity. His continuous figuring of the human through animalistic behaviours is self-incriminating. He weakens the distinction between humans and animals with every comparison, reaffirming the commonality between the two. It betrays his understanding that humans and animals are alike, which indirectly asserts the Priest's own animality. In the previously cited *Animal*, Fudge references Walter Benjamin who declares that 'the horror that stirs deep in man is an obscure awareness that in him something lives so akin to the animal that it might be recognised' catalysing a 'nauseous […] sense of disgust' at this 'bestial' communion with animals, which then implores

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[436] Heholt and Edmundson, *Gothic Animals,* p. 4.

the human to 'make himself its master'.[437] The Priest demonstrates this with his self-conscious rejection and repugnance for the non-human world and deliberate subjugation of anything that could threaten this separation. This fear of identifying with our inner animality manifests as disgust, which, as Fudge determines, is a kinship that 'we wish to wipe out; annihilate' via 'mastery – control, domination'.[438] Yet, Fudge implores, 'if we place these two simultaneous drives – desire for communication and fear […] what emerges is not so much the problem of the animal, as the problem of the human'.[439] Contemporary Gothic literature often explores this idea that animal monstrosity has long been a deflection that attempts to conceal the actual monstrosity of the human. As I will now explore in *Wolf Border,* Hall's novel strategically de-Gothicises the wolf, attempting to strip away sensationalism and become self-aware of the discourses that make animality monstrous.

De-Gothicising Folklore

Wolf Border establishes two discourses of wolf representation, one of Gothic sensationalisation held by the public and media and a realist narrative represented by Rachel and her team based on science. The first instance of Gothic sensationalism in the novel explores monstrosity as a shape-shifting signifier of political agenda. Rachel and her research assistant Huib attempt to diffuse a protest that has gathered at the gates of the estate triggered by the wolves' arrival. A man dressed in a 'pinstripe suit' sports a 'lewdly made […] papier-mâché wolf's head […] with giant teeth and a red tongue', also 'carrying a briefcase' (152). Rachel assumes this is a 'comment on Lord Pennington himself', rather than the wolves, as it is clearly a political statement directed towards the 'apex class; the financial raiders in charge' (152). The apex pun explicitly implies that upper class politicians and landowners are the real predators here: a

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[437] Fudge, *Animal*, p. 8.

[438] Fudge, *Animal*, p. 8.

[439] Fudge, *Animal*, p. 8.

subversive wolf in gentry's clothing. Exhibiting his theatricality, the man raises his red-painted fingers like claws and 'begins to stalk forward, growling' (152). His blatancy directly implies that the enactment of harm has been done not by the wolf's pantomime teeth, but by human hands. Kaisa Lappalainen argues that proliferating wolf narratives 'offer a mythology imbued with archetypal powers that tap into profound fears about the place of the human in nature—fears that blur the boundaries between an animal world and a human world'.[440] This hybrid man–wolf visually literalises such fears. His bloody combination of man and animal portrays a symbiosis that is murderous and dangerous to other people. A man unleashing his animalism is perceived as an aggressor.

The man's poor wolf performance is intentionally satirical, however, because it reaffirms he is a human pretending to be a wolf and adopting wolf behaviours. His charade is interrupted by Huib who corrects the man's imitations with his 'honed, and surprisingly accurate' howls (152). The man is unfazed by Huib's critique and later reprises his role with gusto; crouching down he 'tips his head back in baying parody' (157). His obviously stereotypical performance is self-aware, emphasising that this is a show. His masquerade is an allegory of the rewilding project, whereby the wolves shield and distract from the people who put them there. Still crouched, he crawls to his discarded briefcase, opens it with 'deliberate theatricality' and 'takes out a gun' (157). In this flourish, he makes explicit that his is not a protest about the lethality of the predators. He redirects insinuations of violence towards the briefcase-wielding business of politicians and the elite armed with lethal agendas and destructive tendencies. He 'puts the gun to his large, leering head and pulls the trigger' (157-

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[440] Kaisa Lappalainen, 'Recall of the Fairy-Tale Wolf: "Little Red Riding Hood" in the Dialogic Tension of Contemporary Wolf Politics in the US West', *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 26.3 (Summer 2019) p. 744.

8). His provocative conclusion implores an end to the 'apex class' culture, foreshadowing their undoing and self-destruction. However, it also implies that the wolves will meet the same end, revealing their rewilding to be politically incentivised rather than ecologically motivated. As the performance slips into polemics and implied violence, the crowd snub him because his 'show is in poor taste', a fellow protestor proclaims 'he's not with us', and the rest of the group disbands (158). Everyone now shares the same distaste for his performance; Huib wonders if he is an 'activist' and Rachel also feels unnecessarily threatened, but they have both misread his polemical show that was essentially about class and not at all about the wolves.

The man's performance capitalises on the culturally ingrained fear of the wolf that has been consolidated by folklore, fairy tale and mythology. The novel directly addresses how irrational fears stemming from fairy tale fiction have been appropriated. Fairy tales have a protracted history of animating animals with human traits, agency and monstrosity: *Beauty and the Beast*, *Cinderella*, *Snow White* and countless others. Their anthropomorphic animation actively collapses the boundaries of human and non-human, which becomes problematic for the rewilding of predatory animals that are often represented as aggressors in fiction. The iconography of Little Red Riding Hood is well-known in Western culture; in the past decade, Little Red has appeared at every anti-wolf protest to the point where 'fairy tales are influencing legislation, regulations, public opinion and threatening the recovery of wolves and their vital contribution to our ecosystems'.[441] In *Wolf Border*, one of the mothers in the crowd has played on such stereotyping, dressing her young girl 'in white party frills and a red cape, some kind of fairytale motif', and two boys 'dressed in breeches and velvet Victorian-style jackets' (152, 154). The woman has intentionally dressed her children up in fairy tale attire, unoriginally

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[441] Mark McCormick, *How Anti-Wolf Propaganda Threatens the Survival of The Species* (2015) <https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/how-anti-wolf-propaganda-threatens-the-survival-of-the-species/> [accessed 7 May 2020].

alluding to *Little Red Riding Hood*. Mayako Murai and Daniela Kato find that contemporary appropriations of *Little Red Riding Hood* have transformed the wolf into 'a symbol of primeval wilderness that counteracts the constraints of civilization'.[442] In the novel, the periodization of the children's clothing not only demonstrates how temporally out-of-place the wolf narrative is in the modern countryside, but it helpfully points towards the particular version and deliberate aesthetic that it is engaging with.

The little girl's white frills and red cape gestures towards nineteenth-century illustrations – specifically those of Kate Greenaway who inspired Edwardian children's fashions – which inspire many modern renderings that use this colourway to emphasise her purity and innocence. The boy's Victorian hunting attire is reminiscent of Walter Crane's 1875 illustration, which features a gallant hunter, taking inspiration from the Grimm revision of Perrault, who shoots the wolf just as Little Red Riding Hood is about to be devoured.[443] Crane's hero is fashioned as a nineteenth-century 'sportsman' in breeches and a tailored jacket. Hall's engagement with this particular iconography represents a nostalgic, middle-class representation of childhood and a rural upbringing that is also traditionally gendered. The boys are young English gentlemen taking on protector roles whilst the little girl is reduced to a portent of danger and a sacrificial heroine. Ideologically, we are thrust back in to the nineteenth century regulated by the desire to control and possess nature.

The mother is sentimentalising the fairy tale narrative as an affective appeal, which reveals her sensational desires for a Gothic fantasy. She 'summons' Lord Pennington, 'not unlike the devil' (155). The angered mob congregating at the iron gates demanding the presence

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[442] Mayako Murai and Daniela Kato, 'Introduction: Human-Animal Entanglements in the Fairy Tale', *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 26.3 (Summer 2019), p. 724.

[443] Walter Crane, *Little Red Riding Hood* (London: George Routledge & Son, 1875).

of the devilish landowner, who is concealing monsters within the grounds and causing chaos for the villagers, culminates in a Gothic farce. When Rachel tries to assuage the woman's anxieties with her rational explanations regarding the practicalities of security, she realises 'reality is not what she came for' (155). Instead, the woman wants a 'nightmarish fantasy' of 'wolves that pass like fog through the wire […] howling at the moon' and 'tearing apart her starched and overdressed children' (156). This thrill-seeking desire for the wolves to live up to their fairy tale heritage is apparent. Rachel begins to tire of the 'hysteria' and 'desire for a bogeyman' (156). She is accustomed to people scapegoating the wolves as monsters and irrationally regurgitating fictional hyperbole. The mother even appears to want the Gothic wolf, because that way she can repress it or otherwise face a coexistence with wolves and the possibility of a rewilded future. The allusion to fairy tales demonstrates the long history of demonising wolves and demonstrates the real challenge that Rachel faces in that she must debunk the mythical associations entangled in the figure of the wolf.

The universal and potent fear of living with wolves centralises around Heholt and Edmundson's observation that whilst the animalistic base of the self is considered 'strange', which is 'truly the uncanny' – already destabilising the subject – it is 'also that which is always-already there within our selves'.[444] The second aspect of wolf narratives that the novel explores is this notion of the wolf within. In a dream, Rachel revisits a childhood memory recalling a visit to the wolf enclosure at Lowther Castle. She remembers how the wolf on the other side of the fence appeared as 'an echo, a mirror' to her every move (7). Hall adapts the Lacanian mirror stage of self-identification so instead of recognising her own image Rachel identifies with the wolf, realising her affinity with her inner animal. Crucially, this is a distinctively female experience of lycanthropy that Chantal Bourgault du Coudray tells us in *The Curse of the Werewolf* is markedly different from male accounts. Masculine representations are often

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[444] Heholt and Edmundson, *Gothic Animals*, p. 6.

characterised by a struggle with the beast within, whereas 'the pervasive cultural association of femininity with nature, embodiment and biology' has favoured 'hedonistic female werewolves revelling in their lycanthropic powers' often afflicted because of their 'feminine tendency towards pleasures of the flesh'.[445] Before Rachel relocates back to the Lake District from Idaho, she embraces her inner animality. In a Lakeland village pub, a married man is suggestive towards her across the room prompting her to muse, 'In America it's easier' (38). She methodically describes her mating ritual: she goes to the casino alone, 'orders a drink, scans the room', seeking out desired primal and biological qualities of 'movement, or strength of bones' (39). She describes her process of selection, 'testing' them first outside the bathroom or in the parking lot. This emotionally detached ritual continues, leaving separately for a cheap motel. On occasion she will just stop at the side of the road, further emphasising physicality over the intimacy that readers typically expect of human sex scenes. Rachel describes their ensuing contact as 'gentle fighting' in her 'damp' truck bed that 'smells of oil and blood from the occasional deer carcass' (40). The visceral description of dampness, strong-smelling oil and blood arouses sensations of disgust and repulsion that exaggerates its practicality over pleasure. Then she 'turns on all fours, not for his benefit' and 'rears back' (41). She deliberately addresses the stereotypical sexual objectification of women and instead asserts her sexual agency in the enactment and empowerment of their animalistic sex. This is not erotically described but 'flesh slapping. Outside the truck: pine resin, tar, moths. A dry storm above Kamiah, lightning flashes' (41). Their intimacy is just another of nature's rituals on display.

In conventional wolf narrative, female pleasure is most often responsible for leading the woman to a wolf or it results in them becoming a wolf. Rachel's 'fearful joy of sensuality' is typical for female representations of lycanthropy, according to Bourgault du Coudray, that

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[445] Chantal Bourgault du Coudray, *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p. 112.

makes them 'more approachable to [Satan's] wiles than men', which leads them into trouble.'[446] For Rachel, her transformation is a shift to motherhood. She suspects she is pregnant after her latest sexual encounter, but this time she regretfully deviated from her usual dispassionate ritual and ended up having sex with her best friend. On the way home from the pharmacy, she 'squats at the side of the road like a destitute. Positive' (72). This mirrors the sexual encounter in her truck, reinforcing the cyclicality of sex that results in reproduction. In her review for *The Guardian*, Alex Clark collapses the transition to motherhood with domestication; 'Rachel, in her neat cottage on a meticulously maintained estate in which nothing "is allowed to moulder and rot", her bed and board paid for, her food delivered to her just as the estate's deer are served up to the hunting wolves, has herself been tamed.'[447] This is a misreading of the biological nature of maternal wolves that is intrinsically transforming within Rachel, the expectant mother. In fact, as her pregnancy progresses the more attuned she becomes to her innate animalism and similarly her empathy towards the pregnant wolf. Initially she debated terminating her child but 'It's as if some rhythm – circadian, immune, hormonal, she does not know which exactly – waxes and wanes and, with it, her rational mind' (105). Her pre-existing methodical routines are replaced by something impulsive, primal, intuitive. These deeply ingrained feminine energies wax and wane, inviting imagery of the moon involving her with lunar cycles and lycanthropic connotations. As Bourgault du Coudray observes, in some female wolf narratives, often

> biological imperatives of maternity replace the focus on female sensuality, with the legendary maternity of the she-wolf (via the legend of Romulus and Remus and other stories of children raised by she-wolves) serving to draw the connection between

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[446] Bourgault du Coudray, *Curse of the Werewolf*, p. 114.
[447] Alex Clark, *The Wolf Border by Sarah Hall review – in search of wilderness* (1 April 2015) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/apr/01/the-wolf-border-by-sarah-hall-review> [accessed 11 May 2020].

women and nature. Although this story drew on entrenched ideals of maternal behaviour, its representation of the female werewolf in a positive light marked the beginning of a shift that would become more pronounced during the twentieth century.[448]

Contrary to Clark, it is as if Rachel grows wilder in her shift to the maternal. Despite the outward appearance of domestication, inwardly she is transformed. The slipperiness of her identification with her inner wolf has not stopped in her pregnancy, exemplified by her assertion that her 'baby will grow up in the territory where she grew up' (167). Territory is an oddly ecological term showing how Rachel perceives her home and how she envisages raising her child, as opposed to the trappings of the 'meticulously maintained estate'. Her affinity with her inner animal is jokingly exemplified when the doctors ask her 'Are you having a wolf today?' to which Rachel responds, 'I wouldn't be surprised' (250).

The diametrically opposed representations of wolves and their associative narratives in the novel demonstrates the binary between the cultural and the biological wolf. The ecophobia inherent in folklore and fairy tales has demonised animal agency and made wolves appear threatening to humans. What the novel attempts to do is highlight the ridiculousness of fictional fears preventing rewilded success and ecological balance. It does this by de-Gothicising pre-existing narratives and revealing the wolf within as a symbol of inner animality that is intrinsic to human identity, biology and belonging.

III: Gothic and Dis-abled Bodies

As *Wolf Border*'s failed re-integration of wolves into Cumbria demonstrates, rewilding is culturally opposed by those who fear a return to the wilderness – real or mythologised – those who seek to control ecology rather than being a subject within it. *Beastings* exposes the dangers

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[448] Bourgault du Coudray, *Curse of the Werewolf*, p. 118.

of wildness more explicitly, thus challenging rewilding as a naturalised model of future existence especially in consideration of those who benefit from modernity's improved accessibility and managing chronic pain/illness. Both *Wolf Border* and *Beastings* centrally position marginal identities and otherness in their texts, but Myers is particularly invested in representing disabled and unruly bodies. In her exemplary work in *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Disability*, Sara Wasson powerfully states that 'representations of disability in Gothic literature have most often been toxic, limiting, and corrosive'.[449] She initially argues that this is partly due to characteristics of the mode, because its protagonists generally endure 'misery and isolation', it depicts 'unconventional bodies and minds in terms of monstrosity', and frequently narrates an 'individual fallen into misfortune' (70). This perpetuates negative connotations of disability and impairment, which further marginalises, ostracises and alienates their existence. Wasson's observation is exemplified by the previous chapter's exploration of 'The Croglin Vampire' and in contemporary Lakeland literature, such as Martin Edward's *The Dungeon House* (2015) and Paula Daly's *What Kind of Mother Are You?* (2013), which rely on traditional Gothic imagery to demonise and dismiss disabilities, impairments and mental health.[450]

Daly's novel, which was adapted into the ITV series *Deep Water* (2019), revolves around Kate Riverty's last-ditch attempt to save her failing marriage by fabricating her own daughter's kidnapping and nearly blinding her young son. The novel and corresponding television series are not overly Gothic, yet its promotional materials suggest its unveiling of a darker side to the Lakes and the series actively Gothicises the mentally ill antagonist. Kate is

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[449] Sara Wasson, 'Spectrality, Strangeness, and Stigmaphilia: Gothic and Critical Disability Studies', *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Disability*, ed. by Alice Hall (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2020), p. 70.

[450] Paula Daly, *Just What Kind of Mother Are You?* (London: Transworld Publishers, 2014). Martin Edwards, *The Dungeon House* (London: *Allison & Busby*, 2015).

cast as a crazed woman, whose complex mental illness is censored, villainised and reduced to feminine hysteria as the unhinged, jealous ex-wife. The Gothic trappings are stereotypical and vacuous, encapsulated by one reviewer's assessment of Kate's portrayal in the television series as the 'wicked witch, suspected of harming her own son'.[451]

Like Daly's impaired villain, *The Dungeon House* features a physically impaired villain; Robbie irreparably damaged his leg in a car crash as a teen, which condemns him to a life of misery and misfortune confirming Wasson's earlier pre-assessment. Unlike *What Kind of Mother Are You?* and *Deep Water*, the title of Edward's novel foregrounds the Gothic tone of the text, which is visually reaffirmed by the haunted mansion on the front cover and is championed by Robbie who becomes a Miss Havisham-like figure to almost parodic excess. His injury ends his football career, which marks the point when Robbie stops living; his home remains 'untouched' with 'no sign of life behind the grubby net curtains' (165).[452] Jarringly, amongst the debris, his beloved football souvenirs are preciously preserved in a glass case monitored by CCTV. Robbie's house is an actual time capsule in memoriam of his able-bodied self.

These novels reaffirm Wasson's apprehension of Gothic portrayals of disability, because they are preferentially ableist and toxically represent impairments as debilitating and villainous. In her blog post entitled 'Disability Erasure and The Apocalyptic Narrative', Shoshana Kessock similarly discusses the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of disabled characters framed by her personal experience of navigating modern society in a

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[451] Sarah Deen, 'Deep Water review: Soapy dark drama deserved way more hype than it got', *Metro* (Wednesday 18 Sep 2019) < https://metro.co.uk/2019/09/18/deep-water-review-soapy-dark-drama-deserved-way-more-hype-than-it-got-10764987/>.
[452] Edwards, *Dungeon House*, p. 165.

wheelchair dependent on medication to keep her alive.[453] She addresses ableist narratives that typically portray a valiant disabled/weak character sacrificially surrendering their lives for the able-bodied. In unstable societies, which are a common denominator of apocalypse, Gothic and dystopian fiction, disabled bodies are portrayed as valueless or a burden that endanger the able-bodied. This burdensome viewpoint is expressed by the Priest in *Beastings* upon discovering the Poacher is disabled. Frustrated by their lack of progress, the Priest directs his anger towards the Poacher's limp for 'slowing us down' and says:

If I had known –

Known what father? Said the Poacher

That I was travelling with a bloody cripple. (99)

He offers no further explanation so we assume, based on his evident prejudice, that he would not have employed the Poacher's help had he been aware of his impairment. Kessock further elaborates that the mentally ill or physically impaired, if featured, are often 'an outlying wildcard' or 'simple sidekicks' for 'quirky but unstable comic relief'.[454] The Poacher appears to perform this role well by guiding and goading the Priest. Disturbingly, the alternative reality/fantasy/dystopia/gothic narratives, regardless of their often retrospective settings like in *Beastings*, act out discrimination present in contemporary culture. Kessock argues this excuses an 'eugenics-level categorization of the disabled and chronically ill', which devalues and callously disposes of disabled bodies exemplified by the Priest's graphic killing of the Poacher.[455]

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[453] Shoshana Kessock, 'Disability Erasure And The Apocalyptic Narrative' (2017) <https://shoshanakessock.com/2017/08/28/disability-erasure-and-the-apocalyptic-narrative/> [accessed June 2020].
[454] Kessock, 'Disability Erasure'.
[455] Kessock, 'Disability Erasure'.

Despite these negative representations, disability erasure and the predominance of ableist narratives risk excluding representations of alternative bodies and minds entirely. Wasson acknowledges this and expands on the contrary notion that 'the orthodoxy of disability positivity can lead to dangerous erasures of people with particular experiences of impairment'.[456] Toxic representations perpetuate the narrative of demonising disability, but heroic, happy depictions gloss over the lived experience of disabled bodies. Singular representations of any subjectivity neglect the nuances of emotional, mental and physical discomfort as a result of difference. Disability scholar Liz Crow points out that the 'experience of impairment is not always irrelevant, neutral or positive' and 'Many of us remain frustrated and disheartened by pain, fatigue, depression and chronic illness' so, like Robbie, 'we mourn past activities that are no longer possible for us'.[457] The Gothic's deftness with representing pain, discomfort and non-conventional bodies presents itself as a mode that can counteract the 'orthodoxy of disability positivity' and disability erasure.

Beastings' Cumbrian Gothic narrative balances both positive and negative experiences of disability, demonstrating the complexity of living with physical and mental impairments from both a medical and social standpoint. If the novel uses disabled typecasting and stereotypes, it appears to do so in a self-aware and deconstructive manner. For example, the Poacher's performance as the Priest's comic side-kick, disparaged by Kessock, self-consciously exposes the external judgements of his impairment that do not represent his personal experience. It is the Priest who declares the Poacher is 'impeded', which is ironic given that his livelihood requires him to navigate the natural landscape that – when compared with the Priest's cocaine-fuelled marching – he is able to sustain much more naturally.

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[456] Wasson, 'Spectrality, Strangeness, and Stigmaphilia', p. 74.
[457] Liz Crow, 'Including All of Our Lives' (1996) <www.roaring-girl.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ Including-All-of-Our-Lives.pdf>, [accessed June 2020] pp. 4-5.

Predominantly, negative associations of impairments are not experienced by the disabled characters themselves but projected on to them by able-bodied characters.

The able-bodied biases of society diagnose and determine degrees of disability just as Dr Campbell loosely diagnosed the afflictions of asylum inmates in the previous chapter. Crow describes how the social model of disability revealed to her that she was being systemically 'dis-abled […] by prejudice, discrimination, inaccessible environments and inadequate support'.[458] The medical model of disability identifies impairments, which are physiological, psychological or anatomical limitations, as 'the root cause of any disadvantages experienced' that can 'only be rectified by treatment or cure'.[459] By contrast, the social model reorients from 'lack of ability' to 'disabling social, environmental and attitudinal barriers'.[460] *Beastings'* rewilding narrative examines how society determines the ability of an impaired person and, conversely, explores what that person is capable of when they withdraw from the limitations of that same society. Myers' 'return to nature' plotline deconstructs the social model of disability and repositions the dis-abled outlier from the peripheries of representation to the heart of the text. However, the non-linear chronology of the text continually pivots from the wilderness back to society, creating a gyration between disability positivity/inclusion and negativity/exclusion. The text's chronology alone prevents disability orthodoxy as the timeline refuses any sense of progression towards positivity or descent into disintegration, which is also never solely attributed to impairment.

Simply deconstructing external factors that prejudicially dis-able people, however, cannot entirely eradicate the severity of their suffering, physically or emotionally. As Crow points out, 'our subjective experience of our bodies is also an integral part of our everyday

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[458] Crow, 'Including All of Our Lives', p. 2.
[459] Crow, 'Including All of Our Lives', p. 3.
[460] Crow, 'Including All of Our Lives', p. 3.

reality'.[461] Whilst an awareness of socially disabling rhetoric helps to reduce the extent to which a subject is systemically dis-abled, it does not simultaneously remove a physiological affliction that causes actual bodily suffering. *Beastings* appears to understand these nuances and does not exclusively position disability heroically but employs Gothic physicality to express the pain and suffering of this lived experience. The novel's rural and past setting further problematises disability representation due to Cumbria's perceived lack of and/or antiquated access to healthcare and education (exemplified by Dr Campbell, discussed in the previous chapter), which is then amplified by the difficulty of navigating this wild landscape with any form of impairment. Paul Watson notes that, generally, 'Back-to-the-land' fantasies 'pursue some sort of anti-technology pastoral utopia'.[462] This fantasy privileges able-bodied people and denies the inclusion of those who rely on modern-day technology, industry and healthcare. Watson argues that the literary pursuit of such a fantasy 'is to deliberately condone the brutal extermination of millions of people'.[463] One of the contentions of rewilding narratives that promote returning to nature is that they risk isolating and excluding bodies that cannot easily negotiate a rewilded landscape. Rewilding narratives thus risk a similar sort of disability exclusion to those initially identified by Wasson in Gothic fiction. However, as Wasson goes on to argue, 'Since the Gothic is characterised by confined spaces and disjointed temporality, it can actually be deployed as a highly situated mode lending itself well to indictments of specific maladaptive environments and the suffering they spawn.'[464] Myers coalesces both Gothic and rewilding narratives in order to examine social and medical models of disability in maladaptive environments. He draws on Lakeland's literary history of marginal representation

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[461] Crow, 'Including All of Our Lives', p. 5.

[462] Paul Watson, 'Acid Renaissance: update 1' (February 2019), <http://www.lazaruscorporation.co.uk/blogs/artists-notebook/posts/acid-renaissance-update-1> [accessed June 2020].

[463] Watson, 'Acid Renaissance'.

[464] Wasson, 'Spectrality, Strangeness, and Stigmaphilia', p. 75

championed by Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*, which aims to reposition those subjects to the centre of cultural and social awareness, highlighting the positive and painful experiences of impairment.

Idiots and Wild Children

Beastings can be identified as a re-conceptualisation of Wordsworth's 'The Idiot Boy', which reframes eighteenth-century perceptions of idiocy in relation to contemporary disability studies and specifically rural attitudes towards learning difficulties. In Sally Bushell's introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to 'Lyrical Ballads'* she describes how Wordsworth's collection revolves around 'encounters with those marginalised by society', aiming to 're-centre them and compel readers to engage with the overlooked.'[465] Both 'The Idiot Boy' and *Beastings* explicitly centre marginal figures by making them protagonists and having the narrative revolve around them, making disabled subjectivity central to their texts.

Wordsworth was aware of disability exclusion as he highlights the classist erasure of unfavourable topics and subjects – censored by certain styles, language and poetic discourse – that are perceived as unbefitting for artistic expression. As such, he states in the preface to his *Lyrical Ballads* that his intention was to communicate the 'real language of men', which his subsequent poetry reveals to be marginal identities of the rural class who are otherwise absent from artistic representation (v). Wordsworth explains by using verse it makes the reader presumptive that 'certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in this book, and others will be carefully excluded' (xi). Wordsworth is, rather progressively, aware of the intentional disability erasure in literature and deliberately goes against the popular aesthetic whilst controversially employing the same style in an act of subversion. He published *Lyrical Ballads*

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[465] Sally Bushell, *The Cambridge Companion to 'Lyrical Ballads'* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 9.

before he returns to Grasmere in 1799, so his portrayals of 'common life' and 'low and rustic' subjects that better evoke 'the essential passions of the heart' are fond remembrances from his childhood (xi). Wordsworth, somewhat nostalgically, recollects rural life and its local people as more authentic and genuine in their expression than his adult experience of city-dwellers whom he believes manipulated by 'social vanity'. The poet's preference for marginalised rural identities re-evaluates eighteenth-century discourses that dehumanise difference.

Idiocy, in particular, was perceived by eighteenth and nineteenth-century philosophers as a 'transitional link between nature and man, or the wild and the civil' from which secular, reasonable and civilised beings evolved from.[466] This belief places those with learning difficulties in a liminal social position at an interstice between nature and culture. Whilst this social perception of idiocy is derogative, both Wordsworth and Myers reclaim the external marginalisation of their protagonists and demonstrate that their proximity to nature makes them better adapted to their environment than the able-bodied characters that pursue them, which I will explore in more depth. Firstly, however, I illustrate how *Beastings* exposes various expressions of disability discrimination that attempts to erase and 'other' those with physical or psychological difference.

Wordsworth's contentious 'The Idiot Boy' was published in his and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads,* sparking controversy and critical discussion at the time of its publication because of its eponymous disabled protagonist. Joshua Gonsalves refers to Coleridge's personal condemnation of idiocy, fictionally or otherwise, because it lacks in any philosophical, public or aesthetic merit further believing idiocy to be 'unthinking, animal-like'.[467] Gonsalves concludes that Byron's, Coleridge's and the critic John Wilson's comments all agree that 'on

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[466] Joshua Gonsalves, 'Reading Idiocy: Wordsworth's "The Idiot Boy"', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 38.3 (2007), p. 123.
[467] Gonsalves, 'Reading Idiocy', p. 123.

aesthetic grounds […] idiocy is in bad taste'.[468] He quotes Wilson who protests that it is 'almost unnatural that a person in a complete state of idiotism should excite the warmest feelings of attachment in the breast of even his mother'.[469] Coleridge deplores the animalism of idiots, whilst Wilson claims affection for them is 'unnatural'. Both contemporaneous critics understand idiocy as regression of humanity, not natural, albeit animalistic.

Wilson and Coleridge's passionate rejections of idiocy are self-reflexive, exposing the fragility of the allegedly intellectual, enlightened and evolved human threatened by a perceived weakened mental state. Wordsworth supports this in his response to Wilson in 1802 that defends 'The Idiot Boy' and his inclusion of a disabled subject. Wordsworth argues that any 'loathing and disgust' inspired by the poem is a failing on the part of the reader, whose inexperience and ignorance deprives them of 'thinking and feeling'.[470] Wordsworth deflects any negativity associated with disability on to the person projecting these feelings. The poet expressly claims this is a class issue, because an idiot born in poverty 'cannot be boarded out, as it would be by gentle folks'.[471] These 'unfortunate beings' cannot be easily removed from lower class society, so any 'disgust' is displaced by the taking up of caregiving duties.[472] Therefore, upper-class privilege has allowed the differencing of disability to occur by the spatial segregation of alternative minds and bodies. Lower and rural classes, according to Wordsworth, are unable to do this and so create an environment in which disabled identities remain part of society.

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[468] Gonsalves, 'Reading Idiocy', p. 122.
[469] Gonsalves, 'Reading Idiocy', p. 122.
[470] John O. Hayden, 'William Wordsworth's Letter to John Wilson (1802): A Corrected Version', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 18.1 (1987), p. 37.
[471] Hayden, 'Wordsworth's Letter to John Wilson', p. 37.
[472] Hayden, 'Wordsworth's Letter to John Wilson', p. 37.

The dehumanisation and de-naturalisation of disabled bodies by able-bodied people that Wordsworth expresses in his letter to Wilson is conveyed in 'The Idiot Boy'.[473] In the ballad, a village 'idiot' is sent by his doting mother to fetch the town doctor for his ill neighbour, but he gets distracted in the woods and fails to return. His distraught mother frantically searches for him imagining the worst; perhaps he has 'climbed into an oak', 'joined the wandering gypsey-folk', wandered into 'the dark cave, the goblins' hall' or is he hunting 'ghosts' in the castle? (233-240). She collapses reality, mythology and folklore into the fantasy of her terrified imagination. The speaker is unable to 'put it in to rhyme' the details of the boy's 'strange adventures', so he too fantasises (325, 351). The narrator combines playful fantasy of the boy chasing stars and playing in waterfalls with Gothic-inflected scenarios that depict him as a 'silent horseman-ghost', a 'fierce and dreadful hunter' leaving a 'desart wilderness', 'with head and heels on fire, / And the very soul of evil, / he's galloping away […] the bane of all that dread the devil' (335-346). Imagery of childish fun is seamlessly intertwined with the demonisation of disability, recalling the way that the Croglin creature's 'madness' was represented monstrously. This is almost the inverse of the Radcliffean Gothic that Rachel utilises in *The Wolf Border* – resolving supernatural suspicions with reason – and instead uses Gothic imagery to explain the inexplicable. Whilst the mother's hyperbole likely originates from maternal passion, her wild speculations are Gothically codified. In the absence of their understanding, the able-bodied mother and narrator resort to irrationally questioning the boy's behaviour motivated by fear for his whereabouts but also of what he is capable.

Beastings explicitly engages with Wordsworth and Romanticism throughout the novel and builds on the dynamic of fear and inclusion established in 'The Idiot Boy'. The Girl's muteness is repeatedly mistaken for idiocy, thus characterising her with similar demonising

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[473] William Wordsworth, 'The Idiot Boy', *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. by R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 131-145. Subsequent references to this text will appear in parentheses following the quotation.

and derogatory rhetoric that was used to subjugate Wordsworth's protagonist. Hinckley, confused by the girl's silence, refers to her as 'the imbecile' (76). When the Priest presses Hinckley as to why the Girl would take his baby, Hinckley answers evasively: 'I told you: she's not right. She's built up all wrong' (19). Hinckley exploits the Girl's difference and weaponises it against her, making her appear defective and then uses social dis-abling to explain her behavioural deviancy as if they are interchangeable. Simply because she does not speak, she is 'built up all wrong', allowing Hinckley as the assumed 'right' person to appear morally superior, detracting from his abusive behaviour that drove the Girl to escape.

Myers's novel bestialises the Girl to reinforce her 'defectiveness', which reflects Coleridge and Wilson's comments on the unnaturalness of idiocy. The first person she meets after her escape is a distasteful farmer who lets her go because he sees no value in keeping her. The farmer implores 'you're not deaf are you. Dumb as an old yow maybe but not deaf' (14). He derogatively compares her to an 'old yow', an ewe in Cumbrian dialect, animalising her because of her inability to speak as if language is the determinant of humanity. Unlike 'The Idiot Boy' in this instance, the farmer's ignorance of her condition transforms her from something unknown into a familiar speechless being. Later he confirms, 'You're a dummy', sneering, 'A dummy and a big lump of a heifer that's good for nowt but milking' (24). The farmer dehumanises the Girl because of her muteness, explicitly implying that her lack of language makes her akin to an animal, thus her only value is how the product of her body can be commodified. Her animalisation is a reiteration of the aforementioned eighteenth and nineteenth-century notions that placed idiocy liminally between nature and culture.

This animalisation of the Girl's assumed 'idiocy' corresponds with the nineteenth and twentieth-century fascination with 'wild children', who Gonsalves explains 'had grown up without acculturation and thus were distinguished from innate or natural fools'.[474] The

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[474] Gonsalves, 'Reading Idiocy', p. 123

description of wild children is reflected in Sam George's examination of wolf-children, she writes:

> Wild children were the living embodiment of this threshold between ignorance and knowledge, animal and human, innocence and experience. They could demonstrate what had been lost in the civilising process and provide a link back to the past, to our ancestors[475]

Myers's lower class, rural children that live 'up top', like the Girl, occupy a threshold space between nature and culture. Their transgressive identities straddle George's proposed binaries of animal/human, ignorance/knowledge and innocence/experience. This symbolic fluidity is expressed by the physical fluidity of the Girl and the baby. Wordsworth claimed that poor villagers could not 'board out' their idiots, but Myers's lower-class dispose of their unwanted children by giving them to the church. St Mary's is 'full of the wild children of the fells now locked in tied down strapped and scratched and starved into shape' (7). The church's treatment of these children, whose only ailment is their poverty, replicates the asylum's healthcare administered to the allegedly insane (illustrated in the previous chapter) where unruly bodies and minds are forcibly made to conform. Their wildness is treated in the same way as the perceived unruliness of asylum inmates by using their bodies and physicality to alter their psychology; physically strapping them down, fixing them in place to remove their freedoms, etching at their flesh to alter the outward image they used to identify with their ecology and shrinking them down so they fit the model of 'civilisation'.

The Girl's form of idiocy is symptomatic of her sociocultural position and lack of access to education, as opposed to a biological impairment. When the Priest prepares the Poacher for their search, he says the Girl is 'one of the fold […] one of the blighted' (26). The

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[475] Sam George and Bill Hughes, *In the Company of Wolves: Werewolves, Wolves and Wild Children* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 56.

Priest suggestively links the Girl's situation to her impairment. He refers to her home as 'the fold' – a sheep pen – exaggerating Cumbrians' animality that he collapses with blight implying that to live there is to be diseased. This is reaffirmed by the Poacher's question; blighted 'like in potatoes?' This indexical link suggests the Girl is a product of her environment and that the landscape produces disease, so she is predestined to be abnormal or defective because of the place where she was born.

The Girl's sociocultural position as one of 'the fold' predisposes her to degeneracy, which is then theologically demonised like Wordsworth's devilishly imagined 'idiot boy'. This is confirmed by one of the Sisters who asserts, 'She's tapped […] Bad breeding is what has done it. Bad breeding and a families' devilish ways' (32). Her prejudice towards Cumbria's lower classes influences the Sister's diagnosis of the Girl's physical incapacity as punishment for the surrounding sin. Again, this eerily resonates with Dr Campbell's psychiatric notes from the previous chapter, who emphasised the link between behaviourally debased areas and higher reports of mental illness, which included muteness.

Sanctifying Silence

The demonisation of disability spans historical, medical and religious discourses, and has been ongoing for such a protracted period of time that disability discrimination is now ingrained and socially conditioned. As the Sister suggests, the Bible often portrays muteness as something inflicted by the devil that God can then cure, exemplified by Luke 11:14, 'he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake'.[476] When Betty, the idiot boy's mother, pleads with the doctor for the whereabouts of her son he dismissively states 'What, woman! should I know of him?' and closes the door on her (270).

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[476] *The King James Bible*. Project Gutenberg.

Despite Betty's insistence that 'You know him—him you often see', the doctor's disinterest is demonstrative of the medical ignorance and general social neglect of the boy's mental disability (266). These narratives conflate class, sin and immorality as causes of disability that make the individual responsible for their impairment, either as a punishment or predestination, which releases others from having to take any kind of medical or personal responsibility for their treatment or care.

The social construction of disability has the power to completely ostracise and alienate those who are socially determined 'different', yet the same principles can be applied to sanctify impairments, but only if it benefits the able-bodied. When the Girl was 'one of the fold' her silence was devilish, yet when she is a child of St Mary's her silence is spiritual, honest, pure, a blessing from God. The novel's changing representation of the Girl's speechlessness depends on her situational perspective and the causes of her disability are determined by her sociocultural setting. The novel's theological interpretation of the Girl's silence oscillates between devilish disability and heavenly virtue. These contradictions highlight the hypocrisy and ambiguity of St Mary's teachings that draw on conflicting scripture. After another of the Father's 'nocturnal awakenings', the Sisters tell the crying Girl that she should be grateful for being saved from her family, 'those un-Godly beasts' (48). Inverting Gere's aforesaid contemporary assertion of 'Faith in Nature', the Priest and the Sisters perceive nature as sacrilegious – for them, faith belongs in self-contained religious institutions separate from the natural. The Sisters' preaching is especially ironic given the sexual abuse that is perpetrated by the Priest, a religious man, yet the Girl's family are sinfully bestialised. The Sisters threateningly conclude their feigned consolation by asserting 'silence is virtuous' (48). In this context, the Girl's muteness is now favourable, even sanctified, as it assuages their culpability.

The Sisters' reinterpretation of silence as virtuous shifts their perception of the Girl's disability from demonic to divine will. The virtue of silence is scripturally supported; for

example, the oft-quoted 'let thy words be few' (Ecclesiastes 5:2). In *Manifesto for Silence*, Stuart Sim writes that 'Cultivating silence becomes the means of entering into a meditative state, a process most religions encourage to intensify individual experience of the spiritual.'[477] As such, Christian traditions encourage silence, incorporating it within their teachings, services and prayers, because this silent reflection is believed to bring the participant closer to God.[478] This is reaffirmed by the Sisters who insist that the Girl is 'the lucky one', because she is 'tapped' just as 'God wanted' (94). Now that her sociocultural position has changed from one of the fold to an inhabitant of St. Mary's, her disability is interpreted differently as God's infallible design and divine will. The Sisters clarify that 'father chose you because you were the quiet one' and the 'silent can always be trusted because God took their tongues and made them blessed […] gifted in discretion. Receptacles for The Truth' (94). Harrowingly, this suggests that her disability – a gift from God – has predisposed her to abuse because she is sacred when, fundamentally, it is because she is unable to speak of the crimes against her.

Wordsworth also alludes to theological symbolism, asserting that 'idiots' remind him of the scripture that states, '*their life is hidden with God*.'[479] Wordsworth elevates 'idiots' beyond the secular and assigns their silence a sacredness. He claims 'they are worshipped' in the East, 'a blessing' to families in the Alps and admires their lower class parents as exemplars of 'the great triumph of the human heart'.[480] This calculated combination of the East, the Alps and the poor collapses geographical and sociological tropes that evoke incivility, spiritualism and a natural wildness to which the poet's beloved 'idiot boy' belongs. In these marginal places

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[477] Stuart Sim, *Manifesto for Silence: Confronting the Politics and Culture of Noise* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 65
[478] Sim, *Manifesto for Silence*, p. 65
[479] Hayden, 'Wordsworth's Letter to John Wilson', p. 37
[480] Hayden, 'Wordsworth's Letter to John Wilson', p. 37

beyond the comprehension of Wordsworth's 'enlightened' readership, idiocy exceeds beyond human boundaries and is something to be venerated not feared.

Manipulating Marginality

The Priest's sexual exploitation of the Girl results in a disparagement of speech, rather than demonising her speechlessness. The Father chose the girl because she was 'the quiet one' unable to 'be guilty in the language of gossip or hearsay' (94). Her silence was once inextricably linked to ancestral sin, but it is now her saviour from sinful speech. Silence is praised for its opposition to verbal language, which is linked to bodily expression as opposed to the silence of spiritual reflection. This notion derives from passages such as Ecclesiastes 5:6 that declares 'Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin'. Linguistic expression is associated with fleshly desire, which Sim deduces is because of its 'carnal' connotations.[481] Spiritual silence is promoted as an expression of self-control and physical subjugation. This theology is adapted by those at St. Mary's to manipulate the Girl into maintaining her silence as a form of censorship. They then perpetuate the notion of her 'idiocy' to those outside of St. Mary's, like Hinckley, so that she becomes subject to the social discrimination of speech impairments and is diminished within the household.

The Priest adopts this theology, furthermore, in order to deflect judgement of his sinful actions on to the verbalisation of them. The Priest's purview of silence and speech is fully revealed when he reflects on his own inability to control what he says. Ironically, the typically tight-lipped Priest with 'lips so thin' that his mouth was just 'a gash in his face as if the flesh of his mouth had been pulled tight across his skull then slit with a knife' is incessantly talkative in his sleep (18). He admits, 'The only thing he feared was sleep-talking. If he spoke in his sleep he might reveal his secrets: might let those soul-locked demons of the subconscious out'

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[481] Sim, *Manifesto for Silence*, p. 65.

(91). Interestingly, the Priest intertwines religious imagery with psychological terminology, abridging spirituality and science as if to rationalise his behaviour whilst highlighting his contradictions. Ignorant of his hypocrisy, he admits to suppressing his own internal 'demons' whilst condemning Cumbrian locals for doing the same. He confesses that 'his interests in the esoteric and the marginal were one of the reasons the seminary had first appealed all those years ago', because his position elevated him above the 'commonplace' and so 'The community respects your silence' (92). This religious valorisation of silence created the conditions in which the Priest's abhorrent actions could be cultivated and kept hidden.

However, as the 'gash' of the Priest's mouth suggests, the thin veil of his suppression is easily bypassed during his nightly self-incriminations. He explains that 'Many a night his own words had awoken himself; garbled confessions of things that could never be spoken in daylight. Could never be shared' (92). This subverts the traditional role of Catholic confession, whereby the Priest is the reluctant and unrepentant Confessor. Hearing his 'desirous impulses' aloud, it 'shocked even him and it made them somehow tangible and real and confirmed that they not only existed within the darkest corners of his imagination but had sometimes been acted upon too' (92). To speak is to materialise his subconscious sins, both imagined and real. Yet, on waking, 'the conscious would take control and the subconscious of the somnambulist world would be kept in the solitude of his bedroom' (92). The Priest's privileged position allows him to compartmentalise his private and public persona that he maintains through the moderation of his silence and speech. His sleep-talking is a rebellion against the repression of his abhorrent actions, yet his secrets are still maintained by the silence of his victims.

The Priest's social and class privileges do not apply to the Girl whose silence is also a product of her muted position in the patriarchally governed world of the narrative where she is surrounded by oppressive and abusive men. As previously mentioned, the novel even suggests that her muteness condemned her to victimhood as her silence made her more desirable to the

Priest. Her linguistic imprisonment epitomises her objectification, which further handicaps her from voicing her own narrative and speaking out about the criminal acts that have been performed on her body. Fred Botting states, 'It is a critical commonplace to note how women in gothic fictions are represented as objects of pursuit, imprisonment, violation', which is a model of heroinism popularised by Lewis's *The Monk* (1796).[482] The Girl's entrapment is both a linguistic imprisonment and a social incarceration that allows able-bodied characters to manipulate her psychological condition.

Thus, *Beastings* demonstrates that social dis-abling is largely responsible for limiting the experiences of impaired identities to violent, abusive and oppressive ends. The novel imagines impairments as a product of place, environment and belief that subjugate marginal identities and bias able-bodied people. This is particularly evident in the rural setting of the novel that establishes a binary between the wild, blighted folk of the fells and the supposedly civilised townspeople. In the wilderness beyond society's influence, however, Myers narrates an alternative version of disability that enables a reconsideration of ecophobia, evil and villainy, and it is this I will turn to next.

Deconstructing Social Disability

Most representations of a rewilded future or the 'back-to-the-land' fantasies that Watson describes involve the destruction or destabilisation of a current way of being. The frequent integration of apocalyptic imagery into such texts – and one explanation as to why Kessock's analysis concentrated on apocalyptic narratives – is suggestive of the destruction of a society's current way of being in order to facilitate a new becoming. This balancing of recovery and loss reaffirms Morton's 'myth of progress', which refers to rewilding efforts that necessitate the

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[482] Fred Botting, *Gothic Romanced* (London: Routledge, 2008) p. 153.

removal of something in order to make space for the revival of something lost. *Beastings* is an alternative survival narrative, which challenges and subverts physical and psychological impairment stereotypes outlined by Kessock and Watson, as the characters negotiate a wild landscape made more perilous by the intrusions of civilisation.

In the wilderness of *Beastings*, the disabled characters are the most able and adapted for survival in the landscape. The Girl, especially, prefers the wilderness to civilisation, exemplified by her reaction to the bustling tourist town of Bowness: 'civilisation was here with all its laughter and appetites and desires and cruelties' (109). Instead, she pioneers the rewilding fantasy of *Beastings*, imagining an alternative existence beyond the suffering inflicted by her current society. She summons apocalyptic imagery to hail the welcome destruction of civilisation by nature. She imagines 'the jagged line of the mountains' awakening as the 'great scaly back of a dormant beast', praying that it would wipe out 'the town with a single brush of a limb' (8). The Girl appropriates the pejorative language used historically to make monsters of the mountains, utilising traditional imagery that has embedded the landscape with infinite terrors, and instead employs it to her advantage as her apocalyptic avenger. She imagines St Mary's crumbling into the river: 'the town would fall and the beasts from the farms would run free again' (8). The Girl's subversive dystopian vision is of a rewilded future that welcomes human extinction – the destruction of culture – in favour of free-roaming animals fortified by the natural landscape. She imagines endless floods and perpetual flames engulfing the town until all that is left are 'blackened puddles piles of stones and the smell of sulphur bodies everywhere and the mountains watching on' (9). The Girl's apocalypse is inspired by the Old Testament in which God threatens to punish his wayward followers; the blackened bodies serve as a fearful deterrent to others and an outward show of God's omnipotence. Rather than subjugating her into silence, the Girl utilises religious imagery that serves as a reminder of the vulnerability and impermanence of humankind and the endurance of nature. In *Beastings*, the

Girl displaces the omniscience of God with the watchful mountains. She supplants humans with nature, offering a non-anthropocentric vision of the future that the ecocritics earlier in this chapter struggle to imagine. Unlike Radcliffe's Skiddaw terror, the Girl welcomes necessary self-annihilation and actualisation of the sublime.

Furthermore, the Girl's apocalyptic vision witnesses the annihilation of all human existence by nature, not just selective bodies or the novel's heroic or empathetic characters. Often apocalyptic/dystopian literature, such as Kessock's examples of Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010) and Stephen King's *The Stand* (1978), prioritises able-bodied protagonists that suggestively imply the strongest, fittest and fastest have the best chance of survival and any other body is deemed a drain on the others' existence. These texts overlook that the 'survival of the fittest' is not necessarily the physically most able, but the being that best fits their environment. As Darwin writes in *On the Origin of Species*, 'it is the steady accumulation, through natural selection, of such differences' that advantageously determine those 'best adapted to survive'.[483] The being that can best adapt their behaviour and biology to the environment is the most likely to endure, which has little to do with them being able-bodied. Therefore, exclusivist narratives that focus solely on the physicality of certain bodies and the mental capacity of individuals have failed to grasp what determines the success of an individual's survival.

Beastings draws attention to the discrimination towards disabled bodies expressed by certain characters in the novel and challenges these assumptions by objectively representing nature as unbiased towards physical and cognitive abilities. Myers's heroine is a mute victim of sustained sexual abuse and domestic violence, who is determined 'simple' and 'tapped'. Despite her victimhood and underestimation, she has the strongest survival instinct of any

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[483] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 141.

character. Later, the Poacher surveys her rabbit trap, which 'looks a bit shoddy. Primitive. But it has worked. Whoevr's done it has scouted the area. Found a run. Got some knowledge. […] I thought you said this lass of yours was feeble minded' (170). Myers draws attention to the perceived limitations of the Girl based on her social disability determined by the Priest and the Poacher's admiration of her rudimentary survival skills. The novel's continual alignment of the Girl with nature reveals her innate, instinctual ability within her natural surroundings. The Poacher contends the Girl is 'some stupid lass who's not as stupid as she's letting on' (171). In this he alludes to the external projection of her stupidity, which does not reflect her actual capabilities. He later attests 'she's no dummy this one. If she was she'd be caught by now. She's got heart. I can tell that. And a head and all. Or the right instinct anyways' (182). The Poacher slightly revises his acknowledgement that she has 'a head' with his amendment that she has 'the right instinct' at least, showing that there is a differentiation between perceived social intelligence and the Girl's innate aptitude. As I earlier argued, the Girl's disability is a product of her sociocultural environment so in the wilderness her animalistic and wild child characteristics become advantageous qualities. She successfully evades detection from her pursuers, and it is eventually she who discovers the Priest and attacks him, which marks her transition from voiceless victim to vengeful assailant.

The Girl's saviour complex towards the baby and subsequent survival narrative indicates a departure from the male Gothic mode into the heroism of a Radcliffean Gothic novel. As Robert Miles observes, during her imprisonment in *The Italian* (1797), Ellena is restored by the sublime landscape; her view of the lofty mountains temporarily offers liberation from her physical incarceration via the expansion of her consciousness (100). Similarly, the Girl imagines she is a 'filter' for the landscape and as it 'passed through her […] it fed her. Energised her. Kept her going. In these fleeting moments she felt nature working as an ally and it gave her hope' (131). Like Ellena, the Girl is momentarily strengthened by the sublime

harking back towards a Wordsworthian benevolence; however, this is continually undermined by starvation, exposure and physical suffering that remind the reader of nature's impartiality. Every time the novel edges towards anthropocentric biases, such illusions are hastily dispelled. Nature is not prejudiced or discriminatory to disabled bodies nor is it to any particular body, which is why no one 'wins' in the novel or escapes unscathed. The Girl is the most well-adapted and instinctual character but what the novel crucially displays is that this does not make her invulnerable, which further demonstrates how nature is impersonal regardless of who the heroine might be.

Myers' reaffirmation of nature's impartiality challenges ecophobic rhetoric that perceives nature as fearful. *Beastings* demonstrates that nature poses no more threat to the Girl because of her muteness than it would any other person in the wild. Rather, it exposes that the real threat to her is a human society that objectifies her impairments and identifies her as either an unknowable outcast or alluringly alien because of her alleged defects. This is exemplified in the scene that alludes to the origination of the Girl's muteness after her family abandons her in a snowstorm on the moors and is later found 'disorientated and starving but silent' (78). The Girl recalls how the snow 'surrounded her' making her think 'the world had ended' and 'everyone had died and only she was left' (78). Like her monstrous mountains, the Girl personifies the weather that encloses her and grants it agency to erase all other human existence. In another reversion to apocalyptic imagery, she is the sole survivor. The Girl cried when she was eventually discovered, but not because she was 'lost but at being found' (78). The Girl was unusually comforted by her isolation, because an apocalypse was better than her actual reality. The Girl is fortified by this enclosure within nature, her existence reaffirmed by the erasure of the human world that has only ever caused her pain. This experience formulated the realisation that 'the outdoors nor the night and its infinite darkness held any fear for her. The night was not a foe' (78).

The natural world, so often made alien, unknown and fearful in ecoGothic narratives like *The Day of the Triffids* (1951) and *The Willows* (1907) is not associated here with fear or horror. *Wolf Border* and *Beastings* instead redirect attention to rural communities as the source of fear and sensationalism. Both authors demonstrate how rural horror is externally projected on to the community that appears alien to outsiders, whilst also commenting on how locals cement their Gothic identity by feeding into folklore and terror. Hall and Myers attempt to extract ecohorror from rural Gothic, highlighting distinctions between people, place and nonhuman aspects of rural ecologies. The fears that Gothic literature deftly navigates are now located in the intersection where human civilisation and the natural world collide. The Girl has experienced nature at its most extreme and was unharmed, unlike her experiences with other people. The narrative demonstrates that it is not nature, but humans and their narration of nature that produces fear. The Girl reaffirms this by asserting she was 'not afraid of ghosts or spectres; neither apparitions nor jack o' lanterns black dogs boggles wraiths or the green men that were said to stalk the woods and hollows and fells of the north country' (78). She acknowledges the diverse regional folklore that typically inspires terror yet denies this effect on her. Just as Rachel denies the protestor's desire for Gothic sensationalism in *Wolf Border*, the Girl also diminishes this form of terror in comparison to the horrors of rural realism. Instead, her Gothic is rooted in the 'people that made her fearful' (79). She distinguishes nature and fiction from the actual horrors of humanity, explaining that 'no animal nor fireside fairytale creation could harm her here […] but a person could' (79). She differentiates between imagined and material Gothic, whereby folkloric monstrosity has taken human form that can physically violate her in addition to her psychological scarring. She makes an important distinction that it is not night itself, but predatory people opportunistically using the 'concealment of night' that frightens her (79). She astutely observes how things are not innately Gothic, but it is how the mode is applied for terrifying purposes.

A Rewilded Future?

In Chapter One, I referred to Radcliffe's discovery of a parsonage bookshelf which, instead of the quintessentially English libraries of her Gothic heroines, she found political paraphernalia that shattered her perceptions of rural peace and disconnect. In *Wolf Border*, Rachel finds that Thomas's bookcase is replete with 'leather-bound antiques, hardbacks of contemporary novels […] illustrated wildlife encyclopaedias […] first-edition poetry volume: Auden, Eliot, Douglas. A large Audubon folio…a civil collection' (14). His literary preferences might have appeased Radcliffe with its unassuming countryside Englishness, a blend of modernity and antiquity, luxuriously bound literature or hardbacks that nod to his ecological interests. Unlike Radcliffe, Rachel had been expecting to find 'tomes of the occult? Fairy tales?'; she had imagined Thomas as 'a Gothic fetishist?' but instead his tastes reveal 'A Romanticist with a liking for Exotic pets' (14). Whilst *Beastings* is a modern revision of 'Idiot Boy', Thomas Pennington is a present-day Wordsworth, who attempts to pick up where the poet left off in terms of political activism, striving for 'environmental restoration in a country that desperately needs it' (33). Quoting from Wordsworth's 'Afterthought' – a contemplative poem juxtaposing eternal nature with human mortality – Thomas states ''the form remains, the function never dies'' (32-33). Whilst Wordsworth uses the river Duddon metaphorically to express his earthly legacy as a poet, Thomas's allusion positions the wolves as his immortal legacy. He revives Romantic discourse to facilitate the rewilding of wolves in England, so he can begin to fix the fractured state of its ecology. Rachel had assumed that, like Little Red's mother protesting at the gates, Thomas's fascination with wolves derives from Gothic allure. However, Thomas is aware of misleading mythologisation and states, 'Sometimes a country just needs to be presented with the fact of an animal, not the myth' (35).

Beastings and *Wolf Border* suggest that the Gothicisation of the natural landscape has resulted in a harmful distancing of humankind from the non-human environment. For Hall, this is expressed in the resistance to the wolves that reaffirms the irreversibility of ecological decline in a culture so antagonistically opposed to wildness. The novel undergoes a process of de-Gothicising in order to neutralise the fearful and fictional foundations of wolf mythology that maintains their 'monstrous' separation from humanity in reality. It suggests that the fundamental problem is not that Cumbria cannot accept wolves. Rather, the community's reluctance to leave their ingrained ecophobic beliefs behind – based on mythology and folklore – and to re-educate themselves on the interrelatedness of humans and animals, prevents the possibility of a future coexistence with nature in a more balanced way. *Beastings* redirects terror towards people as Gothic villains and undoes ecophobic rhetoric that imagines the environment as a 'landscape of fear', an image perpetuated by the materials in my previous chapters. Myers attempts to neutralise the anthropocentric constructions of nature as an anthropomorphic entity that has agency to act against or in favour of humanity. The novel removes these biases and in doing so also reconsiders the treatment of alterity in Gothic narratives. The Gothic properties of violence, terror and body horror demonstrate the vulnerability of all biological life. The apocalyptic imagery, however, offers a reassuring note of persistence – even though some material bodies will not survive, ecology will endure.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has made a case for a specifically Cumbrian Gothic, which is unique to its landscape and local identity whilst sharing similarities with other rural, regional Gothics. Thus, it engages with a wider discourse of narrating the provincial peripheries. My original intention when I started my research was to deconstruct the dogmatic romanticisation of Cumbria by highlighting the region's Gothic heritage. However, this Gothically coded experience of the landscape is shared by both Radcliffe and Wordsworth, which demonstrates that Romanticism itself is not at fault for misrepresenting Cumbria, but rather that it is the selective appropriation of Romantic literature by tourist narratives to idealise the landscape which is misrepresentative. Not only does my research challenge the literary hegemony of the Lake Poets, it acknowledges the nuances of Wordsworth's Romanticism that hinges on his complex relationship with nature influenced by beauty and fear – just as Radcliffe delights in the pleasures of terror – which is encapsulated by the sublimity of the Lakeland landscape. My characterisation of a Cumbrian Gothic also recognises the heterogeneity of this mode throughout the three key moments of its construction, which are defined in my three chapters respectively. The first chapter focuses on the cultural creation of Cumbria as a literary landscape that was constructed by both Radcliffe, the so-called Mother of Gothic, and Wordsworth, the Father of British Romanticism. They engage with and build on the pejorative discourse associated with mountainscapes, creating a culturally estimable experience influenced by Gothic terror and topography. The second chapter chronologically follows on from the first, exploring the Victorian revival of regional folklore that refashioned earlier oral traditions and made monsters of marginal identities. Lastly, the final chapter demonstrates how contemporary Cumbrian Gothic is self-aware of its diverse literary heritage and intentionally engages with Gothic narratives for ecological and environmental purposes to heighten social awareness.

The variety of literary forms that utilise Cumbrian Gothic in my thesis displays both the cultural diversity of the region and the pervasive presence of the mode. Analysing Alastair Fowler's commentary on the elasticity of genres, Spooner argues this enabled criticism to reposition Gothic as a fluid and flexible mode that 'could be discovered in texts – or media – which had hitherto been ignored'.[484] The expansion of Gothic criticism to include various forms and media combined with a regional focus has enabled me to consider canonical texts in a Gothic register alongside understudied or overlooked literature. This critical combination has facilitated alternative readings that would have otherwise remained unsurfaced, such as 'The Croglin Vampire' and my Gothic readings of Wordsworth alongside Radcliffe. My analysis of these texts constructs a Gothic aesthetic that is consolidated by intertextual allusions, topographical features and everyday lived experience to create an imaginative, experiential and embodied approach to place and reading the landscape.

In order to historicise what appeared to be a twenty-first-century insurgence of Gothic discourse in Cumbrian culture, I analysed early tourism, travel writing and folklore to establish the historical origins of the mode. For this purpose, I naturally disregarded the twentieth century; however, there is scope to explore the continuation of Gothic discourse during this period in future research. For example, Hugh Walpole, a distant relation of Horace Walpole, wrote *The Herries Chronicles* (1930-1), a novel replete with the everyday Gothic of a wild Cumberland that would repay further attention. I also selected contemporary texts based on their representation of the same topographical features that were foregrounded in the earlier materials for comparative study throughout the thesis. The woodlands, mountains and lakes of the Lake District and its Cumbrian peripheries offer commonality throughout my chapters, showing how different historical periods interact with and represent the same landscape in

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[484] *The Cambridge History of the Gothic: Volume 3: Gothic in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, ed. by Catherine Spooner and Dale Townshend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 7.

Cumbrian Gothic terms to various effects. In addition, I wanted to show how the commonly known features synonymous with Cumbrian beauty have been consistently conveyed in a Gothic register, demonstrating their diversity in both cultural representations and in lived experience. However, there is potential for rich discussion that lies in the less frequented coastal towns and the industrious coastline replete with military and nuclear associations.

The outer periphery of Cumbria is neighboured by the Irish Sea and the Solway Firth, living in close quarters with Celtic and Gaelic 'others' that already have pre-existing and established reputations in regional Gothic criticism. Such a landscape of otherness and industry starkly contrasts with the Romantic imagery of the Lake District. This is best exemplified in Jenn Ashworth's *Fell* (2016), which represents Grange-over-Sands and Lancashire's coastal seaside town of Morecambe during their heyday in the 1960s and their timeworn and faded present-day associations. Cumbria's Coastal Gothic is also present in the creative critical project *Cumbrian Alchemy*, a collaboration between artist Bryan McGovern Wilson and artist and academic Professor Robert Williams, which explores the nuclear energy of the western coast, its associative folklore and scientific figures. This has profound potential for Cumbrian coastal Gothic analysis that juxtaposes and converges science, reason, superstition, local lore and mythology.

This enmeshing of science, reason and superstition is rooted in my second chapter that argues how eighteenth-century folklore contributed to the construction of an everyday Gothic that is part of the local, lived experience of Cumbria, not just an imaginative or fictionalised aesthetic. I argued in 'The Croglin Vampire' case study that the story constructs a 'science of superstition' informed by both external Gothicisation and actual medical pathologisation of asylum inmates. The folkloric incarnation of a primordial monster enmeshes with Victorian Gothic and medical discourse, thus demonising the 'village lunatic'. Due to the region's geographical alienation from central governance, Garlands Asylum escaped the regulations and

bureaucracy that sought to standardise and improve the treatment of the mentally ill. Thus, the particularity of place contributed to the perversion of the escaped patient, turning him into a terrorising evil that threatened the non-native protagonists. Furthermore, my archival research evidenced the rampant rise of mental illness in the nineteenth century and, when paired with Dr. Campbell's inability to treat insanity, instilled the idea of Cumbria as a landscape of 'lunacy'. My analysis of this case study exaggerates the need for regional study in revealing alternative characterisations of Gothic monsters that are particular to their physical, historical and social landscapes.

The utilisation of Gothic in medical discourse exemplifies the pervasive presence of the mode that transcends literary forms, reiterated by its legal function in the case study of 'The Calgarth Skulls'. Whilst various folkloric versions of the tale exist, they all agree that it involved a suspected crime involving the upper-class Philipson family and their lower-class tenants, which led to the conversion of the poor, old people into the Gothically revenant skulls that haunt Calgarth Hall. Their Gothicisation, I argue, is their punishment (as perceived by non-native authors) or their triumph, whereby they arrogate their Gothic identity to access power in death that they were denied in life. By this account, the terrorising skulls are re-narrativised as victims of social injustice who are failed by prejudicial legal and social systems. Instead, they deliver their own retribution by haunting the Philipson family as an immortal reminder of their abuse, whilst also cursing them with their eventual downfall. In this analysis, I demonstrate how Gothic can be used constructively as a political and social tool. Jimmy Packham explores the retributory and reparative function of the mode in *Gothic Utterances* (2021), re-evaluating how Gothic voices are not just designed to communicate fear but can have ethical purposes. Some of these voices are reaching out for 'connections, seeking an interlocutor and seeking

thereby to be heard and understood'.[485] This thesis has shown how different kinds of Gothic exist and are engaged with even in the early examples of Cumbrian Gothic. The activism, awareness and heroic atavism of 'The Calgarth Skulls' is prototypical of the contemporary Cumbrian ecoGothic conservation and literature I analyse in the final chapter.

The historical development of Cumbrian Gothic throughout this thesis charts a trajectory of terror initiated by personal fears correlating to Romantic subjectivity in sublime spaces, expanding to the demonisation of local minority figures into monstrous others and lastly, the fear for the future for both human and nonhuman subjects. Gothic, 'it is widely acknowledged', writes Spooner, 'is the product of modernity, intimately bound up with the way in which a culture progressing to an uncertain future regards its own past. But what happens after modernity?'[486] With this she aptly summarises the overarching theme of *Beastings* and *Wolf Border*, which struggle with the longevity of both the Lake District and global ecologies effected by ecophobia and environmental blindness. The Cumbrian EcoGothic literature I have studied is preoccupied with the Anthropocene and navigating the tumultuous relationship between humans and natural ecology in anticipation of a post-Anthropocene existence. Yet, some critics, scientists and conservationists are already contemplating such a future. For example, in Maggie J. Watson and David M. Watson's research they cite scientific evidence that predicts humanity's survival for the next 5100 years at least, inextricably linking a 'habitable planet' with human existence, before introducing their forecast of a life in the post-Anthropocene.[487] Discussing how traces of biological life can exist even in what we would consider the most inhospitable environments, like Chernobyl, their research optimistically

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[485] Jimmy Packham, *Gothic Utterance: Voice, Speech and Death in the American Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2021) p. 4.

[486] Spooner, *Cambridge History of the Gothic*, p. 2.

[487] Maggie J. Watson and David M. Watson, 'Post-Anthropocene Conservation', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* (Amsterdam), vol. 35, no. 1, 2020, p. 1.

projects, 'No matter how humanity ends or how much we degrade the planet during our demise, life on Earth will continue.'[488] Post-Anthropocene predictions suggest that human extinction is inevitable but other species will persist, which increases anxiety about human survival and the prevalence of non-human species despite their subjugation by humanity.

Gothically inflected Anthropocene narratives are often ecocatastrophic, fearing the decline of nature. Meanwhile, post-Anthropocene criticism once again draws attention to anthropocentric constructions of ecophobia that typically vilify nature, as it shows the persistence of nonhuman life. Rarely in apocalyptic narratives does nothing survive, it is just that humans no longer preside. As Elizabeth Parker distinguishes in *The Forest and the EcoGothic: The Deep Dark Woods in the Popular Imagination*, ecoGothic can scrutinise 'the boundaries of ecophobia', interrogating 'the degree to which our fears of *N*ature encompass fears of human *n*ature'.[489] Parker deconstructs the myth of the primeval woods as portents of human downfall and reveals how perceptions of evil forests are often entangled with manmade malice. My first chapter demonstrates how Radcliffe's and Wordsworth's sublime encounters ultimately provided pleasurable experiences or opportunities for personal development. The dangerous elements of the natural landscape were heightened by intertextual allusions, comparison with altitudinous mountainscapes and emotional affect. The second chapter made monsters of local people that were inextricably linked to the landscape, making topography and terror synonymous with the production of Gothic villains. However, the local account of the 'Calgarth Skulls' and my archival research on 'lunacy' in Cumbria relating to 'The Croglin Vampire' revealed that people were responsible for pathologizing marginal figures, making monsters of 'madness' and the social sub-classes. My final chapter makes explicit the human role in their suffering and exacerbating anxiety over future ecologies. *Wolf Border* maintains

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[488] Watson and Watson, 'Post-Anthropocene Conservation', p. 2.
[489] Elizabeth Parker, *The Forest and the EcoGothic* (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2020), p. 214. [Emphasis in the original]

optimistic in the restoration of wolves in Scotland in spite of England's inhospitality. *Beastings*, however, is nihilistic and ambivalent towards victors in the novel; the suffering of nature and humans appears unavoidable, so the narrative repeatedly welcomes an apocalypse or an escape to another world conveyed by the Girl's island fantasy.

Regional Gothic writing, I argue, can reclaim provincial identities from nationalising narratives and recover aspects that tend to be displaced on to foreign settings. My second chapter especially demonstrates the unique personality of Cumbrian Gothic, its indigenous others and how local authors can be inspired and empowered by their regional Gothicisation. However, the strategic de-gothicisation of *Wolf Border* implies that the local inhabitants within the novel (and perhaps as a wider social commentary on rewilding projects) are only interested in Gothic folklore, fairytale and mythology and not the everyday Gothic of the region's heritage. Rachel dreams of a rewilded future, hoping 'that one day the whole country will re-wild, whatever its new manmade divisions created at the ballot box. She would like to believe there will be a place, again, where the streetlights end and wilderness begins. The wolf border' (234). Her experience with similar projects and public resistance influences her realistic imposition of a border between the human and non-human world. There is an element of informed acceptance that prevents her romanticising a future of ecological harmony, echoing Andrew Smith and William Hughes's argument in *EcoGothic* that we are 'fragmented' from our natural, non-human environment.[490] Regardless of the division of 'us' and 'them' over there, Rachel desires the return of a Gothic aesthetic, a reversion to the wilderness, a reinstalment of the primeval forest she laments being felled, a reinvention of barbarism and the anthropological origins of Gothic culture. Although Rachel seeks to de-Gothicise wolves in

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[490] Smith and Hughes, *EcoGothic*, p. 2.

one sense, their successful escape reinstates them as a symbol of Gothic hope. As Bernice Murphy states of American Rural Gothic, *Wolf Border* returns to 'where it all began'.[491]

Radcliffe transplanted international and fictional Gothic into Cumbria alongside enchanted and sublime spaces during her construction of a Cumbrian Gothic chronotope, whereas Hall displaces this Gothic potential beyond the border into Scotland. By rewriting a successful Scottish referendum, she imagines an alternative reality of a devolved Scotland that reclaims its Gaelic identity from the nationalising homogeneity of Britain. Hall's novel suggests our future existence depends on the resurrection of a particular past, reversing the environmental damage that has been caused by centuries of anthropocentrism. Despite England's inhospitality, Hall suggests the fracturing of a devolved society opens up wild spaces for a future that embraces the past. The novel's conclusion redraws the wolf border, which depicts England as the lamp-lit civilisation and Scotland as the wolf's domain. Like post-Anthropocene criticism I cited earlier, Hall depicts the wolves as an emblem of persistence escaping human civilisation. However, she implicitly denies the possibility for Gothic settings in England, whilst suggesting they can exist elsewhere.

When I wrote my introduction, the world was struggling in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, at the time of writing my conclusion, lockdown fears are circulating again in connection with the Omicron variant, which is producing a seemingly endless cycle of contagion, quarantine and catastrophising. This atmosphere of anxiety for the future is conducive to Gothic narrativisation. In Cumbria, I have experienced first-hand how exclusion, derision and divisive rhetoric has increased within the region – as if devolving and shutting itself off from the national body is an act of self-preservation – and how nature especially has become another casualty of coronavirus and further environmental damage. My social media feeds are currently filled with petitions to hold United Utilities accountable for wastewater

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[491] Bernice Murphy, *Rural Gothic*, p. 2.

pollution that threatens to leave Windermere 'ecologically dead'.[492] For a region renowned for its synonymity with nature, the notion of becoming an environmental wasteland is harrowing. Whilst sewage is overflowing into the region's iconic waterways, the latest storms (Arwen and Barra) have caused infrastructural and ecological devastation, ripping trees out of the ground and cutting off power to most Cumbrian residents; my village had no electricity or mobile telephone signal for six days whilst temperatures plummeted to freezing. Faced with such increasing environmental and wellbeing issues, it is unsurprising that my research has been bookended by legitimate apocalyptic angst and the dread of worlds (financially, medically, socially, ecologically) imploding.

The Covid-19 quarantines, imposed self-isolations and regional tiers have brought close attention and acute awareness to our surroundings, confronting us with the immediate proximity of where we live, the spaces we occupy and the place we take up within it. This has had a decentralising effect as the national body was bureaucratically broken up into zones of infection and hospitalisation rates. This shift that recognises the regional differences of England – not forgetting the nations of Wales and Scotland who autonomously governed the health of their countries – suggests that in times of crisis a more personalised approach to place is necessary for managing large-scale disaster. Furthermore, such schisms were necessary as the experience of Covid-19 differed for people dependent upon their habitat. In Scotland, the local quarantines were dictated by postcode which meant that those living in the Highlands had ample roaming freedom whilst those living in Edinburgh were confined to the city. Unlike in lots of urban environments and what must have felt like a torturous incarceration for those confined to high-rise flats, most Cumbrians were fortunate to have access to an abundance of outside space, which for many has fostered a deep gratitude for where we live. However, this

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[492] BBC News, *Windermere sewage leaves water in 'very dire state'* (14 October 2021) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-58909413> [accessed 17 October 2021].

increased consciousness has drawn attention to the frequency of environmental and health crises that are rising at a terrifying rate on a local, national and global level. As portrayed in my introduction, this awareness has heightened self-defensiveness as some locals harbour a xenophobic resentment towards outsiders carrying disease with them, burdening resources and showing a careless disregard for the Cumbrian ecology.

However, as I have argued in my thesis, Gothic can be used constructively, even positively, in instances that facilitate a progressive propulsion toward ecological enlightenment. On Saturday 12th November 2021, the South Lakes Extinction Rebellion Group organised a funeral procession up Orrest Head named 'The Mourning after COP 26'. Their funeral motif was echoed in the group's promotional material that advertised 'BLACK is the

'South Lakes Extinction Rebellion take to Orrest Head after COP26', *Westmorland Gazette* (18th November 2021)

colour of the day! But add a small splash of RED to your outfit'.[493] The silent procession of protestors in their mourning attire, joined by the 'Red Rebel Brigade' – an international activist troupe renowned for their red robes and mime makeup – carried a coffin filled with their written lamentations concerning the fallout from the conference. The iconography of death signified by the macabre funeral procession is amplified by the acoustics of absence. A silent march is dignified and peaceful, yet collective silence is also sombre and suggestive, in this instance, of the participants' political voicelessness. The solemn soundscape reverberates the dead silence of their unheard and unanswered environmental epitaphs encased within the coffin. However, the suppression of human voices in the landscape also provides an opportunity to showcase the sounds of nature, giving the non-human world the space to speak in the silence provided by the muted march. The protest layers elements of Gothic stylisation, both visual and auditory, to create an experiential, imaginative and sensory theatricalisation of their political frustrations. The group proclaimed the march would be 'filmed professionally' and 'media will be present', highlighting the performativity of their activism and the importance of exposure for public engagement and outreach.[494] Everything about their dramatization is designed to be seen. The group's conscious deployment of a Gothic aesthetic into polemical performance demonstrates how the mode has become a recognisable tool to shock audiences, hold attention and raise social awareness. Furthermore, the optics of the procession visually align with the black and red book covers of *Beastings* and *Wolf Border,* whilst their strategic silence is an additional link to Myers and Gothic theatre in general.[495]

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[493] Extinction Rebellion South Lakes XRSL, https://www.facebook.com/groups/1935410399885898/permalink/444068715686708/ (8 November 2021).

[494] Extinction Rebellion South Lakes XRSL, https://www.facebook.com/groups/1935410399885898/permalink/444068715686708/ (8 November 2021).

[495] See Diego Saglia, '"I Almost Dread to Tell You": Gothic Melodrama and the Aesthetic of Silence in Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery*', *Gothic Studies*, 14.1 (2012), pp. 93–107.

The central 'Red Rebel' pictured above resembles the incarnation of pestilence in Edgar Allan Poe's short story 'The Masque of the Red Death' (1842), which is especially pertinent at present considering its topical plague narrative. When an infectious disease obliterates half of Prince Prospero's kingdom, he selectively safeguards his community in a quarantined palace. Seemingly invulnerable, they partake in carnivalesque revelry with entertainment, food and wine culminating in a masquerade; not dissimilar to the discovery of 10 Downing Street's various social gatherings in Spring 2020 whilst the general public were subject to harsher Covid-19 restrictions. As the evening develops, a foreboding feeling spreads after every chime of the hour when 'for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the clock.'[496] Like our present-day protestors, Poe strategically uses selective silence (suppressing the human) to unsettlingly spread unease, creating a pregnable void so that when the twelfth bell rings it alerts the guests to the presence of a 'masked figure' prompting 'terror…horror [and] disgust'.[497] This conventional Gothic affect is roused by the figure's visual appearance: 'tall and gaunt […] shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave', resembling 'the countenance of a stiffened corpse' and 'dabbled in blood […] besprinkled with the scarlet horror' forming the 'Red Death' incarnate.[498] Clad in the accoutrements of death, the 'spectral image' proceeds with 'slow and solemn movement' like the macabre march of the Cumbrian funeral.[499] The Cumbrian march and Poe's story share a similar aesthetic that utilises death and funeral imagery as emotive iconography to alarm audiences with very little context required to immediately summon an atmosphere of foreboding and fear. Poe's 'Red Death' infiltrates Prince Prospero's privileged party indiscriminately killing each person, delivering retribution

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[496] Edgar Allen Poe, *The Masque of the Red Death and Other Stories* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 73.
[497] Poe, *Red Death*, p. 74.
[498] Poe, *Red Death*, p. 74.
[499] Poe, *Red Death*, p. 75.

to royal hubris. Poe's plague is characterised by blood, which is 'its Avatar and its seal: the redness and the horror of blood' that is embodied by the 'Red Death'.[500] However, while this personification of pestilence resonates with the Red Rebel Brigade (RRB) in both name and colour symbolism, the manifesto on the RRB website declares their redness stands as a symbol of 'common blood' emblematic not of death but of the shared life force between species.[501]

The RRB respond to political unfairness and social injustice, but their presence is ultimately positive. Their website states they represent 'unity', they 'empathise with their surroundings' and 'illuminate the magic realm beneath the surface of all things and we invite people to enter in'.[502] Their values of ecological holism and harmony are blended with a fantastical conception of reality. On the surface, the outward appearance of the protest is unequivocally, conventionally Gothic, just as the book covers of *Beastings* and *Wolf Border* imply with their stylised surfaces, yet their message is a contemporary refashioning of the application of such convention. Emma McEvoy analyses the intersection between culture and charity in 'Boo to Taboo: Cultural Tourism in the Gothic', observing how 'certain kinds of Gothic' can be used 'by the great and good', which expands the mode outwards into 'the wider public psyche'.[503] The RRB's manifesto reaffirms this message by proclaiming 'we are forgiving […] sympathetic and humble, compassionate and understanding', aligning their activism with peaceful and positive intention. This is reiterated by the protest organisers (South Lakes Extinction Rebellion Group), who assert, 'This will be a family-friendly, theatrical event, with a positive hopeful message at the end.'[504] Such messaging appears incongruous

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[500] Poe, *Red Death*, p. 69.

[501] Red Rebel Brigade (2022) <http://redrebelbrigade.com> [accessed 11 December 2021].

[502] Red Rebel Brigade, <http://redrebelbrigade.com>.

[503] Emma McEvoy, '"Boo" to Taboo: Cultural Tourism and the Gothic', *Gothic Tourism*, p. 183.

[504] Extinction Rebellion South Lakes XRSL, https://www.facebook.com/groups/1935410399885898/permalink/4444068715686708/.

with the Gothic mode; however, McEvoy observes that the Norfolk and Norwich festival also exemplifies such 'family-friendly Gothic' reiterated in their publicity that focuses on 'the language of positivity, growth and development' (184).

These events are part of a cultural reorientation that is steering Gothic imagery into mainstream arts and culture in a more inclusive and accessible format, as Spooner considers in *Post-Millennial Gothic* when she discusses the use of the mode in the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies in 2012.[505] In McEvoy's analysis, 'family-friendly' performance can be Gothic in content and imagery, but it does away with Gothic affect, downgrading the 'fear factor' so it 'can signify fear without being frightening' (187). This inclusive appropriation of Gothic imagery is not a derogatory, watering down of the mode, but a means of unifying communities towards a common purpose, which in this case is to raise awareness of the failures of COP26 and environmental inaction more generally. The protest stages a funeral for our future wherein everyone is impacted by the shared experience of ecological trauma.

Furthermore, McEvoy describes how the Norfolk and Norwich festival's 'outdoor promenade shows […] make the town itself perform' by gravitating 'towards cathedrals […] through narrow lanes, playing with the sense of the town's temporality and its topography'.[506] The protest utilises similar perambulatory involvement to mobilise the public, physically and ideologically, setting nature itself as the scene. Orrest Head was the first fell that Alfred Wainwright walked in 1930, thus igniting the inspiration for his *Pictorial Guides* that further popularised the Lake District as a landscape synonymous with nature and leisure, encouraging generations to come to experience the outdoors and engage with their environment. This fell is a significant landmark for modern tourism, so to stage a protest that campaigns for the preservation and protection of such landscapes in this location is especially impactful. Their

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[505] Spooner, *Post-Millennial Gothic*.
[506] Emma McEvoy, '"Boo" to Taboo', p. 184.

funeral is a prophetic visualisation of an imagined future without nature, whilst simultaneously juxtaposing the fictive place and time with the reality of their physical location that represents what is at stake. Their Gothic performance enacts the fear and terror of ecological destruction if their voices remain unheard. However, their theatricalisation ensures visibility and suggests a reparatory and hopeful use of the mode that can protect the landscape they are campaigning alongside.

As the Orrest Head protest demonstrates, environmental activism's use of Gothic is multivalent. Whilst its messaging is reparative, the mode has the capabilities to illuminate the fear and disastrous reality of ecological crises. In 'Gothic in an Age of Environmental Crisis', Sara Crosby alludes to Greta Thunberg's address at the COP24 conference and her harrowing plea, 'You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes.'[507] Thunberg's emotive address implored people to be scared and to acknowledge the terror of environmental decline, invoking the rhetoric of Gothic affect, showing how the mode can be used to critique environmental inaction and existing discourses that have less impact. Crosby concludes that the 'current environmental crisis, to put it simply, might be the most extensive and terrible act of child abuse ever committed.'[508] Samantha Walton corroborates the damaging effect of environmental absence for youths in her book *Everybody Needs Beauty: In Search of the Nature Cure* (2021)*,* which identifies ecological anxiety as a recognised mental health issue in young people.[509] Both Crosby and Thunberg use physicality and violence to make environmental decline tangible, explicit and impactful. Their powerful language demands attention, like my application of 'social death' in the Calgarth

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[507] Sara Crosby, 'Gothic in an Age of Environmental Crisis' cited in *The Cambridge History of the Gothic,* p. 457.
[508] Crosby, 'Gothic in an Age of Environmental Crisis', p. 457.
[509] Samantha Walton, *Everybody Needs Beauty: In Search of the Nature Cure* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).

Skulls which materialises unresolved social justice. Thunberg also addresses the dismissive tendencies of politicians and the wider public who project ecocatastrophe into the future. Rather than deferring apocalyptic angst onto future generations, the reframing of environmental damage as child abuse – unavoidably visualised by Thunberg as a victim herself – forces audiences to bear witness to such injustice, consider their own culpability in the perpetration of abuse and address these issues in the present.

Beastings makes the violence, terror and anxieties of EcoGothic explicit in the agonising suffering of the Girl and baby who escape one inhospitable environment for another, reaffirming Thunberg's classification of environmental damage as child abuse. The empty rabbit traps and the Girl's stone sucking are barren symbols of their bleak future, which comes to a horrifying head when the baby is burnt alive and the half-blind, now mutilated Girl (who suspects she is pregnant after she was raped in the bunkhouse) is perennially condemned to suffer in what Crosby deems the 'bad *oikos'*, the maladaptive and macabre world of *Beastings*.[510] Cumbrian Gothic literature assists in the communication of the violence and horror of environmental crises, whilst Cumbrian Gothic culture's 'family-friendly' protest facilitates the participation of children in the safeguarding of their future, rather than positioning them as passive victims.

Wordsworth's and Radcliffe's anxieties centred on the Self in nature; folklore manifested monsters of local people; contemporary Gothic Cumbria, both socially and culturally, conveys fears of the death of nature. My contemporary Cumbrian Gothic texts still villainise human characters like folklore does, but our empathy crucially lies with nonhuman existence. In *Beastings* when a barn catches fire burning alive the animals inside, the helpers that finally arrive drop their useless buckets as they look upon 'this field of death sculptures – this open sepulchre on the smouldering hillside' (125). Myers materialises the fears of the

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[510] Crosby, 'Gothic in an Age of Environmental Crisis', p. 447.

Orrest Head protest, staging the funeral of nature and the futility of belated human intervention as the starving children passively witness its destruction. This ecocatastrophe is laid plain by one 'gnarled' horse that resembled 'an exploded safe' demonstrating both its economic exploitation and unproductivity as a human commodity that now serves no purpose and has no value (125). The animals' agricultural imprisonment ultimately delivered their death sentence, which is masterfully executed by Myers's evocative, visceral and discomfiting language.

Similarly, in *Wolf Border* a farmer fatally shoots a wolf pup, upholding agricultural traditions and the preservation of a particular animal deemed more valuable to humans than the rogue wolf. In my introduction I quoted Kelly Hurley who contended that whilst 'social transgressions may change from one era to another […] the Gothic still shows a fascination with extreme behaviours and derangements of human subjectivity'. My historical analysis of regional Gothic development demonstrates how these social transgressions and terrors bleed into the next generation, participating in the Gothic trappings of inherited trauma and sin. Contemporary Cumbrian Gothic shows how the sustained attention to 'extreme behaviours and derangements of human subjectivity' has culminated in ecological concerns for both human and nonhuman life. The horses that carried Radcliffe along the crumbling precipices of Skiddaw to her death-defying experience, which would become an oft-quoted sublime summit narrative in that period, are now just 'cooked meat. Charred and blackened. Great lumps of it' littering the landscape of *Beastings* (126).

Finally, in focusing on regional Gothic in response to the Romantic hegemony of the Lake District, my research does not suggest that Gothic is more prevalent or important, but rather to open up cultural and critical discussions beyond what is popular and to offer alternative representations of the region that recognise its diversity. By defining something, there is an element of essentialising in order to establish a pattern. My chapters have illustrated a sense of constancy represented by the centrality of the landscape and its topography, yet, the

type of Gothics, their application and impact vary. The future of Cumbrian Gothic endures in contemporary fiction and culture, which is inferred by the ending of *Wolf Border* that closes with an opening as the wolves re-enter their primordial home ushered in by the Gaelic welcome; 'fàilte' (432). I interpret Hall's final message as a nod to the reparatory potential of Gothic that welcomes a return of the past, bringing with it a rewilded future that relies on regional difference and provincial personality.

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