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“The Syren-song of Woe:” Phantoms of History and the Gothic Poetry of Anne Bannerman (?1765-1829)

A Scottish Poetess and the Examination of the Imperial Union

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the Gothic aesthetic as a means to render visible a “vexed site” of containment through which alternative histories can emerge in terms of identity-building, projection and subterfuge. In so doing, I implicate the Gothic in a social reality and construe it as a discursive site of meaning making that actively interprets the past and questions the Enlightenment trajectory of modernisation and the advent of the British Empire. To this end, I examine the poetry of Anne Bannerman (?1765-1829), a virtually unknown Scottish poet from Edinburgh. The choice of Bannerman fits into two strands of literary criticism that revaluate the canon, namely the revaluation of Scottish Romanticism and the increasing focus on female authors of this period. I take up the notion of fancy, an imaginative faculty, and the haunting spectre to examine how her poetry engages with the question of history and modernity. This study will contribute to a more critical understanding of the relation between Scottish Gothic and the Enlightenment and how a female voice interrogates the process of modernisation and the construction of the British Empire.

Het opzet van deze thesis is om de *Gothic* te construeren als een esthetiek die toelaat om een gebrekkig bedwang zichtbaar te maken en alternatieve geschiedenissen naar voor laat komen in termen van identiteitsformatie, projectie en toevlucht. Hierdoor wordt de *Gothic* geplaatst binnen een sociale realiteit; de esthetiek kan ingezet worden als een discursieve praktijk die het verleden actief interpreteert; het Verlichtingsproces van modernisering en de opgang van het Britse Rijk bevraagt. De focus ligt op de gedichten van Anne Bannerman (?1765-1829), een quasi onbekende dichteres uit Edinburgh. De keuze van deze auteur past binnen twee lijnen van onderzoek die de canon bevragen, namelijk de herwaardering van de Schotse Romantiek en de groeiende focus op vrouwelijke auteurs van deze periode. De notie van *fancy,* een vorm van verbeeldingskracht, en de dwalende geest worden gebruikt om te analyseren hoe haar poëzie het verleden vormgeeft om het moderniseringsproces te bevragen. Deze studie zal bijdragen tot een kritischer begrip van de relatie tussen de Schotse *Gothic* en de Verlichting en hoe een vrouwelijke stem het proces van modernisering en de constructie van het Britse Rijk bevraagt.

Verklaring i.v.m. auteursrecht

De auteur en de promotoren geven de toelating deze studie als geheel voor consultatie beschikbaar te stellen voor persoonlijk gebruik. Elk ander gebruik valt onder de beperkingen van het auteursrecht, in het bijzonder met betrekking tot de verplichting de bron uitdrukkelijk te vermelden bij het aanhalen van gegevens uit deze studie.

Het auteursrecht betreffende de gegevens vermeld in deze studie berust bij de promotor(en). Het auteursrecht beperkt zich tot de wijze waarop de auteur de problematiek van het onderwerp heeft benaderd en neergeschreven. De auteur respecteert daarbij het oorspronkelijke auteursrecht van de individueel geciteerde studies en eventueel bijhorende documentatie, zoals tabellen en figuren.

But still in Fancy's ear
Its first unmeasur'd melodies resound!
Blending with terrors wild, and legends drear,
The charmed minstrelsy of mystic sound,
That rous'd, embodied, to the eye of Fear,
The unearthly habitants of faery ground.[1]

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[1] Anne Bannerman, "Prologue," in *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry*, (London: Vernon and Hood, 1802) ll. 9-14.

Preface

When I embarked on this journey, I had not entertained the idea of writing about a female poet from the Romantic Era. I always thought of writing about medieval romances, as magic and fairies have always drawn me in. For my BA-paper, I had the opportunity to look more closely at the representation of the *guivre,* a woman turned snake, in a French medieval romance, but I did not proceed with this avenue of research. I wanted to study English literature, as the country and culture have always appealed to me. Sadly, the courses I had over the years have not provided me with a firm enough grasp of medieval literature and language to tackle such a subject. Luckily, a course on Romantic and Gothic literature from dr. Koenraad Claes introduced me to a period that held a wisp of the supernatural and a bit of Scotland. I am grateful for the enthusiasm of dr. Claes and his excitement about Scottish literature and the Jacobites that set me on this path. I also want to thank dr. Kwinten Van De Walle for his passion for English literature and the love for eighteenth-century literature he conveyed during the seminars of EL I and II. I also want to thank prof. dr. Steven Vanden Broecke for the support and the valuable insights he offered during the multiple conversations about my research project.

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My venture into historical literature and linguistics has not always been smooth sailing. Fortunately, I had a fantastic and supportive crew to help me make the passage and who made the plunge less daunting.

I want to thank my parents and sister for their seemingly endless patience, support and stability in trying times. Mama, thank you for your unwavering love and strength. Stephan, for finding humour when I could no longer discern it. Gaia, for being my trailblazer.

My wonderful Queens, thank you for your friendship these past years. To Merel, for the promise of mountains and the echoes of wayward voices. To Sofie, for the supportive pink clouds and the wandering tide rolling in. To Marieke, for the rainbows shining in the sky and the melodic hums in the distance. To Rosalie, for the kind words and steadiness in the fields of green. To Anouk, for the brightness and joyful energy in the fading day. Raise a glass to freedom.

To Sarah and Ieme, for the decade(s), the pavement conversations, the bike ride to Destelbergen and the adventures to come.

To Tatjana, for the company, once more with feeling.

To Elena, for the ever-gentle presence of my favourite Parisian flower.

To Pauline, for the cooperation, the conversations, the companionship and the fits of giggles.

To the Historische Taal- en Letterkunde for bringing together a band of manuscript lovers with a passion for the past. It's been a wonderful two years. To Antoine, for the walks and talks. To Luna, for the shared load. To Anna, for introducing me to that other university city.

To the Blandijn, for the seven years of welcoming me in your halls, for the learning, for the people I've met along the way and the exchanges in the coffee corner. I had hoped for a better ending. May we meet again.

To the faculty library staff, thank you for the service in these dire times. It is always comforting to know that books are still within reach.

Finally, to oma, for the unquestionable support of every balloon I let up and for every path I considered taking. I wish you could have walked with me to the end of this one. I miss you.

Gent, August 2020.

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Introduction: Iconoclastic Fury and Polyphonic Voices

Modern cities are lined with monuments and statues, *lieux de mémoire,* and sites of commemoration that function as material manifestations of collective memory. Today, however, many of these monuments have come under scrutiny. In the wake of anti-racist protests, statues have been forcibly removed from their pedestals. In Bristol, for instance, the bronze likeness of Edward Colston, a slave trader, was taken down by protesters and thrown in the harbour.[2] Closer to home, debates around the statues of Leopold II are flaring up once again. The discussion has been continuing for the past twenty years, but due to the worldwide Black Lives Matter protests, it has gained new momentum. Under pressure from bottom-up initiatives and petitions, KU Leuven removed its bust of the former Belgian king and my hometown, Ghent, has decided to remove the statue of the controversial king.[3] Testaments of a "problematically ruined memory," the debate about the removal of such monuments has bearing on what is worth remembering and honouring.[4] The destabilisation of the pedestals of such figures raises the question of the function of monuments and their significance "in the general chain of monumentalization that constitutes the memory of the nation-state."[5] If these statues are taken away – or alternatively placed within a museum context – other, suppressed aspects of history can emerge.

The contested space of the monuments suggests a more general concern with the writing of history and the construction of national memory. The tendency in British history to narrate the historical trajectory as an almost teleological account that leads to the ascendancy of the British Empire – the so-called Whiggish view – obscures and suppresses alternative voices.[6] In the wake of the Act of

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[2] Nora McGreevy, "British Protesters Throw Statue of Slave Trader Into Bristol Harbor,"https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/protesters-throw-slavers-statue-bristol-harbor-make-waves-across-britain-180975060/ (accessed June 19, 2020).

[3] Marc Reynebeau, "Sokkel onder Leopold II Begint te Wankelen," https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20200610_04987706 (accessed June 19, 2020).

[4] David Punter, "Scottish and Irish Gothic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, edited by Jerrold E. Hogle, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 106.

[5] Punter, "Scottish and Irish Gothic," 106.

[6] An examplary and influential account of this type of historiography is Herbert Butterfield's *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931). He uses this term to describe "the tendency in many historians to write on the side of Protestants and Whigs, to praise revolutions provided they have been successful, to emphasise certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present." Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History,* (New York (NY): W.W. Norton & Company, 1965) v.

Union of 1707, when Scotland officially loses its sovereignty, the region's history is consistently recast within the Whiggish mould. The construction of one dominant version, however, does not necessarily silence dissonant voices. It displaces counter-narratives to the realm of imaginative literature. The Gothic aesthetic, with its recourse to the uncanny and its distorted dealings with history, creates a mode through which these alternative voices can make themselves heard. The recent identification of a Scottish inflection has established the aesthetic as being especially powerful in rendering visible alternative trajectories of Scottish history.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the Gothic aesthetic as a means to render visible a "vexed site" of containment through which alternative histories can emerge in terms of identity-building, projection and subterfuge.[7] In so doing, I implicate the Gothic in a social reality and construe it as a discursive site of meaning making that actively interprets the past and questions the Enlightenment trajectory of modernisation and the advent of the British Empire. To this end, I examine the poetry of Anne Bannerman (?1765-1829), a virtually unknown Scottish poet from Edinburgh. The few scholars who have engaged with Bannerman's work often foreground her poems' blend of history and imagination and situate the obscure quality of her work within an epistemological endeavour that raises questions about truth and knowledge.[8] This line of inquiry into Bannerman's Gothic poetry has mostly been limited to her ballads, the poems published in her first collection have mostly escaped critical examination. My research therefore seeks to elucidate the Gothic character of her first collection, *Poems* (1800) and to examine how Bannerman appropriates the Gothic aesthetic to engage with questions of the cultural and national past.[9] I seek to focus on the phantasmatic disruptions created by the destructive forces that permeate Bannerman's poetry. The depiction of *femme fatales,* violent forces of destruction and intangible spirits of vengeance illustrate the failures of modern society to lay its ghosts to rest. Instead, her poems present a haunted memory: the phantoms of the past refuse to remain buried.

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[7] Lori Branch, *Rituals of Spontaneity: Sentiment and Secularism from Free Prayer to Wordsworth,* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006) 22.

[8] See for instance: Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Andrew Elfenbein, "Lesbianism and Romantic Genius: the Poetry of Anne Bannerman." *ELH* 63, no. 4 (1996): 929-957; Daniel P. Watkins, *Anna Letitia Barbauld and Eighteenth-Century Visionary Poetics*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012); Ashley Miller, "Obscurity and Affect in Anne Bannerman's 'The Dark Ladie,'" *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* 3, no. 2 (2007): 1-14; Timothy Ruppert, "Romantic Vision and Gothic Balladry: Anne Bannerman's *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry*," *Literature Compass* 10, no. 10 (2013): 783-796.

[9] Anne Bannerman, *Poems by Anne Bannerman* (Edinburgh: Mundell & Son, 1800). The main source is the digital reproduction of the *Poems,* sourced from the British Library and accessible via institutional access on *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*.

The choice of Bannerman fits into two strands of literary criticism that reassess the canon, namely the revaluation of Scottish Romanticism and the increasing focus on female authors of this period. The first chapter deals with the question of national identity in Scottish Romanticism in an emerging British Empire. It addresses, moreover, the relationship between Romantic literature and the Enlightenment, with special attention to the identification of the Scottish Gothic and its relation to history and modernisation. The second chapter is indebted to the work of such scholars as Diane Long Hoeveler, Emma J. Clery, Adriana Craciun, and Katie Garner, who have recovered female authors from critical obscurity and have sought to assign them a central place in Gothic criticism.[10] Late eighteenth-century Gothic authors, such as Charlotte Smith (1749-1806), Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), Mary Shelley (1797-1851), Clara Reeve (1729-1807) and Sophia Lee (1750-1824), have increasingly earned a central place in scholarship. More recently, researchers have expanded this list, bringing to light the work of such authors as Charlotte Dacre (1771/2-1825), Mary Robinson (1757-1800), and Felicia Hemans (1793-1835). Bannerman is at times included in such lists, but she remains, at most, a minor figure among even these recovered female authors. I will therefore focus on Bannerman's poetry and her place in the literary output of female authors during the Romantic period. Special attention will be given to her marginalised position in Edinburgh from where she attempted to carve out a name for herself in the literary scene.

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[10] Diane Long Hoeveler, "Gendering the Scottish Ballad: The Case of Anne Bannerman's 'Tales of Superstition and Chivalry'," *The Wordsworth Circle* 31, no. 2 (2000): 97-101; Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender From Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*, (University Park (Pa.): Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Emma J. Clery, *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley*, (Tavistock: Northcote House in association with the British Council, 2000); Adriana Craciun, "Romantic Spinstrelsy: Anne Bannerman and the Sexual Politics of the Ballad," in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, edited by Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorensen, 204-24 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism*; Katie Garner, *Romantic Women Writers and Arthurian Legend: The Quest for Knowledge*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Paula R. Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre,* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

Once a firmer understanding of Bannerman's critical obscurity and the particularities of the Scottish Gothic are established, I propose a theoretical framework from which her Gothic verse should be considered. I aim to bridge the gap between scholarship on the Scottish Gothic and female Romantic poetry to examine how Bannerman's poetry can be read as a haunted memory. To do so, I bring in the notion of fancy as an imaginative capacity and its relation to the culture of sensibility that foregrounds affection and sympathy to cast a moral judgement on the current state of the world. The faculty is often linked to female authors who instrumentalise it to solidify their authority on moral issues in the public sphere. I then place fancy in a Gothic context and examine how the faculty can be used to produce apparitions. Consequently, the conjured ghosts are construed as a means to contemplate memory disjointed from time and space. The haunting capacity of the phantom is expanded on by introducing recent scholarship on spectrality. Cultural criticism uses the spectre as an analytical tool to explore social, historical, political, and ethical issues. These readings enrich my understanding of the Gothic aesthetic as an interpretative mode where the phantom can signal displacement and disfigurement. The Gothic spectre, I argue, presents a means to bring alternative historical trajectories to the fore. Bannerman's use of violent and destructive spirits also begs the question of the legitimacy of violence. To contemplate the moral grounds of destructive violence in the Gothic, I draw from Hannah Arendt's conception of violence as instrumental. Violence always appears in a context, and according to Arendt, violence is always a means to an end. The purpose pursued through violence guides and justifies its use. This analysis of violence is then linked to the transgressive potential of the Gothic phantom to examine how they can be used to interrogate modernisation.

The theoretical framework provides the blueprint for my analysis of Bannerman's poetry. The consequent chapters take up the notion of fancy and the haunting spectre to examine how her poetry engages with the question of history and modernity. Chapter four concerns two narrative poems that intermingle past, present and future. I focus on how these poems interrogate the imperial nature of Britain and how they engage with questions about war and colonialism. In so doing, I contend, these poems interrogate historical process and provide alternative visions for the future. The following chapter focuses on Bannerman's use of odes and sonnets that display the destructive nature of storms. The ocean presents an ideal space to contemplate the reach of empire and to question the imperial politics, as well as presenting a site of potential threat. The destructive visions in these poems intimate a breakdown of the governing structures of modern society and, where the two narrative poems imply a vision of hope for the future, these poems intimate oblivion.

In my conclusion, I bring these elements together to address my central research question: How does Anne Bannerman use the Gothic aesthetic to construe an alternative historical trajectory and interrogate the Enlightenment construction of historical process and modernisation? I believe that Bannerman's poems bring the excesses of the modern state to the fore to question the historical process. Her poems perform scenes of arbitrary violence and dispossession intermingled with destruction. These scenes highlight the misery and disenfranchisement of people all over the world, but also indicate the ruinous nature of the current state of the world. The haunted memory presented in her poems interrogates the process of modernisation in the creation of a vision of the ruination of power and empire.

This study will contribute to a more critical understanding of the relation between Scottish Gothic and the Enlightenment and how a female voice interrogates the process of modernisation. It draws attention to the Gothic's dealings with history and how the Gothic can be used to make other voices heard. My research, moreover, interrogates processes of canonisation and how the focus on English literary history distorts the literary output of the Romantic era. In moving the critical focus to Scottish inflections of the Gothic and by examining how these are put to work in poetry, my research enhances our knowledge not only of Scottish literary history, but also of the Gothic verse produced by a female author.

1. Scotland Discontinued?: Reconsidering Scottish Literature

The literary field in eighteenth-century Britain was a highly experimental and fertile one. Readership grew immensely, poetical output was tremendous, novelistic genres (e.g., the national tale, historical novel, sentimental fiction, Gothic romance, etc.) established themselves and the advent of periodicals ignited literary debates.[11] These developments were not limited to the English capital; casting a glance across the English border toward Scotland, a burgeoning literary scene can be discerned. The Edinburgh literary market boomed in the early nineteenth century, producing leading periodicals such as the *Edinburgh Review* (1802) and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1817).[12] The publishing industry of Edinburgh, moreover, rivalled London's publishing centres.[13] Still, subordinated to the English model, scholars have argued that Scottish authors manufactured "false substitutes" and failed to produce "an authentic Romanticism."[14] The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of some of the debates in current scholarship on Scottish literature produced during the Romantic period (ca. 1760-1830). To do so, it first examines the reconsideration of the Romantic literary scene in Scotland and how a vibrant literary scene persisted after the incorporation of Scotland in the British Union. It then addresses the impact of the Scottish Enlightenment on the literary output and how the new model of historical progress informed the literature of the age. It then moves on to a discussion national identity in Scottish fiction and how it relates to the recognition of a Scottish inflection of the Gothic aesthetic as a means to foreground the process of history-making and historical fragmentation.

1.1. Conflicted Histories: Fictions of Scottishness

Until recently, critics have tended to overlook the tremendous literary output of Romantic Scotland and its participation in literary developments in the British Isles. An important turning point is the publication of Katie Trumpener's seminal work, *Bardic Nationalism* (1997). Her study of the bardic tradition in the British isles underscores the importance of the literary developments of the Scottish, Irish and Welsh peripheries in the construction of modern literature in the eighteenth century.[15] In the wake of Trumpener's compelling argument to reconsider the role of the nationalistically inspired literary forms of the peripheries, the body of scholarship on Scottish Romanticism is growing. The vibrancy of the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, as a literary centre is the subject of Ian Duncan's *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (2007). Duncan describes the epistemological and historical work of Scott's fiction and his contemporaries and how modernity and national life become the central theme of the novel. He also stresses the importance of the periodical press and its vital role in the literary developments in the early nineteenth century. The diversity of the Scottish literary scene is the subject of the co-edited *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (2004).[16] Leith Davis, Ian Duncan and Janet Sorenson bring together specialists in both Scottish and Romantic literature to discuss not only the usual suspects of Walter Scott (1771-1832), David Hume (1711-1776), James Hogg (1770-1835), and Robert Burns (1759-1796), but also Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) and the marginally known poet Anne Bannerman, which is especially relevant for my research. The past decades also witnessed an increase in the publication of new critical editions of the works of the above mentioned Scottish Romantic authors. More recently, the *Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Literature* series has published on major authors of the period, such as Walter Scott (2012), James Hogg (2012) and Robert Burns (2009), as well as a separate volume on Scottish Romanticism (2011).

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[11] Barbara M. Benedict, "Readers, Writers, Reviewers, and the Professionalization of Literature," In *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740–1830*, edited by Tom Keymer, and Jon Mee, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 3.

[12] Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh*, (Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2007) 26.

[13] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 21.

[14] Ian Duncan with Leith Davis and Janet Sorensen, "Introduction," in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, edited by Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorenson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 3.

Two major conceptual inquiries run through this growing body of scholarship on Scottish Romanticism. The first addresses the question of national Romanticism, and the merit of a study in a Scottish strand. This topic forms the subject of Murray Pittock's *Irish and Scottish Romanticism* (2008) and is reprised in his introduction to the *Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism* (2012). Pittock delineates some specific features that give a particular Scottish character to the literature produced during the Romantic period. He highlights the continuing existence of a separate public sphere in

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[15] Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*, (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1997) xi.

[16] Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorensen, eds. *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Scotland. After the Union of 1707, when the Scottish parliament was dissolved and taken up by the English, the region was still able to manage its own universities, its laws (while legislature moved south of the border, existing, pre-Union laws could still be in effect), its financial system and the religious practices of the Scottish (Presbyterian) Kirk. The continuity was further ensured by a "distinctive agenda of selfhood:" the Scots language was still in use and practiced in literature, and the Scottish past was perpetuated in imaginative literature.[17] Lastly, the sense of Scottishness was also performed by the diaspora, as migrating Scots retained their regional identity beyond the borders of their homeland.[18] Over the course of the eighteenth century, a space for Scottish authors and their literature in a unified Britain thus continued to exist.

The second line of inquiry takes up the topic of the relationship between Scottish Romanticism and the Scottish Enlightenment. The Scottish Enlightenment is well attested. Recent scholarship hails Scotland as an important site of learning, with its four university cities (Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow and St. Andrews) contributing to the various developing fields of the human sciences, such as economics, historiography, law, and literature.[19] Edinburgh, known as the "Athens of the North," became the embodiment of the region's modernisation. Especially pertinent is the trajectory of the Scottish Enlightenment that "developed a new, synthetic account of human nature, historical process, and the dynamics of social formation in a cosmopolitan or universal order of modernity."[20] Such intellectuals as David Hume and Adam Smith made modernity the discursive and philosophical project of the human sciences.[21] In their wake, Scottish Whig historians wrote down how their country evolved, moving beyond the aggressive sectarianism and regional conflict that plagued early modern Scotland, "across the watershed of the 1688 Glorious Revolution and 1707 Union, toward a cosmopolitan civil society flourishing within the imperial economy of the new British state."[22]

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[17] Murray Pittock, "Introduction," in *Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism*, edited by Murray Pittock, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) 3.

[18] Pittock, "Introduction," 3-5.

[19] Duncan e.a. "Introduction," 1-3.

[20] Duncan e.a. "Introduction," 3.

[21] Ian Duncan, "Walter Scott, James Hogg, and Scottish Gothic," in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) 123.

[22] Duncan, "Walter Scott," 124.

Literary texts, in turn, engage with the ideas of modernity, reason and knowledge. Duncan reads the relationship between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Scotland as one of continuity. Pittock, however, nuances Duncan's assessment, proposing instead to view the relationship as intertwined, but not necessarily continuous: both "desire to articulate the significance and values of Scotland's intellectual and historical inheritance in national terms within the wider British empire."[23] Overall, the concern with national identity and national history and their significance within the British space has created split representations of Scotland in literary texts. G. Gregory Smith coined the notion of "Caledonian Antisyzygy" to describe the internally contradictory and self-divided character of Scottish literature and identity.[24] Scottish identity did not necessarily need to vanish with the 1707 Union of the Parliaments. One way of harmonising the cultural Scottish identity with the British political one is through aestheticising the elements of national character incompatible with the Britishness and by relocating them in the (distant) past.

Walter Scott, for instance, manages to create a sense of Scottishness in his novels by locating national character in the past, while simultaneously supporting an economic and political identity for the region within the imperial Union.[25] Scott's historical novel, *Waverley* (1814), for instance, follows the Enlightenment rhetoric of progress and improvement, where the relics of the past make way for a prosperous and modern nation. The novel follows the titular character and his engagement in the Jacobite rising of 1745-6 and the rebellion's almost inevitable failure. As the tale concludes, Scott remarks that "[t]here is no European nation which, within the course of half a century, or little more, has undergone so complete a change as this kingdom of Scotland."[26] The innovation, commenced in the wake of the Jacobite insurrection – which sought to place the Catholic James Francis Edward Stuart on the throne instead of the protestant Hanoverian King George II – upended the existing power structures and eradicated the Jacobite party.[27] Following the overturn of the old manners and customs, there was a "gradual influx of wealth and, extension of commerce."[28] The somewhat congratulatory tone of Scott fits within the post-Enlightenment notion of modernity as the result of intellectual, economic and cultural advances, where primitive modes of belief were transcended by reason.[29]

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[23] Pittock, "Introduction," 9.
[24] G. Gregory Smith, *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence* (London: Macmillan, 1919), 4, quoted in Duncan e.a. "Introduction," 6.
[25] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 17.
[26] Walter Scott, *Waverley,* edited by Clare Lamont, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 375.
[27] Scott, *Waverley,* 375.

The re-articulation of Scottishness within a development scheme occurs on a wider scale. The Scottish Highlands – the strongholds of the Jacobites and the old feudal order – were rebranded: authors turned it into a nostalgic, premodern space. The sublime scenery of the Highlands was presented as a tourist attraction, or a source of inspiration for romanticised visions of the region's past, an "invention of tradition" as expressed in Macpherson's Ossian. The "theme-park Highland heritage" transformed Scotland into a land of fanciful imagery, where myths about the Highlanders and their belief in ghosts and other supernatural creatures ran wild.[30] The "aesthetic salvage of tradition," however, contributed to a sense of historical fragmentation.[31] Duncan links the divided Jekyll-and-Hyde-monster that permeates Scottish literary output in the wake of the Union to the use of the uncanny by Scottish authors: "[f]rom Macpherson and Burns, to Scott and Hogg, the uncanny marks the crux –hinge or gap?– between the diachronic axis of history and the synchronic axis of culture [...] the spectral repetition [...] of the imaginary life of a social world abolished in the forward drive of progress."[32] The uncanny in Scottish literary works arises from a severe disruption between historical orders. It serves as an indication of discontinuity, pointing to the inability of outdated modes of belief to cease existing once the modern order has been installed.

1.2. Scotland's Accusing Ghosts: Gothic Hauntings

Like the bodies bubbling up during the draining of the Edinburgh Nor' Loch, the displaced past has a way of resurfacing.[33] The castoff relics of a turbulent past – the Jacobites, superstitions, religious sectarianism – find expression in the use of the Gothic aesthetic in imaginative literature. Concurrent with the recognition of the Scottish Romanticism, a tendency to distinguish a Scottish inflection of the Gothic emerges in scholarship. This line of inquiry is founded on an understanding of the different historical trajectories of Scotland and England in terms of religion (resp. Presbyterian/Catholic and Anglican, with minorities in every part), sovereignty (the Union of 1707), and cultural heritage (Celtic in Scotland, Anglo-Saxon in England). The re-imagined picturesque and fanciful spaces become a locale of threat where the "subaltern native self" whose problematic identity is repressed in the emerging British space comes to haunt it.[34] If Scottish history is recast in a series of disjunctions and the inevitable failure of independence in favour of the ascendency of the British state, the uncanny recursions in the Scottish Gothic point to "the past that refuses to be lost."[35]

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[28] Scott, *Waverley,* 375.
[29] Duncan e.a. "Introduction," 2.
[30] Duncan e.a. "Introduction," 4.
[31] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 186.
[32] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 186.
[33] The North Loch was a putrid marsh that had outlived its usefulness as a defence system and favourite haunt for suicides and torture place for accused witches. The draining of the Nor[th] Loch fits within the plan to redevelop Edinburgh and create a modern capital, see: Charles McKean. "Twinning Cities: Modernisation versus Improvement in the Two Towns of Edinburgh," in *Edinburgh - The Making of a Capital City*, edited by Brian Edwards and Paul Jenkins, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) 45-6.

Various scholars point to the importance of the dissolution of Scottish independence and the final defeat of the Jacobites in 1745 in determining the Scottish Gothic. Pittock states that the Scottish inflection is "the aesthetic sign of the national defeat of opposition to the British state."[36] David Punter echoes this assertion, arguing that the Gothic's dealings with history are "involved in specific modes of persistence when national aspirations are thwarted by conquest or settlement."[37] The attempt to create a continuous and explicable account of the history of the British Empire that reassures "the validity of national destiny" inevitably supresses accounts of alternate historical developments, *in casu,* Scottish history.[38] Punter reads the uncanny as the sign of a history that is threatened with effacement.[39] Duncan likewise identifies an association between the uncanny/supernatural and the national. He locates the regional inflection in the representation of the past. Whereas English Gothic consistently turns to the aristocratic, feudal, Catholic past, Scottish Gothic tends to represent "some version of a broader national culture."[40] The attempts to displace the turbulent history of Scotland creates an uncanny recursion of the repressed.

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[34] Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) 125.

[35] Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism,* 212.

[36] Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism,* 26.

[37] Punter, "Scottish and Irish Gothic," 105.

[38] Punter, "Scottish and Irish Gothic," 106.

[39] Punter, "Scottish and Irish Gothic," 105.

The analysis of the Gothic's regional inflection builds on the identification of Gothic's engagement with history and how it reconfigures the past "to impress its magnificence on the present."[41] Christopher Baldick describes the "Gothic effect" as arising from the "tyranny of the past (a family curse, the survival of archaic forms of despotism and superstition)" that bares down "with such a weight as to stifle the hopes of the present (the liberty of the heroine or hero) within the dead of physical incarceration (the dungeon, the locked room, or simply the confinements of a family house closing in upon itself)."[42] The imaginative reservoir of ghosts, bleeding nuns, haunted castles, crypts, ruins, etc., allows a staging of a past that is prone to irrupt into the present.[43] The representations of monsters, ghosts and doubles in Gothic narratives is often read as a process of Othering. These others present the symbolic retainment of the premodern in the Gothic, allowing the contemporary audience to cope with a society in transition.

In such interpretations, the Gothic is implicated in a modernist project. Jerrold Hogle, for instance, reads the Gothic as a site where "symbolic abjection" can take place; the fears and beliefs that the modern order cannot take in are contained within a narrative of characters that are caught between the allure and terror of the past and the forces of change.[44] The Gothic spectres and spaces become a kind of "Gothicised nature […] that bears the affective charge of cultural changes."[45] The representation of the superstitions and mentalities of the past allows a society to disavow them from the emerging order, but also to anachronistically preserve them as "a figure for an imagination."[46] The simultaneous rejection and presentation of the premodern in the Gothic leads Diane Long Hoeveler to contend that the Gothic functions as a secularising mode. She perceives the uncanny as an expression of the "coexistence of the immanent and transcendent," as the Gothic is split between the premodern past and the secular future that it cannot quite envision.[47] Hoeveler's study implicates the Gothic imaginary in a wider project of modernity, and, like Hogle and others, she brings to the forefront how the Gothic mediates and assuages the anxieties of a society in transition.

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[40] Duncan, "Walter Scott," 124.

[41] David Punter, "Scottish Gothic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, edited by Gerard Carruthers, and Liam McIlvanney, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 135.

[42] Christopher Baldick, *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) xix.

[43] James Watt, "The Gothic," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740–1830*, edited by Tom Keymer, and Jon Mee, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 132.

[44] Jerrold E. Hogle, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, edited by Jerrold E. Hogle, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 8.

[45] Tilottama, Rajan. "The Work of the Negative: Symbolic, Gothic, and Romantic in Shelley and Hegel," *Studies in Romanticism* 52, no. 1 (2013): 20

[46] Rajan, "The Work of the Negative," 21.

While providing valuable insights, these approaches tend to understate, however, how the Gothic functions as an interpretative activity, something that is rendered visible in discussions of the Scottish Gothic. The inflection of the Gothic not only "illuminates Scotland's haunted history," it also renders the conflicting narratives about historical events visible, allowing to consider alternative versions that cannot be heard in the official history.[48] Angela Wright's discussion of the fictions of Scott and Hogg demonstrates how Scottish Gothic excavates the layered nature of its history and how it draws attention to "the process of telling history."[49] She interprets the use of castles, graves, inscription and manuscripts as the representation of the "contested sites of authority."[50] In raising the question of how narratives are transmitted, she argues that the Gothic allows for "an exploration of the inconsistencies of the nation's history."[51] Wright's compelling argument can be supplemented by Punter's reading of Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor,* which tells "a story of how 'other' truths of history strive to make themselves felt through the fabric of the official version."[52] Gothic narratives allow different histories to co-exist and open up a space to contemplate the possibility that the past – as an objective, natural given – does not exist. As Carol Davison and Monica Germanà observe in their introduction to the *Scottish Gothic,* the Gothic "draws attention to the ways in which a story always emerges from a polyphony of clashing voices, throwing light on the fabricated nature of both story and history.”[53] The Gothic challenges the existences of a true history; the use of multiple narratives and voices “erodes the foundations of hegemonic authority, allowing a plethora of ‘other’ voices to emerge.”[54]

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[47] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780-1820,* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2010) xv.

[48] Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà, "Borderlands of Identity and the Aesthetics of Disjuncture: An Introduction to Scottish Gothic," in *Scottish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion,* edited by Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018) 5.

[49] Angela Wright, "Scottish Gothic," in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, edited by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, (London: Routledge, 2007) 76.

[50] Wright, "Scottish Gothic," 76.

[51] Wright, "Scottish Gothic," 80

[52] Punter, "Scottish Gothic," 133.

The Scottish Gothic functions as a fictional act of remembering that allows for a multiplicity of historical narratives that interrogates the trajectory of the Scottish Enlightenment and its emphasis on modernisation. Pittock implicates the Gothic in a critique of the diachronic reading of the past, arguing that the “the presence of Old Scotland as the accusing ghosts at the feast of modernity” points to the homogenising account of historical development.[55] Duncan likewise presents the Scottish Gothic as an “elaborate set of historically determinate intuitions about modernity.”[56] Rather than transcribing to the notion of progress and the installation of a modern order that overrides the premodern superstitions and mentalities, the Gothic allows it to persist, which hampers the advent of the new order, the modern British state. The Gothic allows for fissures in the process of modernisation, drawing attention to the possibility of other trajectories. The temporal slip of the Gothic between the past and the present, its dealings with history and use of historical understanding, the aesthetic turns historical memory “into an almost unholy exercise”[57] It demonstrates an awareness that history is malleable and thus opens up a space to contemplate the “what if.”[58] Scottish Gothic presents an “implicit possibility of a history that could have been ‘done differently.”[59] The spectral persistence of mentalities of the past upsets the forward movement of modernisation and allows an interrogation of a Whiggish interpretation of Scottish history.

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[53] Davison and Germana, “Borderlands of Identity,” 5.

[54] Davison and Germana, “Borderlands of Identity,” 5.

[55] Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, 125.

[56] Duncan, “Scottish Gothic,” 123.

[57] James Kelly, “Gothic and the Celtic Fringe 1750-1850,” in *The Gothic World,* edited by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend, (London: Routledge 2013) 45.

[58] David Punter, “Introduction,” in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) 3.

[59] Punter, “Scottish and Irish Gothic,” 106.

2. In Search of a Poetic Voice: A Reappraisal of the Female Poet

The previous chapter examined the growing body of scholarship on the literary output of Scotland during the Romantic Era. It established some thematic concerns in Scottish literature of the period, foregrounding the interconnection of literature and the Enlightenment theory of modernisation. In particular, it demonstrated how the Scottish Gothic can function as an aesthetic to interrogate the forward movement of modernisation and the Whiggish view of history. Bannerman, as a Scottish poet, had to contend with a subaltern status grounded both "in national cultural identity" and in gender.[60] The aim of this chapter is to situate Bannerman in both the national and gendered space to gain a better understanding of her poems. First, it provides some biographical information and addresses her marginal position with the male-dominated literary scene in Edinburgh. It documents the critical reception of her poetry and her short-lived career. The thwarted ambitions of the poet notwithstanding, scholars have remarked the exceptionality of Bannerman's poetry, which will be discussed in the succeeding section. They foreground her visionary imagination and the transgressive potential of her *femme fatales* to unsettle the governing structures of reality. Though Bannerman was writing from a subaltern position, her poetical aspirations can be placed in the wider engagements of female authors.. Where scholarship stresses the moral authority of female Romantic poets, inquiries into the Female Gothic have demonstrated the potential of the mode to scrutinise the position of women. As a writer of Gothic verse, an understudied aspect of Gothic criticism, Bannerman's poetry is situated at the intersection of these lines of inquiry.

2.1. A Fragmentary Biography of an Elusive Poet

Facts about Anne Bannerman's life are still shrouded in darkness. The little that is known about her life is based on what others have written about her, as Bannerman's letters and writings were unfortunately destroyed after her passing in 1829.[61] Scholars have thus been left to piece her life together, and this has led to considerable biographical gaps. Adriana Craciun's archival research, for instance, established Bannerman's birth date as 31 October 1765, in Edinburgh.[62] Andrew Elfenbein's study of Bannerman, however, estimates her date of birth around 1780. He bases his estimation on the correspondence of Robert Anderson (1749-1830), a close acquaintance of Bannerman and one of the main sources for information about the poet's life and writings. Within it, Anderson refers to her as a "young woman," and Joseph Cooper Walker (ca. 1762-1810) writes to Anderson that Bannerman is "scarcely out of her teens."[63] Several other remarks, for instance Anderson's praise of the "splendour and energy" of her poetry and his recognition that she has "so opulent a mind at such an age," seem to suggest that there is something singular about her, unusual for someone her age.[64] If we follow Craciun's estimate, Bannerman would have been in her early thirties when she published her poems, which does not seem to necessitate a remark as provided by Anderson. Moreover, as late as 1807, Bannerman was still referred to as a "young lady" or "young friend," which are unlikely terms to use to designate someone in her forties.[65] Bannerman's poor health and impoverished conditions after the death of her mother and brother in 1805 also make it more likely that she was born around 1780, given that a long life in her condition seems rare. There is, however, no definitive evidence for either Craciun's or Elfenbein's dates of birth, and further research done by Katie Lister seems to imply that Elfenbein's estimation is more likely.[66]

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[60] Stephen C. Behrendt, *British Women Poets and the Romantic Writing Community*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009) 203.

[61] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 159.

The poet's exact date of birth has little effect on the research enacted in this thesis, however, except insofar as it bears some weight on her career as a writer. Starting out with poetical pieces published in periodicals, such as the *Poetical Register* and the *Edinburgh Magazine*, under the pseudonyms Augusta or B, or later using her name, her literary life flourished over a short duration.[67] She published three volumes of poetry. Her first, *Poems,* was published in Edinburgh, in 1800, and dedicated to Robert Anderson. This volume of poems was highly praised and contained some extended poems, original odes and sonnets. Her second volume, *Tales of Chivalry and Superstition,* published in London in 1802, received less favourable reviews. Her last volume of poetry, *Poems: A New Edition* (1807), contained little new material and was mostly a revised edition of her earlier poems and ballads. She struggled to make more money and her literary career was almost over by the time she published *Poems: A New Edition* via subscription in 1807. She eventually gave in to Anderson's urging for her to became a governess and took an offer from Lady Beresford in 1807, officially relinquishing her aspirations as an author.[68] From her brief friendship and correspondence with Anne Grant (1755-1838) starting in 1824, we learn that Bannerman spent the remainder of her life as a "feeble invalid at Portobello."[69] Grant remarks that, though Bannerman was in poor health, "her shattered frame is illuminated by a mind bright with genius and rich in stores of intelligence."[70] The tone of Grant's letter praises Bannerman and intimates that she has made a rather lasting impression. Bannerman's health decayed even further and eventually she died in 1829 in Portobello, as is confirmed by the death notice that appeared in the January 1830 issue of the *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.*[71]

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[62] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 272, note 3.
[63] Elfenbein, ""Lesbianism and Romantic Genius," 951, note 1.
[64] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 157-8.
[65] Katie Lister, "Femmes Fatales and Fatal Females: Anne Bannerman's The Prophecy of Merlin," in *The Survival of Myth: Innovation, Singularity and Alterity*, edited by Paul Hardwick and David Kennedy, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010) 168.
[66] Lister, "Femmes Fatales and Fatal Females," 168-9.
[67] Adriana Craciun, "Bannerman, Anne (1765–1829), poet," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1312 (accessed 29 Mar. 2020).

2.2. Recapturing the Poetical Work: A Literary Career of Limited Duration

Bannerman lived and wrote in Edinburgh, the rising city of the Romantic literary scene. She was well surrounded, having gained the support of Anderson, editor of the *Edinburgh Magazine* and the influential thirteen volume *A Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain* (1795-8). Anderson is thus a prominent figure in the literary culture of the late eighteenth century, and his support opened many doors for Bannerman's step onto the literary scene.[72] Anderson recommended Bannerman's poetry to Bishop Percy, editor of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), John Leyden (1775-1811), the co-editor of Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802/3)*,* Walker, an Irish writer and antiquarian, and a friend of Charlotte Smith, and Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), who came to admire her work.[73] Though well surrounded, Bannerman hovered on the margins of this male-dominated literary circle, which in part contributed to the short duration of her career.

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[68] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 158.

[69] Anne Grant, "Letter CCLXXXII," in *Memoirs and Correspondence of Mrs. Grant of Laggan*, *Vol. III,* edited by John Peter Grant. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844) 67.

[70] Grant, "Letter CCLXXXII," 67.

[71] "Deaths" *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Edinburgh, UK 27*, no. 161 (January 1830): 135, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=h9i&AN=53153033&site=ehost-live (accessed 6 Apr. 2020)

[72] Francis Espinasse, and Douglas Brown, "Anderson, Robert (1749–1830), literary scholar and biographer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-497. (accessed 8 Apr. 2020).

Her first publication, *Poems,* was well received. The *Critical Review* (1800) was pleased with an "opportunity, which but too rarely occurs," to offer its readers "specimens of poetical performances of merit."[74] A similar claim is made in *The New London Review* (1800). The "wearied spirits" of the reviewer were lifted upon hearing "the breathings of ardent genius."[75] He hails Bannerman as "a real muse" and admires the "energic numbers" and "soothing influence of her charmed song."[76] The critic of the *New London Review* describes her poems as "sublime," "beautiful," and "halcyonian;" she does not fail "to strike the chord of true poesy, with the melting pathos of Collins and the romantic ardour of Gray."[77] William Collins (1721-1759) and Thomas Gray (1716-1771) were influential authors of the mid-eighteenth century who contributed to the reconfiguration of the ode. The positive reception is also found in *The Critical Review,* lauding her "effusions" as "the genuine offspring of a lively and excursive imagination."[78] The general picture derived from the various reviews is that the *Poems* presents a singular publication that demonstrates the author's genius and imaginative capacity.

Her second publication, *Tales of Chivalry and Superstition*, forms a more coherent whole, comprising ten ballads. The tales are inspired by French, Russian, Spanish, Scandinavian, and British legends and present a 'Gothic' collection, making use of *femme fatales,* wandering spirits, prophecies, and other occult elements. The more overt Gothic character of the ballad most likely contributed to its mixed reception, as it displayed the more horror and lurid imagery of the school of Matthew Lewis which was falling in disgrace.[79] While acknowledging Bannerman's talents, the *Annual Review* believes her to be capable of "higher productions" than the "fashionable fictions" produced in the *Tales.*[80] One outwardly negative reviewer in the *Critical Review* notes that "the author has heard that obscurity is one source of the sublime and has therefore veiled his [sic] sublimity in impenetrable darkness."[81] The critic goes on to complain that while her ballads excite the imagination, she fails to satisfy it. A similar observation is made by Walter Scott in his "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad:"

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[73] Adriana Craciun, "Bannerman, Anne (1765–1829), poet." Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. 23 Sep. 2004; https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1312 (accessed 6 Apr. 2020).

[74] "Art. VI. Poems by Anne Bannerman," *Critical Register*, no 16, (1800): 139.

[75] "Poems by Anne Bannerman," *New London Review :Or, Monthly Report of Authors & Books* no 3, 17 (1800): 407.

[76] "Poems by Anne Bannerman," *New London Review,* 407.

[77] "Poems by Anne Bannerman," *New London Review,* 409.

[78] "Art. XI. Poems by Anne Bannerman," *The Critical Review*, no 31 (1801): 435.

> Miss Anne Bannerman likewise should not be forgotten, whose *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry* [...] were perhaps too mystical and too abrupt; yet if it be the purpose of this kind of ballad poetry powerfully to excite the imagination, without pretending to satisfy it, few persons have succeeded better than this gifted lady.[82]

Whereas Bannerman was initially successful, her second publication seemed to put a stop to her fledgling career as a promising poet.

2.3. A Regional Poet Reconsidered

Bannerman's poems are largely absent from anthologies of Romantic and Scottish poetry. Her poems are not found in Catherine Kerrigan's *Anthology of Scottish Women Poets* (1991) and Paula Feldman's *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era* (1997).[83] This lack is not surprising, as critical attention to the author only began in 1997 and warrants more attention still. The handful of scholars working on her poetry remark the exceptional aspirations of the author and the continuing resonance of the poetic devises to make her voice heard. To come to a full understanding of the richness of her work, Craciun states, one must foreground gender and genre.[84] As a female author, writing poetry in the Gothic mode and operating at the margins of a male-dominated literary scene, Bannerman did not have it easy to establish herself. Her disappearance in the folds of literary history and her recent rediscovery is due to the renewed attention to female authors and their literary output that uncovers the multiplicity of female voices during the 1790s and 1800s. A critical edition of her collections is not yet in existence, neither is a full-length monograph, though efforts have been made to put Bannerman on the research agenda.[85]

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[79] Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs,* 165.

[80] "Review of *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry," The Annual Review, or, Register of Literature* 1 (1803): 720.

[81] "Review *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry," The Critical Review,* 38 (1803): 110

[82] Walter Scott, "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad," http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/poetry/apology/essay.html. (accessed 21 Dec. 2019).

[83] Catherine Kerrigan, *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), Paula R. Feldman, ed. *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era: An Anthology*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[84] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 157.

Overall there is a tendency to identify Bannerman as a Romantic poet who uses Gothic motifs to further her authorial ambitions. Elfenbein (1997) notes the boldness of the poet, stating that she pushed "the limits of acceptable poetry."[86] He draws attention to Bannerman's "impassioned imagination" and how reviewers described Bannerman as "bold" and "sublime," observing that these adjectives were usually reserved for male authors.[87] Elfenbein makes much of Bannerman's position as an unmarried woman and speculatively claims that she was a lesbian, as her Werther sonnets express sexual desire for a woman. He continues his argument, reading Bannerman's concern with politics and female sexuality as a means to "unsettle the conventional position of woman as object of heterosexual desire."[88] He posits that her poetry presents a departure from canonical Romantic poetry and breaks with the eighteenth-century standard behaviour of women, as she foregrounds sublime and vivid supernatural women. Bannerman's *femme fatales* and representation of female sexual desire, however, are not as uncommon in female poetry as Elfenbein suggests.

Craciun's *Fatal Women of Romanticism* demonstrates that transgressive women are found across Romantic female-authored texts. She places Bannerman's poetry within a larger study on female authors from the Romantic period. Her overall argument establishes the *femme fatale* as an ideologically charged figure that can alternatively be picked up by the male imagination or appropriated by female authors. Craciun draws attention to how female authors in particular use is to challenge the construct of woman and challenge the "stability of naturalness of sex itself."[89] Her study builds on the recognition that the two-sex model is culturally and historically specific and became solidified during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The *femme fatale* as a violent, destructive, yet hyperfeminine figure presents an ideal point for interrogating the "development of sexual difference" and thus also to interrogate the construct of women as a different sex.[90] Craciun's chapter on Bannerman's fatal women draws attention to their obscurity, as they are usually represented as veiled. The appearance of these females usually affects the structure of the narrative, creating a labyrinthine structure were various episodic scenes intermingle. Craciun observes the extremely destructive character of Bannerman's figures in comparison to contemporary representations of "domestic, rationale female characters," reading the violent women as a means to question the objectification of women by male authors.[91] Craciun moreover links the "radical alterity" to the poet's exploration of the notion of the poet as prophet, who can perceive "beyond the veil," and be divinely inspired.[92]

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[85] An annotated edition can be found in the doctoral thesis of Maththew Heilman, "The Complete Poems of Anne Bannerman," (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University, 2017); Retrieved from https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/202 (accessed 29 Mar. 2020).

[86] Elfenbein, "Lesbianism and Romantic Genius," 951.

[87] Elfenbein, "Lesbianism and Romantic Genius," 935, 938.

[88] Elfenbein, "Lesbianism and Romantic Genius," 944.

[89] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 3.

These visionary aspirations are elaborated on by Timothy Ruppert and Daniel Watkins, who both focus on her second volume, *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry* (1802). Ruppert examines how Bannerman uses Gothic motifs (e.g. revenant, bleeding nun) in her ballads as a means to practise her vatic art; it grants her a "greater imaginative freedom" to further her authorial ambition. As a seer-poet, Bannerman draws from her knowledge of the past to make its voice heard in the present so as to open up new visions of the future.[93] The transformative impulse of Bannerman's poetry is also discussed by Watkins. He argues that the volume presents an attempt to reunite the "worlds of fancy, history, mysticism and fairy land" that were once part of a single reality. Watkins proposes that Bannerman reimagines conventional sources (Biblical and literary) and intermingles them with a prophetic voice to unsettle her readers' perceptions. In so doing, she pushes the readers to contemplate that any structures of meaning and cultural understanding are void and that there is no guiding principle or authority.

The prophetic voice that challenges the governing structures of understanding and perception is supported by what Allison Miller calls an "obscure poetics." In her analysis of Bannerman's *Tales,* she connects the poet's contemporary reviewers' identification of an impenetrable obscurity as a major flaw to a more complex poetical agenda. Miller argues that the ballads' failure to insist on meaning and its resistance to narrative linearity functions as a way to question perceptions and sense, as well as bodily affect and readability. The *Tales* enact and depict a "fragmented reading experience" that makes it impossible for its readers to connect emotionally to the poem.[94] The affective capacity, feeling the terror of the Gothic, can be replicated, but meaning and sentiment are beyond reach. The poems' "resistance to narrative clarity" is, as Craciun shows, a means to thwart the readers' "will to truth."[95] Through the labyrinthine narrative constructs and open-ended structure, Bannerman's poems only direct its readers to "the answer's absence."[96]

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[90] Craciun, *Fatal Women*, 4-9.

[91] Craciun, *Fatal Women*, 162.

[92] Craciun, *Fatal Women*, 162.

[93] Ruppert, "Romantic Vision and Gothic Balladry," 785.

Scholars construe Bannerman's work as an engagement with epistemological issues and the contemplation of history, but they do not fully implicate it within a critique of the Enlightenment, neither do they make a connection with similar endeavours as identified in the Scottish Gothic. My research therefore builds on the work of these scholars but pushes further to contemplate the poems as envisioning alternative historical trajectories and as questioning the inevitable advent of the British Empire.

2.4. Women's Writings: Romantic Poetry, the Female Gothic and Gothic Verse

Scholars working on Bannerman's poetry have already demonstrated the wide range and singular ambitions of the poet. Discussions of the poet, however, tend to be exclusively focused on Bannerman and rarely place her within a wider context, with the exception of Craciun's monograph and Katie Garner's discussion of Romantic women authors and their engagement with Arthurian lore. To better contextualise Bannerman's poetry, I want to underline some currents of research within which to situate the poet. This section touches upon several themes, including the authority of female authors of the age on moral questions, the Female Gothic and Gothic verse, which will be expanded upon in the following chapters that analyse how Bannerman's poetry engages with the literary output of her age.

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[94] Miller, "Obscurity and Affect," 6.

[95] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 163.

[96] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 175.

As discussed above, scholarship on Bannerman has identified the poet's recourse to violent, vengeful and aggressive female characters as a means to confront the limits of poetic possibility and feminine ideals. These scholars underscore the violent nature of her female characters, but they rarely raise the question of morality. For instance, the female avenger in Bannerman's ballads is read as the "destroyer of the male system of privilege and plunder," but the morality of violence is not brought into the discussion.[97] This omission is mostly due to the aim of the researchers, but in raising the question of morality, Bannerman's work can be related to the literary output of Romantic female authors. Research on female Romantic poetry has demonstrated that women authors participated in the public sphere. Their growing contributions and public involvement in such issues as education, abolition, women's rights demonstrate the politicisation of women writers and their presence in national and public debate.[98] Stephen Behrendt, in *British Women Authors and the Romantic Writing Community* (2008), argues that the poetry produced by female authors during the Romantic period functions as a vehicle for "radical social and political subject matter and ideology."[99] He identifies an activating agency in their writings that is most often rooted in sentiment and foregrounds values of affectivity, tolerance, respect, and shared experience.[100] A similar poetical project of women poetry is identified by Paula Backscheider: "women indisputably wrote to participate in the great public debates of their time, to intervene in the public sphere, to shape mores, and to mold opinion."[101] She grounds the revision and creation of poetic forms by female poets as a means to demonstrate an "eternal truth: any crisis – political, biological, natural – is always a moral crisis."[102] Backscheider conceives of the "national project" of women poets as "more personal," namely that they challenge Great Britain "to live up to its past and its stated ideals."[103] Female poets' recourse to sensibility and affectivity thus granted them a certain authority to hold the nation accountable for its actions and have bearing on issues relating to morality.

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[97] Hoeveler, "Gendering the Scottish Ballad," 99.
[98] Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 40.
[99] Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 42.
[100] Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 42-3.
[101] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets,* 20.
[102] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets,* 20.
[103] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets,* 20.

Feminist literary scholarship has also been important in recovering the contributions of female authors to literary developments of their age. The eighteenth century witnessed a proliferation of female authors who wrote novels, poetry and plays. The rediscovery of their voices is instrumental in better understanding the literary output of the Romantic period and in challenging received traditions. The critical revaluation of Charlotte Smith, for instance, is an important turning point in Romantic studies. Stuart Curran boldly opens the 1993 edition to the poems of Smith, stating that she was "the first poet in England whom in retrospect we would call Romantic."[104] Though long hidden in the obscure folds of literary history, Smith is now widely accepted as key player in the Romantic sonnet revival, producing a large corpus entitled *Elegiac Sonnets.* Our knowledge of female authored poetry form the Romantic era is growing, but it takes time to rediscover how they relate to the predominantly male-based literary categories.[105] The integration of female poetry in Romantic studies has demonstrated that they "seldom conform to the familiar outlines of what we have customarily regarded as the male Romantic poetic tradition in Britain."[106] In studying these authors alongside the established big five (or six if one adds William Blake (1757-1827)), William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel T. Coleridge (1772-1834), John Keats (1795-1821), Percy B. Shelley (1792-1822), and Lord Byron (1788-1824), a more dynamic picture of the period emerges, challenging the canon and questioning conceived terminological restrictions pertaining to the description and identification of the literary output of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The growing focus on female authors has not been limited to Romantic poetry, but has permeated Gothic criticism as well, recovering the engagements of female authors with the Gothic. These efforts led to the recognition of the Female Gothic as a category of investigation. Since its inauguration by Ellen Moers in 1976, the category has opened up a new avenue of scholarly inquiry. Moers initially conceived the term to describe the writing of women in the Gothic mode and how female authors use it to voice their anxieties about oppression, imprisonment and powerlessness in a patriarchal society.[107] In the wake of Moers study, psychoanalytic readings were favoured, building on feminist literary scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s that was "underpinned by a politicised understanding of the 'historical reality' of women's position within a patriarchal system."[108] Female Gothic entered mainstream criticism and by the 1990s the focus had shifted to socio-cultural aspects and how the social position of women was reflected in the female-authored Gothic texts.[109] As a result, the traditional Female Gothic plot was identified. It is usually associated with the Gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe that narrate the plight of a young woman, imperilled and threatened by an oppressing villainous figure, where the supernatural is rationalised and the novel usually ends on a positive note, with a wedding.[110]

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[104] Stuart Curran, "Introduction," in *The Poems of Charlotte Smith,* edited by Stuart Curran, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) xix.

[105] Isobel Armstrong, "The Gush of the Feminine: How Can We Read Women's Poetry of the Romantic Period?" in *Romantic Women Writers: Voices and Countervoices,* edited by Paula R. Feldman and Theresa M. Kelley, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2005) 15.

[106] Stephen Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 4.

The recognition of the separate category of the Female Gothic, however, has not gone uncontested. Scholars have pointed to its rootedness in second wave feminism and its universalising and categorical approach to systems of domination and oppression. There is, moreover, the slippery quality of categorisation pertaining to the designation of "female" as the gender of the author, the predicament of the heroine – as research has demonstrated that male authors could appropriate the plot – or whether it foregrounds the psychologised terror as opposed to the 'male' horror.[111] Adding to the growing contestation of the category was the question about the Female Gothic as a transgressive or conservative category, as the typical plot appeared to affirm the societal expectations of women. Diana Hoeveler's *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (1998), for instance, argued that the heroines of Gothic novels performed a "victim feminism." They appear as damsels in distress, but they develop passive-aggressive strategies to overcome the oppressive and corrupt patriarchal system that seeks to victimise them.[112]

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[107] Ellen Moers, *Literary Women,* (New York (NY): Doubleday, 1976) 90.
[108] Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, "Introduction," in *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, edited by Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith (New York (NY): Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 3.
[109] Wallace and Smith, "Introduction," 3.
[110] Wallace and Smith, "Introduction," 3-5.
[111] See for instance: Christopher Baldick and Robert Mighall. "Gothic Criticism," in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, edited by David Punter, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 267-88; Benjamin Brabon and Stéphanie Genz, eds. *Postfeminist Gothic: Critical Interventions in Contemporary Culture*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

The disadvantaged and disempowered position of women appears to run through the Gothic as practiced by female authors. Recent criticism, conscious of the critique on the Female Gothic, remains self-critical with respect to the notion's assumption, and has illustrated the ongoing vitality of the Female Gothic as a fluid and broad category. Though diverse in its representations and expressions, the plight of women is an important theme in female-authored Gothic texts. It simultaneously enacts and contests gender identity and allows for an interrogation of the "chaste-versus-transgressive paradigm" with which female authors were confronted.[113] As Avril Horner and Sue Sloznik observe in the introduction to the collected volume *Women and the Gothic,* female-authored Gothic texts reflect "the continued polarisation of women through patterns of antithesis such as good/ bad, saint/sinner and virgin/whore; a continued use of stereotypes; and the pathologisation of women who fail to conform to traditional expectations."[114] Consequently, authors could use the Gothic aesthetic and its violent, sublime and marvellous imagery to celebrate transgressive women.[115] It is exactly this propensity to subversion that the *femme fatale* in Bannerman's poetry presents and which I seek to examine further.

As my study is concerned with Gothic poetry, it addresses a gap in Gothic criticism. Scholarship on female authors of the period appears to run in parallel lines. In my case, the study on Romantic female-authored poetry and the Female Gothic rarely seem to find each other. The lack of cross-fertilisation between the two lines of inquiry creates a distorted image of the literary output of female authors. The retrospective labelling of texts as 'Gothic' and 'Romantic' implies a strict separation between the two that did not really exist during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This misconstruction has done little good for research on Gothic verse. In examining the overlap between 'Romantic' and 'Gothic' poetry, my research presents Gothic poetry as the "melancholy, decadent, dark side" of Romantic poetry.[116] Foregrounding the notions of melancholy, the uncanny and transgression, my research builds the observation of Caroline Franklin, editor to the *Longman Anthology of Gothic Verse,* who remarks that Gothic poetry is "particularly susceptible to psychoanalytical approaches."[117] Though Freudian psychoanalysis tends to be ahistorical and universalising, the insights offered by Freud's concept of the uncanny resonates with criticism today. Critics consistently refer to the Freudian notion of the uncanny to describe the distortion of the "borderline between strange and familiar."[118] As Franklin argues, Gothic poetry's recourse to archaic spelling, ellipses and narrative fragmentation strengthens the defamiliarizing effects of the uncanny. These identifications will be carried over to my own research.

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[112] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism,* xv.

[113] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*, 6.

[114] Avril Horner and Sue Sloznik, "Introduction," in *Women and the Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, edited by Avril Horner and Sue Sloznik, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016) 1.

[115] Horner and Sloznik, "Introduction," 1.

Lastly, my research builds on Punter's discussion of Gothic poetry. He states that poetry's challenge to "naturalistic narrative movement" produces phantoms and ghosts.[119] Punter's discussion of Gothic poetry puts doubt at its centre and presents the use of the Gothic in poetry as another means to examine limits and boundaries.[120] He identifies the Gothic aesthetic as follows:

> It is instead involved in continual remaking, repetitions with difference, and is always haunted by the ghosts of its own pasts, the legends, the fairy tales, the edges of history with which it is preoccupied: the "pre-occupations" which lay stake to their own space, lodged within the apparently stable house of any "occupied" institution. It is also because Gothic itself keeps on invading spaces which attempt to set limits around themselves; Gothic comes as a reminder that the boundaries between life and death are always malleable, permeable, penetrable.[121]

Punter implicates the Gothic within the grander question of the return of the repressed past and raises the question of how poetry as a form engages with the doubts about the return of a suppressed past. As poetry is more condensed, it cannot rely on elaborate descriptions to convey the traumatic past that has seeped into Gothic spaces such as gloomy castles and derelict abbeys.[122] It must therefore use other devises to represent the repertoire of images and, as Punter demonstrates, Graveyard Poetry presented a source of inspiration. Poets could draw on its lurid imagery and contemplation of morality to approach questions of the past and how its discarded relics can be confronted.[123] Punter's argument brings my discussion full circle, back to the identification of Scottish Gothic's engagement with the return of suppressed histories and an examination of "the discarded past and what remains to rise up against us."[124] Punter's analysis allows me to connect Bannerman's poetry to the figure of the revenant and how it functions "as phenomena of repetition."[125] The following chapter will focus on the figure of the spectre and how it can be used as an analytical tool before analysing the use of spirits in Bannerman's poetry to map alternative historical trajectories.

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[116] Caroline Franklin, ed. *The Longman Anthology of Gothic Verse,* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2010) 12.
[117] Franklin, *The Longman Anthology,* 15.
[118] Franklin, *The Longman Anthology,* 13
[119] David Punter, "Gothic Poetry," in *The Gothic World,* edited by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend, (London: Routledge, 2013) 210.
[120] Punter, "Gothic Poetry," 211.
[121] Punter, "Gothic Poetry," 219.
[122] Punter, "Gothic Poetry," 210.

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[123] Punter, "Gothic Poetry," 213.
[124] Punter, "Gothic Poetry," 213.
[125] Punter, "Gothic Poetry," 219.

3. Reading the Gothic: Flights of Fancy, Uncanny Haunts and Wraiths of the Past

The previous chapters identified two main gaps in scholarship that my research addresses: the exclusive focus on male authors of the Scottish Gothic and the lack of cross-fertilisation between studies on Romantic female poetry and the Gothic. Bannerman, as a woman poet from Scotland, can be considered from two subaltern positions and this study intersects with questions of gender and national cultural identity. I therefore bring to the fore how Bannerman deals with the identified themes of the Scottish Gothic and how her position as a female might affect her engagement with them. The Gothic aesthetic is preoccupied with the past and scholars have identified the Scottish Gothic as particularly fertile to examine and illuminate the process of history-making. The recognition of a Scottish inflection of the Gothic has opened up a space to take a haunting past seriously and to contemplate the uncanny return of phantoms as an indication of a repressed history, as discussed in chapter one. To understand Bannerman's poetry in terms of a haunted memory, I draw from the recognition of the imaginative faculty of fancy as a means to conjure up apparitions. The similarity between the insubstantial nature of fancy and the phantom bridges the gap between Gothic and Romantic aesthetics. Consequently, the haunting capacity of the phantom is construed within the Gothic to render alternative histories visible. My reading engages with the identification of the Gothic trope of haunting and supplements it with recent scholarly output on the spectre in cultural criticism. The aim is to instrumentalise the phantom as an analytical tool that can interrogate the process of modernisation, and how its haunting can propose alternative historical trajectories. Specifically, it examines the question of violence and its relation to Gothic and transgression to raise the question of the possibility of moral judgement.

3.1. Fancy and Sensibility: The Politics of Psychodrama

The faculty of fancy is intimately related to the imagination. Originally synonymous, Romantic aesthetic theory reduced fancy to a therapeutic faculty that could only manipulate experience rather than invent and transform it. Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria,* one of the most influential Romantic accounts of imagination, fabricates a hierarchy between imagination and fancy. Unlike the imagination, fancy is not capable of creating *ex nihilo,* but has to build on existing structures. He claims that fancy is "no other than a mode of memory emancipated from time and space."[126] The status of the faculty of fancy in Romantic aesthetics construes it as second secondary to the imagination and radically breaks with the early modern notion of fancy as an ambiguous power, capable of deceit and destruction, but also of creation and prophecy.[127] The vitality of the faculty can be attested throughout the eighteenth century, as odes and sonnets to fancy abounded, as for instance Smith's sonnet "To Fancy," invoked as the "Queen of Shadows," demonstrates.[128]

The prominence of the Coleridgean dichotomy has obscured the appraisal of fancy in the Romantic era, as it has been brought over into most scholarship on this period. Subsequently, the elevated status of the imagination as paramount to creative genius and artistic production was consolidated. Fancy was downgraded to a childish impulse; as a dispersive faculty it was prone to flightiness and believed to induce delirium and reveries, much less capable of creating a solid, stable vision.[129] M.H. Abrams' *Glossary of Literary Terms* maintains that "[m]ost critics after Coleridge who distinguished fancy from imagination tended to make fancy simply the faculty that produces a lesser, lighter, or humorous kind of poetry, and to make imagination the faculty that produces a higher, more serious, and more passionate poetry."[130] The disparaging description does not grant fancy the possibility of generating a serious nor a passionate poetry. With a stroke of the pen, the faculty is diminished.

This conception of the imagination is moreover embedded within a transcendentalist (Kantian/Schillerian) aesthetic and Coleridge's religious views. For Coleridge, the imagination is a mediating faculty the renders eternal truths and Platonic ideas visible through our perception.[131] Alternatively, Scottish Romantic authors drew from Hume's conception of the imagination – akin to fancy's creative and destructive potency. It construes the imagination as central to our experience of the world through our senses, but simultaneously resulted in a fiction, as the world which we perceive is an assemblage of impressions through the senses.[132] Consequently, Humean scepticism and subjectivism proposes a conundrum for the existence of an objective past: it is impossible to ascertain the reality of the past. Instead, these Scottish Romantic authors propose a fantasy, a re-imagining of subjective impressions of past events, perceived through the eyes of the imagination.[133] Historical memory is thus subject to interpretation, as fancy – synonymous with the imagination – can imagine alternative histories (cf. infra). This construal can intimate a distinguishing element of Scottish Gothic, as chapter one discussed how the aesthetic is used to illuminate a memory under siege and to underscore historical fragmentation.

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[126] Samuel T. Coleridge, "On the Imagination, or Esemplastic Power," in *Biographia Literaria by Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, edited by Adam Roberts, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014) 206.

[127] Donald M. Friedman, "Wyatt and the Ambiguities of Fancy*," The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 67, no. 1 (1968): 32.

[128] Charlotte Smith, "Sonnet XLVII, To Fancy," l. 1.

[129] Jeffrey C. Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry: Fancy in British Romanticism*, (New York (NY): Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 5-6.

[130] M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms 7th Edition*, (New York (NY): Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1999) 87-8.

[131] Robert Cairns Craig, "Coleridge, Hume, and the Chains of the Romantic Imagination," in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, edited by Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorensen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 31.

Moving further away from Romantic aesthetics, Julie Ellison's "The Politics of Fancy in the Age of Sensibility" proposes to read the status of fancy in the culture of sensibility. She argues that sensibility is not just a "taste for pathos," but that it produces a "varied, contested, and ambivalent discourse of emotional action."[134] Her analysis underscores the importance of the socio-political background of the British Empire: "sensibility is almost by definition a culture of a colonial, mercantile empire."[135] Ellison proposes that sensibility cannot be envisaged without victims, affective (re)action needs a populace that is estranged, dispossessed or disenfranchised in some way. Within the culture of sensibility, fancy figures as an "imaginative exercise" that disperses outward, its flightiness allows it to (literally) take the higher ground and to contemplate the unfolding of empire.[136] Fancy's commentary ponders "prospective scenarios," its spirit ranging from apocalyptic to panegyric, commemorative or elegiac.[137] Though diverse in tone, Ellison's conception of fancy always functions to highlight suffering and to impart an affective reaction, but always in the context of imperial sensibility.

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[132] Craig, "Coleridge, Hume," 32.

[133] Craig, "Coleridge, Hume," 34.

[134] Julie Ellison, "The Politics of Fancy in the Age of Sensibility," in *Re-Visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776–1837*, edited by Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) 128.

[135] Ellison, "Politics of Fancy," 129.

[136] Ellison, "Politics of Fancy," 129.

[137] Ellison, "Politics of Fancy," 129.

The association of fancy with sensibility calls attention to its moral and ethical dimension. Sensibility, much like fancy, was long met by distrust from scholars. Its fashion for emotional display was thought of as an unmeasured, excessive outburst of emotion that produced an unstable and formulaic type of literature.[138] Reassessments of sensibility, however, demonstrate how its appeal to emotions and affectivity is connected to (the identification of) "the relativity of value."[139] Jerome McGann posits that the "poetry of sensibility and sentiment" develop "new and non-traditional modes of expression" to contemplate the implications of the sceptical philosophies of the Enlightenment.[140] Early modern philosophers such as René Descartes argued that knowledge relied on systematised perception. This notion was taken up by empiricists such as John Locke who professed that all knowledge is reflection on sensation, problematising the distinction between fact and feeling.[141] Humean scepticism went even further and postulates that passion overrules reason in our conduct. Hume argues that morality is a subjective perception, grounded on an emotional approving of what is just.[142] Sceptical philosophy created a space to contemplate reality in terms of affect and sentiment, as moral judgement was increasingly perceived as a subjective quality and thus underlined the intersubjective consensus of normative responses.[143]

The notion of sentiment and sympathy appears as a central concern for Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, as not only Hume but also Adam Smith, that other Enlightenment Scot, has discussed it extensively. He perceives sympathy as a "work of the imagination that constitutes modern social bonds."[144] According to Smith, sympathy arises not from observing the passions of another person, but in witnessing the situation of another. To sympathise is to imagine oneself in the individual's situation, and as such, an imaginative faculty is necessary to feel sympathy for another human being. Subsequently, our behaviour is not only something we exhibit, but also something that can be scrutinised by others, imparting a sense of propriety. Society holds up a mirror, as we are simultaneously a spectator who observes others, and an object in the eyes of others.[145] For Smith, human sympathy is essential for the moral and social order of society.[146] The sympathetic imagination functions as a conscience, as it allows us to judge the conduct of ourselves and of others. Fancy, as an imaginative faculty, partakes in this social dynamic and enables us to approve or disapprove of exhibited behaviour as we imagine ourselves as the subject of a given situation.

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[138] Susan Manning, "Sensibility," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740–1830*, edited by Tom Keymer, and Jon Mee, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 80.
[139] Manning, "Sensibility," 97.
[140] Jerome J. McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 5-6.
[141] Margaret Anne Doody, "Sensuousness in the Poetry of Eighteenth-Century Women Poets," in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment*, edited by Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain, (New York (NY): Palgrave Macmillan, 1999) 5.
[142] Hina Nazar, *Enlightened Sentiments: Judgment and Autonomy in the Age of Sensibility,* (New York (NY): Fordham University Press, 2012) 2.
[143] Manning, "Sensibility," 97.
[144] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 265.

The growing attention in Scottish Enlightenment philosophy for the role of the passions, the imagination and emotions was carried over to literature. The literature of sensibility relies on the premise that judgement occurs through sentiment, where affective language is used to inspire sympathy amongst its readership and incite social action; against issues such as slavery and poverty, for example. Chapter two already discussed the interventions of women poets in the public debates of the late eighteenth century. Female authors employed the rhetoric of sensibility as an activating agency to incite social change. The representation of feelings and situations of injustice served to illuminate the suffering of others and to hold the nation morally accountable for its actions. The late eighteenth century was moreover an period of tumult and revolution, where institutions such as slavery, colonialism and education were increasingly questioned by progressive and radical thinkers.[147] The voice of the disenfranchised, the repressed and the unfree, was brought to the fore and fancy became a faculty that not only related to chaos, but that could be positively associated with liberation.[148]

3.2. Gothic Apparitions: Fancy and the Ghostifying of Mental Space

Within this context of sensibility, fancy functions as a mode of expression that illuminates the disenfranchised and dispossessed, but it can simultaneously be considered as a faculty that can draw forth "things not present in the senses."[149] Fancy, as a contraction of phantasy, is etymologically connected to the Greek *phantasia,* to make visible, and *phainen,* to bring to light. It is in this form that fancy contributes to the emergence of the Gothic aesthetic that reappraises the "Fairie way of Writing." Joseph Addison uses this phrase, coined by John Dryden, to describe the "kind of writing, wherein the Poet quite loses sight of Nature, and entertains his Reader's Imagination with the Characters and Actions of such Persons as have many of them no Existence, but what he bestows on them."[150] Addison underscores the dependence of this type of writing on the "Poet's Fancy" that works "out of his own Invention." [151] A similar observation is made by Anna Laetitia Barbauld in an introduction to Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto,* the first self-proclaimed Gothic story. Barbauld writes: "[t]he large limbs of the gigantic figure which inhabits the castle, and which are visible at intervals; the plumes of the helmet, which rise and wave with ominous meaning; and the various enchantments of the palace, are imagined with the richness and wildness of poetic fancy."[152] Fancy not only renders something visible, it also conjures up images of objects and figures with no existence in the real world.

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[145] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 265.

[146] Jonathan Heard, "Once More with Feeling: The Scottish Enlightenment, Sympathy, and Social Welfare," *Ethics and Social Welfare* 10, no. 3 (2016): 211.

[147] Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry,* 6.

[148] Robinson, *Unfettering Poetry*, 6.

The association of fancy with the Gothic imaginary to conjure up ghosts renders it an "apparition-producing faculty."[153] The rise of the Gothic runs almost parallel to the decline in the belief in ghosts. Stories about apparitions circulated throughout the eighteenth century, but there was a tendency to debunk them as hallucinations or illusions.[154] Terry Castle's essay collection, *The Female Thermometer,* discusses the interconnection between the act of denying the actuality of the ghost and the "absorbance of ghosts in the world of thought." She locates the commencement of this shift in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novels where real ghosts have been replaced by spectral images of absent loved ones that haunt the protagonists.[155] The characters experience the immediate sensation of being haunted, while her novels dismiss the reality of the ghosts. To explain the seemingly real experience, Lockean epistemology grants the mind the "capacity to revive old impressions."[156] There is, however, a certain inconsistency in this transition: the belief in superstitions and the reality of ghosts declines, but, as Castle remarks, "[i]n the very act of denying the spirit-world of our ancestors we have been forced to relocate it [the supernatural] in our theory of the imagination."[157] Actual ghosts can no longer plague us, but our mind can still conjure up illusions that can haunt us. To account for this apparent paradox, Castle observes that the "urge toward exorcism created its own recoil effect."[158] Ghosts do not disappear but are instead interiorised, suggesting their inevitable return.

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[149] "fancy, n. and adj." *OED Online*. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/68025?rskey=3uB9OX&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed 12 Jul. 2020).

[150] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator,* no. 419, 1712, quoted in Emma J. Clery and Robert Miles, eds. *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook,* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000) 105.

[151] Addison, *The Spectator,* 105.

[152] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "Introduction," quoted in Peter Sabor, ed. *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage,* (London: Routledge, 1995) 87.

[153] Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 174.

[154] Castle, *The Female Thermometer,* 162-3.

Castle's research foregrounds the individual experience, but can be considered in a broader socio-historical framework. Attempts to abolish turbulent elements of history and overwriting them through the creation of an official account inevitably leads to a recoil effect: the suppressed must somehow come back. Duncan has observed that the uncanny functions as a symptom, internalised through the "discourse of cultural nationalism."[159] I briefly touched upon this identification of the uncanny in Scottish literary works of the Romantic period as a sign of disruption between historical orders in chapter one. As such, Duncan links the uncanny in Scottish Romanticism to the return of the repressed, building on Freud's identification of the cultural uncanny which signals "an incomplete act of repression."[160] The uncanny effect, moreover, necessitates that the belief in the actuality of the ghost is superseded, as the uncanny feeling points to the (seemingly) real appearance of "something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary."[161] The decline of the belief in ghosts by the late eighteenth century enables the uncanny to arise, as ghosts are predominantly perceived as figments of the imagination. The original German term, the *unheimlich,* intimates a close connection to the notion of *heimlich,* that which is known. These two notions stand in a dialectical relation that explains the sense of the eerily familiar. The uncanny entails *re*visiting, which imparts a sense of familiarity and having been there before.[162] The susceptibility of the uncanny to suffuse the known and the unknown, the familiar and the unfamiliar, leads Punter to propose that the *unheimlich* invites us to contemplate "super-natural events" that lie beyond our normative experience. He states that the uncanny "reminds us of something which, perhaps, we have *once* known but only in the remote past, whether that past be considered historically or psychologically."[163]

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[155] Castle, *The Female Thermometer,* 123.
[156] Castle, *The Female Thermometer,* 134.
[157] Castle, *The Female Thermometer,* 143.
[158] Castle, *The Female Thermometer*, 139.
[159] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 187.
[160] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 186.
[161] María del Pilar Blanco, and Esther Peeren, "Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities," in *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory*, edited by María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 4.

The uncanny signals ruptures that gnaw at the fabric of time and in so doing, they disturb any linear movement. In the Scottish Gothic, the uncanny effect exposes the recoil: historiographical attempts to locate national distinction in the past forces the displaced elements to find a different outlet. Historiographical output in the eighteenth century rhetorically repositioned the region's history to accommodate the unfolding narrative of the growing British Empire and Scotland's place within the British nation.[164] Through such repositioning, the national difference of Scotland was relocated in the past and separated from the "contentious arena of contemporary politics."[165] In so doing, these narratives sought to create a socio-political and economic imperial identity that could be supplemented by a cultural Scottish one, which did not threaten the incorporation of Scotland into the Union. Essentially, Whiggish historiography constructs a scriptural tomb: it reinvents the sense of the Scottish past, containing it, so that the politico-historical narrative can no longer be an active force in the present. However, historiography's attempts to contain the past within an official narrative does not make it disappear. Alternative narratives and visions linger and the appearances of phantoms gesture towards the resurgence of the past, creating an uncanny effect as "moments of return" are also "instances of displacement, differentiation, and deferral."[166]

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[162] David Punter, "The Uncanny," in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, edited by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, (London: Routledge, 2007) 130.
[163] Punter, "The Uncanny," 131.
[164] Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism,* 66.
[165] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 17.

The uncanny in the Scottish Gothic presents itself as the recoil effect of the selective representation of the past. To engender an uncanny effect through the haunting phantoms, fancy works in two directions. The author calls upon the faculty of fancy to bring forth scenes of terror and the imaginary beings (cf. infra), but the representation of fantastic terror also needs to evoke a sensation of terror in its readership through triggering their fancy. Within the culture of sensibility, fancy draws from an affective language and scenes of suffering to stimulate positive emotions such as sympathy in its readership. In its Gothic guise, fancy does not seek to exercise benevolent feelings, but instead to "excite forlorn, melancholy, and solemn feelings, and dispose us to welcome, with trembling curiosity, the awful being that draws near."[167] To achieve this kind of emotive response, a scene must unite "grandeur and obscurity," which can otherwise be described as the sublime.[168] Edmund Burke, a key theorist of the eighteenth century aesthetic sublime, construes it as the "strongest emotion" that can be evoked by objects. The sublime, writes Burke, "operates in a manner analogous to terror."[169] He stresses the psychological effect of the sublime on the beholder: the sublime derives not from an actual experience of pain, danger, or fear, but is engendered by the beholder's imagining of it. The Burkean sublime operates on the same precept as sensibility, namely that passion and sentiment are the basis on which we experience reality.[170] To tickle the audience's fancy, a sublime scene must impart a suggestion of danger, threat, or terror, but in its uncertainty, it leaves something for the mind to exaggerate.[171]

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[166] Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature*, (New York (NY): Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) 19.

[167] Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry," quoted in Emma J. Clery and Robert Miles, eds. *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook,* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000) 166.

[168] Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry," 168.

[169] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1759) quoted in: Andrew Ashfield, and Peter De Bolla, eds. *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 131.

[170] The Burkean "experiential" sublime is distinct from the Kantian, "epistemological" sublime. The latter is important to the Coleridgean aesthetic, whereas Burke's centrality to the Gothic sublime (in for example Ann Radcliffe and Mary Shelley) has been noted.

[171] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* quoted in Emma J. Clery and Robert Miles, eds. *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook,* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000) 114-5

3.3. Gothic Hauntings: Spectral Disruption in Time and Space

Gothic fancy can thus be activated through sublime scenes of terror. A recurrent element in Gothic tales is the haunt, where the spectre "gives shape to many of the figurations of trauma that characterises the Gothic."[172] Scholars frequently interpret the haunting ghost as a symptom of a disturbing experience that needs to be overcome. For instance, the notion of transgenerational haunting proposed by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok can be used to describe a Gothic tale in which the protagonist is haunted by unstated family secrets, passed down through generations. The protagonist needs only to decode the secret to resolve the haunting. In a similar vein do readings of the Gothic as a modernising mode suggest that ghosts present a figuration of anxieties about a society in transition. The haunt signals a discontinuity and a means for society to cope with change. Such readings of the Gothic perceive the ghost as a trope that needs to be contained within the narrative and whose haunting needs to be solved or explained away. Alternatively, I propose that the Gothic does not function as a mirror or compensation for a society in transition. I instead explore the Gothic as a "vexed site" of containment where alternative histories emerge in terms of identity-building, projection, and subterfuge, as stated in my introduction. In such a reading of the Gothic as an interpretative act, the haunting phantom functions as a tool to signal displacement, disfigurement and disruption.

To construe the phantom and its haunt as such, I introduce recent scholarship on spectrality and hauntology to describe the persistence of elements of the past in the guise of the spectre. Hauntology – a contraction of haunting and ontology – is a neologism coined by Jacques Derrida (1993), whose works show a critical presence of the Gothic.[173] Scholars have used this term to describe the destabilisation of time and space through the haunting capacity of the spectre.[174] As "dark double of ontology," the notion of hauntology underscores Derrida's deconstructionist efforts.[175] Hauntological studies in cultural criticism foreground the notion of the spectre and how spectrality, as it "operates at in-between space," interrogates ontological categories and the modes and limits of perception.[176] Cultural critics have since the 1990s opted to use the term 'spectre' to designate the ghost, because the concept evokes the etymological connection to vision and visibility: "to that which is both *looked at* (as fascinating spectacle) and *looking* (in the sense of examining)."[177] The duality of spectrality makes the term especially suitable for examining and highlighting the liminality of ghosts and the effect of their haunting.[178] As beings neither here nor there, lingering between life and death, spectres present a "paradoxical incorporation" that critics use like a kaleidoscope to contemplate political, ethical, cultural and social issues.[179]

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[172] Andrew Smith, "Hauntings," in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, edited by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, (London: Routledge, 2007) 147.

[173] See for instance, Jodey Castricano's *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

[174] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx. L'État de la Dette, le Travail du Deuil et la Nouvelle Internationale*, (Paris: Gallilée 1993) 89.

[175] Christine Berthin, *Gothic Hauntings: Melancholy Crypts and Textual Ghosts,* (New York (NY): Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 3.

The detachment of the Gothic spectre from an embodiment of fears and anxieties to a disruptive element that signals displacement makes it possible to incorporate the insights offered by recent cultural criticism. Certain scholars on spectrality, such as Esther Peeren and Maria del Pilar Blanco, claim that the ghost in Gothic narratives has a metaphorical use rather than being used as a tool to gain insight into a phenomenon outside itself.[180] The notion of transgenerational haunting, for instance, proposes that the ghost needs to be understood as relating to a family secret that needs to be uncovered and exorcised for the protagonist to move on. Studies on spectrality put forward that the ghost does theoretical work, meaning that it should not be exorcised but understood within the context in which it appears and what its haunting capacity demonstrates. Reading the Gothic ghost as disruptive entity allows me to examine how it contemplates and interrogates the Enlightenment notion of historical progress. The fissures and gaps created by the haunting phantom fracture the linear movement and allows the repressed past to come back through. This phantasmatic space constitutes a "state-of-exception" where different temporalities can cross and meet and where the normative can be interrogated.[181] The spectre's classificatory ambiguity "destabilise[s] traditional organisational categories and the accepted natural order" because they, as heterogenous beings (alive and dead, material and immaterial, real and unreal) draw "into question the relationship of the signifier and the signified and the adequacy of binary thinking."[182] Suspended between states, spectres confuse established epistemological and ontological boundaries and limitations. The discursive and epistemological instability of the ghost can thus interrogate processes of history-making: it "invokes what is placed outside it, excluded from perception and, consequently, from both the archive, as the depository of the sanctioned, acknowledged past, and politics as the (re)imagined present and future."[183] The ghost, with one foot in the past and one in the present, bridges the delineation between the two, interrogating the drawing of the dividing line between past and present.

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[176] Katy Shaw, *Hauntology:The Presence of the Past in Twenty-First Century English Literature*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) 14.

[177] Shaw, *Hauntology,* 2

[178] Shaw, *Hauntology,* 2.

[179] "incorporation paradoxale," Derrida, *Spectres,* 25.

[180] del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, "Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities," 3.

[181] Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) 1.

The ghost not only brings in repressed histories, but also implicates a reflection on ethics and injustice. Contemporary scholarship on spectres and haunting associates the ghost with disappearance, dispossession, and injustice. In these readings, spectrality not only questions the temporal sedimentation, but also interrogates the "spatial sedimentation of history and traditions."[184] The disruptive spectre does not so much de-synchronise time, but it creates an atmosphere of doom and gloom, signalling displacement. The ghost, even as an analytical tool, "remains a figure of unruliness pointing to the tangibly ambiguous."[185] A (non-)being that is neither here nor there flickers between states and categories, it aptly conjures up that which is excluded. The absent presence of the spectre can invoke the unjust and the displaced. Avery Gordon's sociological reading of the haunt presents it as "an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known."[186] For Gordon, haunting and spectrality provides a means to grapple with "modern forms of dispossession, exploitation and repression."[187]

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[182] Erika E. Hess, *Literary Hybrids: Cross-Dressing, Shapeshifting, and Indeterminacy in Medieval and Modern French Narrative*, (New York (NY): Routledge, 2004) 143.

[183] del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, "Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities," 9.

[184] del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, "Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities," 2

[185] del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, "Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities," 9.

[186] Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, (Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press, 1997) xvi.

[187] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters,* xv

In *History, Memory, and State-sponsored Violence: Time and Justice*, Berber Bevernage likewise employs the spectre as a figuration that can "speak about others who are not present in the name of justice."[188] Building on Derrida's assertion that the spectre can only be contemplated when "time is out of joint," Bevernage connects spectrality to our modern chronosophy – the way in which we construe time. He draws on the analytical distinction between an irrevocable and irreversible past identified by Vladimir Jankélévitch to describe an experience of the (irrevocable) past that clings to the present:

> [t]he irreversible, a having-taken-place (*avoir-eu-lieu*) that should primarily be deciphered as a having-been (*avoir-été*), refers to a transient or fleeting past. The irrevocable, a having-taken-place most often associated with the having-been-done (*avoir-fait*), in contrast, is stubborn and tough.[189]

The distinction relies on the experience where the irreversible, the having-been, implies that an event is a thing of the past and can no longer affect the present. Conversely, the irrevocable describes a kind of continuum, where the event occurred in the past, but can still be a relevant force in the present. As such, the irrevocable creates an experience of contemporaneity between past and presence, which challenges the modern consciousness of time that defines itself as an arrow that propels forward.

This temporal system is, moreover, the result of the Enlightenment historicism that conceives a (teleological) linear, chronological time and in turn relates to the discursive construction of modernity. Modernity is not a supra-historical notion, but the effect of practices that are enacted by non-literary and literary discourses. As such, modernity is fragile, as Jurgen Habermas proposes, because it needs to repeatedly renew "the break with the past in order to distinguish itself."[190] This necessity implies that modernity functions as what Frederick Cooper has described as a "claim-making concept," it is "a way of talking about the world in which one uses a language of temporal transformation […] in which 'tradition' is produced by telling a story of how people became modern."[191] The production of a specific narrative of the past creates a present that can differentiate itself from the past on the basis of progress. This conception is prevalent in Whiggish historiography, that, as Herbert Butterfield states, has the tendency "to emphasise certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present."[192]

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[188] Berber Bevernage, *History, Memory, and State-sponsored Violence: Time and Justice*, (New York (NY): Routledge 2011) 135.

[189] Bevernage, *History,* 4.

[190] Bevernage, *History,* 14.

[191] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History,* (Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 2005) 114.

Bevernage's irrevocable past resists this process, because it functions as a spectre, neither absent nor present, that gestures towards a fissure that interrupts the present moment. Ghosts "introduce a constant 'anachrony' in the present; they provoke an untimeliness and disadjustment of the contemporary."[193] The introduction of ghosts shatters temporalities and in so doing it resists the effectuation of the rupture between past and present that occurs in historiography and hinders the (re-)assertion of modernity. The interconnectedness between modernity and modern historiography was already proposed by Michel de Certeau. He formulates modern historiography as "a tomb in the double sense of the word in that, in the very same text, it both honours and eliminates. [...] It can be said that writing makes the dead so that the living can exist elsewhere."[194] De Certeau's conception points to the role of history-writing as a means to contain the past. Concurrently, the spectral persistence of the past withstands the construction of a scriptural tomb by historiography. The past that was closed off from the present returns and destabilises the linear, forward movement. The appearance of the ghost renders visible the repression and seeks to amend the construction of the past. It excavates the layered nature of history, as observed by Wright in her discussion of the Scottish Gothic.[195] In so doing, the ghost disrupts the rupture between past and present and opens up a space to contemplate the process of becoming modern.

Haunting serves to disfigure the present, calling attention to the injustice done in the past, but also serves as a call to action. The creation of the contemporaneity between past and present also intimates new prospects; the resurgence of the past also points toward the future. Derrida construes spectres as both *revenant* and *arrivant:* they signal a 'returning' and a 'coming.'[196] This duality reveals that the appearance of ghosts does not necessarily implies a negative outcome. The acknowledgement of what happened in the past can inspire to act consciously in the present as to create a better future. Katy Shaw reads this duality as a "tripartite haunting, the specter resists any finite end to the past, and instead encourages a new awareness of the role of the past in the present of contemporary culture."[197] The haunt can therefore function as both a means to render the (repressed) past visible, and as a signal of conscientious action where we can look back to the past and decide to change the course of history. The interrogation of history and the laying bare of the blind spots and the repressed voices can also intimate a moral responsibility, an ethical consideration to contemplate alternative outcomes based on what happened in the past.

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[192] Butterfield, *Whig Interpretation,* v.

[193] Bevernage, *History,* 142.

[194] Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History,* trans. Tom Conley (New York (NY): Columbia University Press, 1988) 101; Michel de Certeau, *l'Ecriture de l'histoire,* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975) 140-1.

[195] Wright, "Scottish Gothic,"76.

3.4. Gothic Violence: Transgressive Acts and Cruel Justice

Fancy is a social figure: it hovers, soars and haunts to draw attention to displacement, both on a temporal and spatial scale. Bannerman's fanciful flights are often accompanied by visions of destruction and arbitrary violence directed at innocents. The violent outburst of fancy, I contend, has a double-edged potential as both a source of empowerment and of critique. To this end, I draw from Arendt's conception of violence as instrumental. Violence is not a property that belongs to the empowered but is a tool that "stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues."[198] Violence is never an end in itself, but a means to an end that can be used, abused and appropriated by anyone, even those in a disempowered position. The concept of violence as a tool that needs justification will be expanded on through Frantz Fanon's reading of revolutionary violence as a means of liberation in the context of decolonisation. The cathartic element of violence identified by Fanon enables me to connect it to the *femme fatale* in Gothic literature, especially in the works of Charlotte Dacre, where violence can function as a form of empowerment. The destructive and violent forces of fancy function as a “strategy for resistance to certain kinds of injustice and inequality” and re-imagines spaces of potential power.[199]

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[196] Derrida, *Spectres,* 56.
[197] Shaw, *Hauntology,* 13.
[198] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence,* (San Diego (CA): Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1970) 51.

Violence always appears within a context. Arendt’s reflection on violence as instrumental intimates that violence can never be disengaged from the envisioned end of the party that wields it. Her suggestive essay, *On Violence,* has been met with controversy – not in the least because of its harsh statements about the Black empowerment student movements – but her understanding of violence can stand on its own.[200] Characteristic to violence, suggests Arendt, is its need for implements, tools that can be used for a particular purpose to inflict damage and destruction. Because of this, violence is “ruled by the means-end category,” it operates within a deliberate stratagem that pursues a specific objective.[201] However, violence is an uncertain and dubious instrument that “harbors within itself an element of arbitrariness.”[202] Though unpredictable in its result, acts of violence tend to be rational within the system in which they intervene. The “hierarchy and the entropy implicit in violence” warrants a contextualisation of violence.[203] Nigel Gibson asserts “[v]iolence cannot be allowed to speak for itself. It does not have its own meaning but it has a context and a history [...] To be made thinkable, violence has to be historicized.”[204] To contextualise violence is to discuss its historical contingency and to acknowledge that it must always be discussed in terms of its practical application and how it is mediated through human action.

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[199] Kaley Kramer, “‘How Do You Like My Darkness Now?’ Women, Violence, and the Good ‘Bad Girl’ in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*," in *Bad Girls and Transgressive Women in Popular Television, Fiction, and Film*, edited by Julie A. Chappell and Mallory Young, (New York (NY): Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) 15-6.

[200] Arendt’s *On Violence* is especially harsh on the rhetoric of violence present in the student movements of the ‘60s, and especially in the Black Empowerment movement and leads her to make some prejudiced and offensive statements regarding the radical Black student movements and their aims (though she condemns racism in the same essay), Iris Marion Young, "Power, Violence, and Legitimacy: A Reading of Hannah Arendt in an Age of Police Brutality and Humanitarian Intervention," in *Breaking the Cycles of Hatred: Memory, Law, and Repair*, edited by Martha Minow and Nancy L. Rosenblum, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 261-3. More elaborate critiques on racial prejudices in Arendt are for instance Kathryn T. Gines, *Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question*, (Indiana University Press, 2014); Michael D. Burroughs, "Hannah Arendt, “Reflections on Little Rock,” and White Ignorance." *Critical Philosophy of Race* 3, no. 1 (2015): 52-78.

[201] Arendt, *On Violence*, 4.

[202] Arendt, *On Violence,* 4.

[203] Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim, “General Introduction: Theorizing Violence in the Twenty-first Century,” in *On Violence: A Reader*, edited by Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim, (Durham (NC): Duke University Press, 2007) 7.

[204] Nigel C. Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003) 105.

Violence is thus never politically or morally neutral, as it is justified by the end it pursues. Fanon, a French psychoanalyst and an important anti-colonialist thinker, elaborates on the violence inherent to the colonial order in his *Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961, *The Wretched of the Earth,* 1963). For Fanon, violence does not belong to either the coloniser or the colonised but is embedded within the system and decolonisation is only possible through violence.[205] The colonised, writes Fanon, "liberates himself in and through violence."[206] Revolutionary violence – violence in the context of liberation and decolonisation – is not aimed at the destruction of the coloniser (in theory). Alternatively, Fanon underscores the emancipatory force of violence, that was not about the readiness of the colonised to kill, but to give his own life for freedom.[207] Revolutionary violence can be justified as the (only?) means to liberate oneself, within the context of the decolonisation of Africa. Moreover, Fanon's account raises the question of sanctioned violence and its relation to legitimacy. Legitimacy is a concept of moral reasoning, that much like justification, provides a reason for doing something.[208] As discussed above, Enlightenment empiricism progressively stressed the subjective nature of morality, resulting in the awareness that morality relies on intersubjective consensus. Fanon's conception of revolutionary violence can be justified if an intersubjective agreement is reached amongst the populace that sanctions its liberating force. However, can it be legitimatised?

To make matters more complicated, Arendt distinguishes between legitimacy and justification: "violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate."[209] She hints that the distinction has to do with the fact that justification appeals to the future, where legitimacy refers back to the past, but she does not elaborate on this suggestion. There is something to be said about this distinction, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines justification as "the action of or result of showing something to be right," thus pointing towards the future to demonstrate the rightness of something.[210] Legitimacy, alternatively, alludes to “conformity to the law” or “some recognised principle,” and while based on agreement, it harkens back to the past in which such an agreement was made.[211] Arendt’s conception of violence as instrumental, a means to an end, implies that it cannot find legitimacy in the past, it can only be justified by what it brings about. The outcome predicates its moral sanctioning. Furthermore, as violence is always contextual, its justification will always be limited and dependent on the point of view of the commentator. The subjective nature of morality implies that certain acts of violence can be perceived as justified by one group, while another condemns it. Actors and victims alike shape accounts of violence: “[w]hat is celebrated in one place may be mourned in another. Memory is never an equal balance, or a neutral lens, of human experience and history.”[212]

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[205] Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la Terre,* (Paris: La Decouverte, 2002) 81.

[206] "l'homme colonisé se libère dans et par la violence" (my translation). Fanon, *Les Damnés,* 83.

[207] Fanon, *Les Damnés,* 89-90.

[208] Young, "Power, Violence and Legitimacy," 273.

[209] Arendt, *On Violence*, 52.

[210] "justification, n." OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/102224?redirectedFrom=justification (accessed 16 Jul. 2020).

Violence is disruptive and unpredictable, but not irrational. It always appears in a context and its moral justification depends on the end pursued through the use of violence. Gothic novels abound with violence. A conventional feature, violence is most often put on display as an instrument of the villain, who represents a threat “to consume the world of civilised and domestic values.”[213] The violence is usually directed at a persecuted heroine, who at times is valiantly defended by another male whose violence is aimed at the preservation of her virtue. Rarely are women permitted to use violence in traditional narratives, and if they do, it “generally results in their social exclusion” or their untimely end.[214] Certain Gothic novels, such as Mathew Lewis’ *The Monk* (1796) and Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya* (1806), deploy a more violent and horrific Gothic imagination and represent empowered female characters. *The Monk*’s Matilda and *Zofloya*’s Victoria are two women that depict a “feminine Eros” that devolves into violence.[215] The characters find themselves in similar situations as those of the Radcliffean heroine, but instead of enduring silently, they take their fate into their own hands. Matilda allies herself with Satan to get what she wants, which eventually leads to her downfall and inevitable persecution by the Inquisition. If Lewis' Gothic novel was controversial, Dacre's was met with even more scorn, as it was not deemed appropriate for a woman to write about female desire and violence.[216] Her "unabashedly libidinous" imagination represents female characters who do not shy away from manipulation and the use of violence. The novel moreover depicts a woman, Victoria, who gives in to her desires, and even though it ends in disaster, she "*does* give in without regrets or repining and is unrepentant to the novel's final page."[217] The novel shows the degeneration of a proper woman into "an unsexed, unfemale, and unnatural body" as the result of emotional and physical violence.[218]

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[211] "legitimacy, n." OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/107111?redirectedFrom=legitimacy (accessed 16 Jul. 2020).

[212] Lawrence and Karim, “General Introduction,” 1.

[213] Fred Botting, *Gothic,* (London: Routledge, 2005) 3.

[214] Kramer, “’How Do You Like My Darkness Now?’” 17.

[215] James A. Dunn, "Charlotte Dacre and the Feminization of Violence," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 53, no. 3 (1998): 307-8.

The violence used by these transgressive women is aimed at furthering their own gain and fulfilling their own desires. Temporarily successful, they demonstrate that violence can lead to empowerment, but their disastrous end demonstrates the failure of violence when justified for individual gain. Fred Botting notes "violent executions of selfish ambition and voracious passion and licentious enactments of carnal desire" appear to be celebrated in Gothic narratives.[219] The power and violence of characters such as Matilda and Victoria transgress the conventional laws of possibility and indulges "in fanciful ideas and imaginative flights" that challenges reason.[220] The Gothic terror threatens not only reason, but the overall disintegration of the socio-political and cultural fabric of reality as transgression implies a variability of boundaries. Transgressive acts thus threaten the organising structure of reality and creates a continuum between dichotomic categories:

> [t]he moral, political and literary ambivalence of Gothic fiction seems to be an effect of the counter-vailing movements of propriety and imaginative excess in which morality, in its enthusiasm to identify and exclude forms of evil, of culturally threatening elements, becomes entangled in the symbolic and social antagonisms it sets out to distinguish.[221]

Where moral justification of violence depends on the end it pursues, the Gothic's ambivalent play of transgression resists a clear identification of any governing structure, even of the justification of violence. Instead, it implicates both good and evil, both reason and irrationality, morality and immorality, because the terms are interdependent. The threat that emanates from transgressive figures breaks down the hierarchical conventions that regulate society.

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[216] Beatriz González Moreno, "Gothic Excess And Aesthetic Ambiguity In Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*," *Women's Writing* 14, no. 3 (2007): 420.

[217] Charlotte Dacre, *"Zofloya, or the Moor,* edited by Kim Ian Michasiw. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) viii.

[218] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 130-1.

[219] Botting, *Gothic,* 4.

[220] Botting, *Gothic,* 4.

[221] Botting, *Gothic,* 6.

Bannerman's poetry displays violent encounters as different temporalities and geographies meet. Her poems interrogate the politics of empire and colonisation through the staging of specific episodes of the past, rife with justifiable violence. The foregrounding of voices of the victims of empire raises the question of aggression and violence within the context of imperial politics. Violence functions as a means to push conventional understanding of the world to its limits. It contemplates the possibility that there is no guiding authority and that morality is intersubjective; what we morally approve or disprove is grounded in the eye of the beholder. Where sensibility and affective language evoke sympathy, violence, alternatively, evokes chaos and a threat to society. The violent phantoms of the past intimate aggression and in the hands of the haunting spectres; the violence enhances the spectre's destabilising and transgressive effect. Violence enacted by Bannerman's spirits, re-imagines the spaces of potential power and connects it to scenes of exploitation, dispossession and war.

The following chapters build on this framework in the analysis of Bannerman's poetry. Fancy both functions as a spectre to contemplate the repercussions of the past in moral terms and to conjure up displaced voices. The faculty of fancy induces apparitions of the past, but, I argue, these phantoms not only question the writing of history, but also ponder the implications of the past for the present and the future. I examine how the phantom functions as both a social figure and as a means of reckoning, enacting a cruel justice founded on the *ius talionis* principle. In so doing, Bannerman's poems perform fancy in her various guises, as both a figure that can conjure up alternative vision for the future, but also as a destructive force that seeks only oblivion.

4. “Time Shall Be No More:” Visionary Fictions and the Ghosts of Future’s Past

This chapter concentrates on two narrative poems of Anne Bannerman: “The Genii,” and “Verses on an Illumination for a Naval Victory” (henceforth “Verses”). Both poems are written in heroic couplets, but differ greatly in length. “The Genii” is the longest poem of her collection, spanning 406 lines, the “Verses” counts 142 lines. I place these two poems side by side because both trace historical trajectories and present a commentary on the current state of the world. “The Genii” is grander in its scope as it presents a theocosmological myth that narrates the early beginnings of the Genii and ends with their destruction. The “Verses” instead focuses on a smaller temporal scale. The naval victory is not immediately located in time and space, but can be connected to the French Revolutionary War. Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia relate the poem to the “Glorious First of June,” which was the first naval conflict between France and Great Britain, in 1794.[222] Fought out on the Atlantic, the British gained a “strategic and psychological victory,” though they had not been able to block the ships with grain from reaching the French coast at Brest.[223] More overtly political, the “Verses,” not so much celebrates the victory, but interrogates the commemoration of it, demonstrating the bloodshed and inhumanity that comes with it. The wandering view presented in these poems imagines an observer that moves “through the world, assembling a view of society from multiple fragmentary sights and interactions.”[224] Ingrid Horrocks construes this wandering figure as a means for women authors to evoke “experiences of marginality, coercion, difficulty and desolation.”[225] The use of wandering fancy in Bannerman’s poems participates in a wider enterprise of wartime female authors to contemplate sympathy, imagination and exile.

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[222] Paula R. Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia, British Women Poets of the Long Eighteenth Century: An Anthology, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) 450.

[223] Roger Knight, "Howe, Richard, Earl Howe (1726–1799), Naval Officer," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13963. (Accessed 27 Jul. 2020).

[224] Ingrid Horrocks, *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility, 1784-1814*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) 39.

[225] Horrocks, *Women Wanderers,* 201.

These topics were, as discussed in the second chapter, frequently addressed by female authors during the late eighteenth century. These two poems are global in reach and are illustrative of female poets' engagements with the expanding British Empire and its wars. Behrendt argues that the sentimental mode is predominantly used by female poets to underscore the intimate sphere of experience that illustrates individuals who suffer from the aftermaths of a non-specific war, making a universal appeal to pathos and humanity.[226] Bannerman's poems participate in this rhetoric of sentiment and sensibility as they highlight the casualties of war and empire, but also raise questions pertaining to the morality of Britain's actions. The "Verses" and "The Genii" examine the question of war, colonialism and violence and as this chapter will demonstrate, fuse fancy with the sublime, affect with terror in a fragmented narrative. In so doing, they not only interrogate the past, but also contemplate its implication for the future.

Remarkably, the poems conclude with an apocalyptic vision. These endings, together with the key themes explored in Bannerman's poems, ties into millenarian anxieties that were present at the turn of the century. A sense of crisis and uncertainty dominated, made more imminent through the "cataclysmic political events," and visionary literature flooded the market place.[227] The futuristic agenda turned to the past and grabbed hold of it to validate and re-affirm the power of Great Britain.[228] This visionary aim proposed by Stuart Curran, however, is largely based on male-authored texts. In a similar vein do most male poets of the time sensationalise and glorify war, which provides a stark contrast with female voices (e.g. Maria Barell, Anna Barbauld, Charlotte Smith, Helen Maria Williams) who emphasise the human costs of war.[229] Alternatively, Penny Bradshaw demonstrates that female-authored poetry proposes a different vision: "[r]ather than imagining a utopian future which heralds a return to Britain's legendary past, they instead use the narrative of past events, to imagine a logically projected future."[230] Bradshaw's compelling thesis rests on an analysis of "Beachy Head" (1806) by Charlotte Smith and *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812) by Anna Laetitia Barbauld. She argues that they use the "fantastic device of time-travel to provide a vision of the ruins of British and European civilisation."[231] The poems by Smith and Barbauld construe a dystopian vision in which the ruin of empire implies the ruin of patriarchal society. Upon the smouldering ashes, women could re-imagine the world and build it anew, doing away with the oppressive elements that existed before.[232] I expand on Bradshaw's analysis and include Bannerman's poems as these interrelate visions of the past with the prospects for the future. I want to note, that while the poems foreground similar themes, Bannerman did not base her poems on the works of Barbauld and Smith, as these were published after the appearance of Bannerman's first poetry collection. Though intertextuality is possible in the other direction, it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine potential influence.

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[226] Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 87.

[227] Penny Bradshaw, "Dystopian Futures: Time-Travel and Millenarian Visions in the Poetry of Anna Barbauld and Charlotte Smith," *Romanticism on the Net* no. 21 (2001): 2. https://doi.org/10.7202/005959ar (the article has only been published on the web and has no page number, instead I refer to the paragraph numbers that are mentioned on the webpage).

[228] Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 159.

[229] Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 114.

4.1. Crossing the Threshold: The Vision's Paratextual Frame

The two poems have received paratextual support that can lead its readership in a certain direction. Paratext are textual devices that guide the reader inside the text; these can take the form of epigraphs, advertisements, footnotes and other elements that can "be situated in relation to the location of the text itself."[233] "The Genii" is more extensively framed, containing not only footnotes, but also an argument that precedes the poem proper, and the collection's advertisement that warns its readers of a resemblance to Erasmus Darwin's (1731-1802) *Botanic Garden* (1791). Darwin's poem consists of two parts, the first, "The Economy of Vegetation," blends natural history with mythology to record the technological and scientific advances of society. The second part, "The Loves of the Plants," fashions plants with human sensibilities and characteristics. Darwin was an English physician and a "promotor of industry," favourably inclined towards machine labour, as well as being a slave-trade abolitionist.[234]

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[230] Bradshaw, "Dystopian Futures," 3.

[231] Bradshaw, "Dystopian Futures," 2.

[232] Bradshaw, "Dystopian Futures," 4-5.

[233] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Tresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 4.

[234] Martin Priestman, *The Poetry of Erasmus Darwin: Enlightened Spaces, Romantic Times,* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) 193.

Like "The Economy of Vegetation," Bannerman's "The Genii" includes discussion on the formation of the natural world and its phenomena such as earthquakes and volcanoes. The drawing of a connection between the two – that Bannerman claims is "accidental" – can however function as a selling point for her collection. Darwin's poem was favourable and enthusiastically received and as the advertisement bring the *Botanic Garden* to the mind of prospective buyers, Bannerman could potentially benefit from it.[235]

Of more particular interest to the content of "The Genii" are the opening argument and the footnotes. The argument is essentially a brief rundown of the different scenes presented in the poem and offers a clear insight into the extensive range of the Genii, both temporally and spatially. The argument establishes their "malignant influence" that operates on the level of the world, causing earthquakes, shipwrecks and volcano eruptions, whilst also destroying "domestic happiness."[236] The represented incidents of history intermingle world-scale exploitation, such as the unfortunate lot of the miners excavating the silver from the mines of Potosi and "negro-diving," where slaves are forced to dive into the sea for pearls, with more intimate scenes of suffering.[237] In so doing, the argument creates an impression of formidable forces that are associated with scenes of woe and exploitation. The connection between misery and the will of the Genii, moreover, suggests that the poem offers an exploration of the origin of evil in the world. Several footnotes supporting the poem reference *Genesis,* which in conversation with the poem strings together a parallel account of creation. In particular, the poem addresses the temporary loss of the sway of the Genii when "the Son of Heaven" was given dominion. However, as "that awful hour of terror came" and "Man retreated from his Maker's eye," the Genii could regain "their primeval sway."[238] The postlapsarian condition of humanity allowed the Genii to once more wreak havoc in the world.

This reading is also supported by poem's title, which invokes a supernatural entity. Bannerman's Genii are a form of spirits that have a certain kinship with the Persian djinns, a supernatural being that can be both benevolent and malevolent. Lesser spirits than angels, Muslim demonology, classifies djinns as beings that are "said to have the power of appearing in human and animal forms, and to exercise supernatural influence over men."[239] The poem's direct intertext with *Tales of the Genii: Or, The Delightful Lessons of Horam, The Son of Asmar* (1764), referenced in the footnotes, supports this association. The *Tales of the Genii* was said to be written by Sir Charles Morel, who presented the text as an authentic translation of a Persian manuscript. It was later found out that the *Tales* were entirely made up by James Kenneth Ridley (1736-56), who used the *Arabian Nights* as main source of inspiration. The poem merges eastern mythology with Christian themes, supported by references to *Genesis,* but also implicitly refers to another class of supernatural beings. In pagan belief, a genius was held to be a "tutelary god or attendant spirit, allotted to every person at birth to govern his or her fortunes and determine personal character, and finally to conduct him or her out of the world."[240] The poem does not specify the mythological background of these beings and could be inspired by either, or both. The history of the Genii sketched in Bannerman's narrative foregrounds the malignant influence of the supernatural beings on the world and those who live in it. The poem's paratextual framing suggests an account about supernatural forces that govern the world and who cause misery and evil.

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[235] Janet Browne, "Botany for Gentlemen: Erasmus Darwin and 'The Loves of the Plants'" *Isis* 80, no. 4 (1989): 595.

[236] Bannerman, *Poems,* 2.

[237] Bannerman, *Poems,* 2.

[238] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 37, 39, 43.

The "Verses," is more modestly framed. There is a footnote that contains a reference to a historiographical work on America, written by Scottish historian William Robertson (1721-93). It concerns a scene of a solitary warrior who sets out alone to "cut off a straggling enemy."[241] Another footnote references two lines from William Cowper's *Task,* a narrative poem published in 1785 that deals with the poet's reflections on personal and political occurrences of the time. The intertexts of these meditative preoccupations and the "Verses" will be discussed in more detail in a later section, as it has specific bearing on the visionary aspect of Bannerman's poem. Of substantial significance to the reading of the poem, is the epigraph, an excerpt from French dramatist and poet, Jean-Baptiste Rousseau(1671-1741) "Ode VI. A La Fortune" (c. 1716). Rousseau's ode is a balanced contemplation of fortune, which he describes as a "deceiving idol."[242] The poem addresses the inconsistency in favouring certain warriors, such as Alexander, while condemning others, such as Atilla, for essentially acting the same way. The lines cited by Bannerman are taken from the sixth and seventh stanza, which questions the voice of praise. It interrogates the costs of war and wonders what the admiration of the victorious is worth, when their splendour was gained through the destruction of others.[243] It calls them out as "ruthless conquerors" and implicates us as "insensible judges" who "admire such exploits."[244] The epigraph of the "Verses on an illumination for a naval victory" intimates that the poem will not be celebratory in tone, but will offer instead a nuanced account of victory. The title is suggestive as well, as it illuminates victory and through the epigraph, suggests the arbitrary nature of triumph and victory.

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[239] "jinn, n.". OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/101355?redirectedFrom=jinn (accessed 18 Jul. 2020).

[240] "genius, n. and adj.". OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77607?redirectedFrom=genii (accessed 18 Jul. 2020).

[241] William Robertson, *The History of America, Vol II,* quoted in Bannerman, *Poems,* 28.

4.2. "The Storms that Shake the Tenements of Clay:" The Charms of the Genii

The paratextual frame of the poems tips off the reader about its content. In the case of the "The Genii," by way of the title, the reader is aware that the subject of the poem has something to do with supernatural beings. The poem's opening confirms this and immediately presents them as powerful and omnipresent entities:

> "Yes! 'twas your thunder – Awful Genii, hail!
> Who, thron'd in terrors, ride the Siroc gale,
> Whose fires in Aetna's sulph'rous bosom glow,
> Whose cold, on Arctic rocks, congeals the snow;[245]

The first line links them to thunder. Thunder, as a weather phenomenon, generates a loud noise following the discharge of lighting that violently disturbs the air.[246] It is usually heard as a low rumble that can reverberate. Since antiquity, thunder has also been associated with a dominant and formidable god in a polytheistic pantheon: Zeus was the king of the Greek and Roman gods, Thor was a prominent figure in Germanic religions, as his name lives on in Thursday. In the Bible, moreover, thunder metaphorically represents the voice of God, thus not only connecting the prowess of the Genii to pagan beliefs, but also giving them Biblical connections.[247] Not only are the domineering forces, they are also inescapable. The poem associates them with the "Siroc gale," the "Aetna," a volcano in Sicily, and the "Arctic rocks."[248] The Siroc gale designates an "oppressively hot and blighting wind" that originates from the North-African coast.[249] The Genii are geographically spread across the world, ranging from the Mediterranean to the Northern polar region, while they are simultaneously associated with the elements of air, fire and ice. This elemental connection is expanded on in the succeeding lines that demonstrate their "fearful force" over the "portals of the skies," the sea, the "deepest caves," and mines.[250] The Genii's command is enhanced further through the alliteration of obstruent consonants that replicate a forceful tone. As an obstruent is formed through restricting the airflow, the t, d, and k-sounds similarly create an obstruction that mimics the oppressive character of the Genii as well as the disrupting noise of the thunder.

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[242] "trompeuse idole," Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, "Ode VI: à la Fortune," in *Les Oeuvres De Mr. Rousseau: Poésies Diverses*, (Paris: Pierre Ribou, 1716) l.5. (my translation)

[243] "Quels traits me présentes vos fastes," "des murs, que la flâme ravage, / des vainquers, fumans de carnage, / un peuple au fer abandonné." Rousseau, "Ode VI," ll. 51, 55-7. (my translation)

[244] "impitoyables conquérans," "juges insensés que nous sommes, / nous admirons de tels exploits." Rousseau, "Ode VI," ll. 52, 61-2. (my translation)

[245] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 1-4.

[246] "thunder, n." OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/201527?rskey=BG1GoR&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed 18 Jul. 2020).

The beginning of the poem establishes their "sov'reign sway" and associates them with the creation of the world, which sprung "from Chaos' dreary bound."[251] In this state, the Genii are associated with darkness and "the realms of night," from which they observed the dawning of the earth. Their "drear abode" is contrasted with the "lavish beauty gay" and "sweet verdure" of the green earth, which breaks up the imposing and threatening atmosphere of the Genii and creates a moment of tranquillity. The "new-born day" fashions a *locus amoenus* with hills and blooming flowers, brightened by the sunshine, casting them in “purple tinges,” and where the “summer breeze” emits a “faint flutter.”[252] This almost idyllic scene, where “all was good,” was initially the dominion of the Genii, they “possess’d the throne,” and “reign’d alone.” Their reign was disbanded when the “Son of Heaven” was given dominion of “the earth’s wide shores” by the “Power Omniscient.”[253] This shift in “imperial power” led the Genii to flee and relocate to “the clifted cave.” As indicated above, the Genii regained their influence after the Fall. From their cave, they “heard earth’s solid centre reel, / when the bright angel grasp’d the flaming steel,” and regained their “primeval sway.”[254] The ascent of the Genii is heralded by a show of strength: “they thunder’d with triumphant ire,” humanity is shaken by “subterraneous fire,” which, given their connection to the Etna, likely signifies volcano eruptions, and earthquakes, as their “hands uptore / the rooted rocks.”[255]

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[247] W.R.F. Browning, "thunder," in *A Dictionary of the Bible*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199543984.001.0001/acref-9780199543984-e-1910 (accessed 18 Jul. 2020).

[248] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 2-4.

[249] "sirocco," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, edited by T. F. Hoad, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192830982.001.0001/acref-9780192830982-e-13955 (accessed 18 Jul. 2020).

[250] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 5-11.

[251] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 12-3.

The poem suggests their tremendous power and their connection to elemental forces such as volcano eruptions, earthquakes and strong winds, but never lets them take a definitive form. The propensity for destruction displayed by the Genii and their obscured presence makes them sublime forces. The Genii are described as “[m]ysterious” and hailed as “[t]remendous,” “dark,” and “terrific” which intensifies both the unknowable element and the vastness of these entities.[256] Mystery and darkness evoke the obscure and indicate an undefinable shape. Tremendous and terrific are terms that can be associated with magnitude and intensity and suggest an impressive presence that excites trembling or awe.[257] Though indeterminate, the Genii are comprehensive and magnificent beings, obscure and dangerous. The suggestion of threat and unknowability of the Genii renders them sublime. The sublime, as discussed in chapter three, is an overpowering emotion that is elicited through the imagining of fear, pain or danger. It arises from the tension between the evocation of danger and threat and the will to live. Sheer power is, as Burke observes in his *Philosophical Enquiry,* a source of the sublime, which is most often associated with a superior being. The experience of pain, he argues, arises from a fear that the power and strength "should be employed to the purposes of rapine and destruction."[258] The sublimity of power, and the terror it evokes, lies in the possibility of the force and violence being directed to us. The Genii present such a threat, as they can potentially overwhelm and destroy us.

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[252] Bannerman, “The Genii,” ll. 20-8.
[253] Bannerman, “The Genii,” ll. 28-32.
[254] Bannerman, “The Genii,” ll. 41-3.
[255] Bannerman, “The Genii,” ll. 45-8.
[256] Bannerman, “The Genii,” ll. 317, 125, 177, 267.
[257] "tremendous, adj.". OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205497?redirectedFrom=tremendous (accessed 21 Jul. 2020).

4.2.1. The Imperious Rulers: The Genii and the Question of Empire

The Genii's penchant for destruction and their forceful presence resonate with their imperial tendencies. Throughout the poem, they are hailed as "fateful powers," "terrific kings," "malignant tyrants," "impetuous powers," "dread kings," and "imperious rulers."[259] The office granted to the Genii is one of dominion and ranges from the more neutral king and ruler, to the more pejorative tyrant, implicating them in a more oppressive and ruthless rule. The adjective modifiers convey the impression of unrestrained, reckless, grim, domineering and commanding powers, thus tying in to the earlier assessment of the Genii as sublime and oppressive forces. Their dominion is extensive as they "rule supreme" in "land, and sea, and air, and fire," which enables them to enact their will.[260] Their imperial prowess is also demonstrated by their physical conquering of space. The poem details their pioneering spirit as their "feet have trac'd" unknown places and their "piercing sight" has seen "expanding shores" that "long have slept, in undiscover'd night."[261] The conquering spirit of the Genii is supplemented by their enormous wealth that they have taken and hidden away in the earth. They have "aspir[ed]" to create and amass riches, having "rear[ed] the pillar'd dome" and retire in "long-extending palaces" on "glitt'ring thrones, and canopies of gold."[262] The association of imperial power with wealth is quite befitting of an imperial-colonial economy. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) connects the contemporary system of commerce to the emergence of the European colonial empires. He argues that "[t]he motive which excited them [the Spaniards] to this conquest was a project of gold and silver mines."[263] Like the European nations that explore the earth to find riches – whether in the form of silver and gold, or arable land – the Genii too, hunt for treasures that can be "yield[ed]" from the "deepest caves."[264]

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[258] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry,* quoted in *Gothic Documents,* 116.
[259] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 49, 197, 287, 341, 365, 393.
[260] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 54-55
[261] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 199-202.
[262] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 60-2.

The poem establishes the Genii not only as harvesters of the riches of the earth, but also as their manufacturers. The power of the Genii holds sway over the "gloomy demons of the mines."[265] While the Genii lead from "mounts of gold," "riches" are "spurn[ed]," the "shining spoil ; / [f]rom cumb'ring clay the precious ore refine, / to form the treasures of the dreary mine."[266] The "dreary mine" is identified as the mine of Potosí, the "silver-beaten throne" where the Genii reposed.[267] This filling of the mine was done before "the vaults echoed to the miner's moan."[268] The choice of the mine and its relation to the stock of wealth of the Genii is not incidental. The mine in Potosí was the primary source of silver coming out of Latin America during the early modern period, and was initially in the hands of the Castilian crown, and gained the title of *Cerro Rico,* "rich mountain." The digging up of silver was undertaken by both free and unfree indigenous labourers and not always in the best of conditions.[269] Bannerman's poem takes up the exploitation of the mine by the Spanish and casts the conquistadores in an ungratifying light: the "tremendous and unpitying host" leads "death and slaughter to the western coast." The pillaging and slaughter of the Spaniards awakens the Genii from their slumber, as the "ponderous stroke" of the "loud axe" "stain[s] the lustre of your [the Genii] favourite seat."[270] Representing the Spanish as spoilers who claim the riches for their own angers the Genii, who seek their vengeance. Awoken form their slumber by the conquistadores, they "[u]nmoved," and trough their "terror-working spells" "[b]ring hideous spectres from their yawning cells."[271] Like the fiery whip of the Balrog of Morgoth, these spectres

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[263] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, (Dublin: printed for Whitestone, Chamberlaine, W. Watson, e.a. 1776) 406.
[264] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 10.
[265] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll 10-1.
[266] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 69-72.
[267] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 76.
[268] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 75.
[269] Rossana Barragán, "Working Silver for the World: Mining Labor and Popular Economy in Colonial Potosí," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 97 no 2 (2017): 194.
[270] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 84-5.
[271] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 88-90.

"brew the blast" and their "pestilential breath" sweeps through "the caves of death."[272] The digging for the "envied ore, might also yield a grave."[273]

The show of power from the Genii and the havoc they wreak on the miners is the first act of the Genii located in time and space. The poem suggests that before the Spanish set foot on American soil, the Genii had momentarily ceased their showing of force, as the poem details: "every breath was still; / no earthquakes thunder'd your relentless will."[274] The Genii, imperial powers themselves, become angered when the Spanish set foot on their domain and return with a vengeance. The onslaught of the Genii, in this instance, is located within the context of imperial aggression and colonialism. The Spanish conquistadores seek riches and to get them, they enter the domain of the Genii and exploit the mine and its workers. The response of the Genii can be read as a defensive strike. They are disruptive agents of chaos and imperial tyrants in their own right, but they react when provoked and their violence needs to be placed in the context of imperial ambitions. The arbitrary violence of the Genii can be interpreted as a commentary on the system of wealth accumulation and the search for riches in the heart. The Genii punish the miners for the greed of the Spanish, demonstrating that the riches of the earth are hard-won and amount to an early death.

A similar retaliation against the instrument, instead of the actor, occurs in the poem's representation of "Negro-diving." Again, the Spanish are implicated as perpetrators, as the footnote states that "[t]he Spaniards employ their negro slaves in diving for pearls, along the coast of Terra Firma, and particularly in the Bay of Panama."[275] The scene is now set on the ocean, that like the mines, is the domain of the Genii and their wealth, the "foaming waves" can be cleaved to reveal "their treasures."[276] Hidden beneath the Pacific sea, their "coral palaces" stand, adorned with "emeralds" on "crystal pedestals," and "sapphires" that "blaze" on "their summits."[277] In these "deep retreats" they hold their "wat'ry reign" and are left to their own devices, as no "wanderer annoys, / nor dares" to reach into their caves.[278] There is but one who passes on this "dangerous way, / thro' the deep caverns of Panama's bay," and that is the "poor Negro."[279] He advances through the treacherous waters "[t]o drag the treasures from their dark abode."[280] The "jealous eyes" of the "tremendous rulers" espy the "fated victim" "weakened from the tedious toil," and instead of killing him outright, they allow him to return to the surface with his "sever'd spoil."[281] He catches his breath and then:

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[272] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 90-1.
[273] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 94.
[274] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 81-2.
[275] Bannerman, "The Genii," 19.
[276] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 9-10
[277] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 295-8.

> From some wild gulf, that pours the sweeping storm,
> The furious shark uprears his scaly form,
> In awful hunger, rolls his flaming eyes ;
> The luckless sufferer turns, and shrieks, and dies.[282]

The Genii retaliate and punish the diver for stealing from them, sending a ruthless shark to do the killing.

The violent defence of the Genii is aimed at protecting what is theirs, namely the wealth and riches of the earth. In the eyes of the Genii, as represented in the poem, their assault can be justified as a reaction against an incoming threat. However, in showing that the victims of the attacks are the slaves and miners, the instruments so to speak, instead of the actors, the poem intimates that the disputes amongst imperial powers and wealth affects the disenfranchised. It is the Spanish crown that uses these miners and slave divers to unearth the riches who then become the victims of the Genii's revenge. The actual perpetrators, the Spanish, escape the immediate wrath of the Genii, instead having to replace their labourers to make profit. The Genii, because of their merciless retaliation, do not appear as forces that evoke sympathetic response. They might defend their homes, thus justifying their response, but the result is more destruction and suffering. Exploitation is met by violence and it does not solve anything, it only perpetuates a cycle of (needless?) destruction. This perpetuation is also implied in the description of the Genii's pioneering visit to African shores. The excursion on the African continent ranges from the "Lybian wastes" to the "golden sands" of "Gambia" and is likened to the travels of a

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[278] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 299-300.
[279] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 301-2.
[280] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 306.
[281] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 307-10.
[282] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 313-6.

"noble lion" who "pursues his way, thro' solitary lands."[283] This lion is eventually threatened by a new host, that can defeat him, laying "the kingly tyrant at their feet."[284] The victory of this unspecified host, herald the promise of "conquests yet to come," indicating that though the lion has been defeated, another power will rise to the occasion.

The Genii are cruel actors of reckoning, but they also wreak havoc when fancy strikes them. They unleash a storm "when dark fury sways," and observe its process "with souls unmov'd" and with "gloomy joy."[285] The effect is intensified, as they "drag the tempest from its channel'd cell" which in "its fateful progress [is] rapid to destroy."[286] The result of this unleashing is a "dark Maelstrom" whose "furious torrents boil / [r]ound the rough marge of Moskoe's fearful isle."[287] The description relates to the Moskenstraumen, one of the most powerful tidal currents in the world, that was said to destroy all vessels that came near it.[288] The poem links this natural phenomenon with the Genii, stating that they "thunder at the source / and lend the whirlpool its destructive force."[289] While the vortex is formed, the "mighty monarch of the northern sea" rises up from his cave and gets caught in the vortex of the Maelstrom.[290] Struggling against the "gulf of death," he is eventually driven to the rocks and "is seen no more."[291] The mighty monarch is identified as a whale, as the footnote specifies that the "frightful cries" stems from these animals that howl "in a frightful manner" as they try to wrestle free from "the force of the water."[292] The imagery in the following line confirms this, as "frantic with despair," he "flings his monstrous water-spouts in the air," but cannot regain control.[293] Where earlier the Genii were related to predators such as the lion and the shark, here the whale becomes the victim of their destructive current.

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[283] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 206-7.
[284] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 224.
[285] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 241-3.
[286] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 242, 244.
[287] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll 245-6.
[288] "maelstrom, n." OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/112107?redirectedFrom=maelstrom (accessed 21 Jul. 2020).
[289] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 249-50.
[290] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 253-6.
[291] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 259-4.
[292] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 257.
[293] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 257-8.

The whale appears as an unfortunate casualty of the Genii. This mighty monarch can be the British Empire, as they are an important player on the northern seas, but also because they increasingly established their rule over the seas during the eighteenth century. The British Empire came to be viewed as "Protestant, commercial, maritime and free" with James Thomson's ode "Rule Britannia" (1740) as an important proponent of that vision.[294] The whale's demise by the Genii demonstrates that while Britain might believe that they rule the waves, the Genii have the final say as they can unleash "avenging storms" and can submit the waves to their "proud control."[295] Similar to the struggle between the lion and the conquerors that beat it back and killed it, the mighty monarch's reign will end. The empire will one day fall as no imperial power can last forever. Alternatively, the whale can be analysed as the Old Pretender, James Francis Edward Stuart, and the Genii's Maelstrom as the Hanoverian dynasty that sweeps up the mighty monarch, who eventually relinquishes his claim to the throne. Either way, both readings point to the inevitable downfall of any ruler or imperial power, which ties in to the downfall of the Spanish colonial enterprise in Latin America, the French expeditions in Louisiana and Haiti, the Portuguese in Africa and eventually, the British in the Americas. These imperial powers might temporarily hold power, but they must eventually relinquish it.

Another reading is possible through the poem's intertext with William Collins' "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland, considered as the Subject of Poetry" (1788). Bannerman's footnote draws a parallel with the Ode, citing the following line "round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle."[296] The reference is made with the contrasting formulation in her poem, detailing how the "furious torrent boil / [r]ound the rough marge of Moskoe's fearful isle."[297] The first difference is the geographic space, the Hebrides lie to the west of Scotland, whereas the isle of Mosken is situated in the northern part of Norway and is an uninhabited rocky isle. The alternative spelling is not uncommon, as Edgar Allen Poe also used "Moskoe-Stromen" in his short story "A Descent into the

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[294] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 173.
[295] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 239, 248.
[296] William Collins, "An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands," quoted in Bannerman, *Poems,* 16.
[297] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 245-6.

Maelström."[298] The other contrast is between the actors and the course they follow. Collins "Ode" was posthumously published, in incomplete form, in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* (1788). The "Ode" presents a flight of imagination that surveys the superstitions and legends of Scotland and establishes the region as "Fancy's land."[299] The quotation is taken from the ninth stanza that discusses the "skirting wing" of the muse as the Hebrid isles are surveyed by the poet's fancy.[300] The gentleness of the muse's presence contrasts with the ruthless path of the "furious torrents" of the Genii's maelstrom. In drawing this incongruity via the footnote, Bannerman opposes the destructive force of the Genii and the gentle, creative force of the poet's fancy that can survey the landscape and leave it unharmed. The power of fancy can then be interpreted as an alternative to the imperial powers and as a force capable of intimating brighter prospects.

4.2.2. Omnipresent but not Omnipotent: The "Benign Hand" and the Promise of Hope

The potential of hope and alternative visions of the future are presented in the poem. The Genii appear as inescapable and vindictive forces, but the poem demonstrates that they are not omnipotent. The poem makes them the perpetrators of the earthquake and tsunami that ravaged Lima in 1746. The scene portrays a "hush'd city" in the night that is taken by surprise by the "play" of the "massy engines."[301] The link between the disruption and machinery is interesting, as it can be read as a commentary on the advent of industrialisation in Britain that has a similar disarranging effect as the earthquake. It cleaves the existing structures and organisation of society, creating a growing labouring class in the cities, and a dwindling population in rural places. This connection is perhaps implied, but the commentary is not developed further as the poem's focus remains on the "sound of thunders" and the "furious waves" that rouse the "affrighted victims" from their sleep.[302] The "dreadful scene" details the individual fate of two people. The first presents a "frantic mother, clasping wild, / to her quickheaving heart her sleeping child," as they wait on a remnant of their house for "the shock" that will soon "level all."[303] The power of the Genii is indiscriminate and destroys anything and everyone it its path, save one. A man on a tower watches the scene unfold, observing how the "mountain-wave's returning force" sweeps through the city, overwhelming the buildings.[304] As he "gaze'd" "death's sullen spectre scowling by his side," he is taken by the "gloomy tide," but a "hand benign" saves him "from the grave."[305] This hand benign can be interpreted as the hand of God. Earlier in the poem, the Genii fled when the "Son of Heaven" had been given dominion of the earth. A literal interpretation could take the hand benign to be an act of kindness from a stranger. When the man is almost swallowed up by the waves, a boat appears and he attempts to reach it, but his efforts are foiled by the wild sea. It could thus be that a person in the boat was able to rescue the man from the waters.

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[298] James D. Hart, and Phillip W. Leininger, "Descent into the Maelström, A." In *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195065480.001.0001/acref-9780195065480-e-1289, (accessed 28 Jul. 2020).

[299] Collins, "An Ode," l.19, quoted in Clery and Miles, *Gothic Documents,* 41-6.

[300] Collins, "An Ode," ll. 148-41.

[301] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 96-7.

[302] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 99-102.

The potential of foiling the Genii might lie in an act of kindness, which is alien to the Genii. The poem implores the Genii to feel pity upon viewing displays of affect amongst people, especially in scenes of mourning. Within this address, a reference is made to the "grateful Hamet," whose story can be found in the Thomas Day's *History of Sandford and Merton* (1783), as the footnote elucidates. Day's short story collection is aimed at children and seeks to educate them about the excesses of the colonial system and inspire abolitionist sentiments. Day's *History* follows Tommy Merton, a young aristocrat who grew up on a plantation in the West Indies and was sent to England for his education. Self-absorbed and bad-mannered, he treats the household servants poorly, but through the influence of his English peers, and especially his friendship with the farmer's son, Merton becomes a virtuous gentleman.[306] The *History* in showing the transformation of Merton aims to demonstrate the "ignorance and corruption endemic to the imperial system."[307] The publication of the *History* was immediately met with success and remained "enormously popular" in the following century.[308] The contemporary readership was most likely familiar with the book's contents; the association established with the *History* in the footnote and abolitionist sentiments could be discerned by them.

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[303] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 103-6.
[304] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 109-14.
[305] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 115-24.
[306] Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism,* 169.
[307] Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism,* 169.
[308] Thomas Day, *The History of Sandford and Merton,* edited by Stephen Bending and Stephen Bygrave, (Peterborough (ON): Broadview Press, 2010) 10.

The question of sympathy raised through scenes of mourning uses a language of affect. As discussed in the previous chapters, female poets of the late eighteenth century often gave a voice to the social injustices of the world. The poem's scenes appear to function in a similar way, as a very sensibility-laden description of a "pale mourner" follows.[309] She tries to hide her anguish as "[n]o heart-wrung sighs her agonies betrays."[310] However, as she traces the "alter'd feature of that long-lov'd face" which betrays the loss of life, she can no longer control her "stifled feelings" and "tears of keenest pain unbidden roll."[311] The lack of specificity about the time and space makes the mourner interchangeable. She can signify any woman that lost a loved one, whether it was through war, natural disaster or natural causes. The universality invites the readership to imagine that this could be them, or a female loved one in mourning. Moreover, the appeal to sympathy and morality follow the reawakening of the Genii and their role in an earthquake in Lima and the consequent tsunami that swept away Callao, the neighbouring port town. The Genii are not only masters of the elements, but their indiscriminate violence also destroys "domestic joy."[312] It could happen to anyone, which strengthens the entreaty to pity and empathy.

To emphasise the supplication for compassion, "[b]enignant spirits" are hailed.[313] The unspecified "spirit" leaves out whether the appeal is directed at the benevolent djinns, which according to the mythology exist, or whether a different type of spirit is called upon. These spirits "bind the wounds of sublunary care," and have "angel smiles" that can "chase away / the storms that shake the tenements of clay."[314] These spirits console humanity, as implied by the sublunary, and to do so, they must "[d]escend" from their "silver couds" where they "[i]nhale the fragrance of the summer wind."[315] These spirits come from the superlunary region and are thus heavenly in nature. So far, the Genii, though associated with air in the guise of winds, have been connected to mines and caves, places below the ground from which they unleash their wrath. Conversely, the benignant spirits dwell in the higher regions and must come down from their clouds to sooth the cares of humanity. The heavenly nature of the gentle spirits is echoed in the type of visions they, "[i]n midnight slumbers, to the fancy bring."[316] In times of woe and misery, they provide visions of "eternal spring," "golden glories," "the heavenly day," and "unmingled bliss."[317] The description of the scenes of hope insinuates a providential scheme. The devastation wrought by the Genii is placed within the grander scheme of things that will eventually establish peace and joy in the world:

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[309] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 141.
[310] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 144.
[311] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 145-50.
[312] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 130.
[313] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 151.
[314] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 152-6.
[315] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 153-5.

> Say, tho' the boast of human pride is o'er,
> And hope extinguish'd, to revive no more,
> Life eternal shall repair the woe
> And soothe the memory of the scenes below.[318]

This glimpse of relief displayed as a promise of the afterlife helps to make sense of the witnessed horrors and softens the pain and despair of humanity.

The Christian message of the poem presents a counterpoint within the bleak and violent history of the Genii. It can be read as imparting a message of Christian love for your neighbours as its placement follows from the rescue of a man by a stranger, and an appeal to compassion that devolves into a supplication to the benignant spirits. This intermezzo of peace is broken up by the impossibility of the Genii to be swayed by a "throb of rapture."[319] Instead, the poem presents another display of power, this time moving towards the northern reaches, "where Boreal tempests roll."[320] From this "giant throne" in the "bleak pole," the poem moves "beneath the burning line," toward the African continent, signalling once again the extensive spatial range of their power.[321] From there, they survey the "polar night" and the "tropic blaze," and actively "guide the world of waters."[322] However, once again, the Genii's power is not absolute. Though the poem demonstrates how they conjure up "sweeping whirlwinds" and "internal storms," they can still be overpowered by the "soft spirits of fluid air."[323] Amidst a "dead sea," made wind-still by the Genii, a mariner, "in vain" watches "for th'accustom'd gale."[324] The connection with Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) is not explicitly made, but the exposition of the mariner's situation hints at an intertext with the poem: "the hush'd waves" keep "in sullen silence" and a "death-like calm" arrest the "stiffen'd keel" of the mariner.[325] Neither "bark" nor "flagging sail" is moved and "gloom obscures the way."[326] Like Coleridge's mariner, the one in Bannerman's poem finds himself trapped in a dead sea without winds to move him along. In the *Rime,* the ship got stranded because the mariner had killed the albatross, which brought the wind to guide them forward. "The Genii" does not impart why the mariner finds himself in such a situation, it appears as an arbitrary act of the Genii. They created a storm, but "not a zephyr flies," until "[f]rom heav'n's high arch, the fav'ring breezes" are brought by the soft spirits.[327] The power of the Genii is broken and the heavenly spirits allow the mariner to resume course which returns "to his breast the flame of hope."[328]

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[316] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 159.
[317] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 159-64.
[318] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 165-8.
[319] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 180.
[320] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 183.
[321] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 197-9.

4.2.3. Turning the "Fiery Tide:" The Fall of the Genii and the End of Time

It is in fire that the Genii will eventually find their downfall. Though their "spells can penetrate the realms of fire," the poem asks if the "imperious rulers" still "dare" to "aspire / [t]o wield the sceptre of the realms of fire?"[329] The Genii have used fire as a means of destruction, erupting volcanoes such as the Etna on Sicily and the Hecla, a volcano in Iceland. These "eternal deluges of liquid flame" contain the "ardent element" they have currently conquered, but they will have to release their hold on it.[330] The "meaner deities" of fire "shall, for your ruin, all its force combine, / [t]o sweep from nature's face your dreadful line."[331] Throughout the poem it has already been intimated that the power of the Genii will be broken. In the beginning, they temporarily fled from the sight of the "Son of Heaven," and though they regained their sway on humanity after the Fall, their powers were not absolute. Benign strangers, gentle spirits and soft winds could intervene and eventually, the end of time will destroy the Genii:

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[322] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 229-31.
[323] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 266, 279.
[324] Bannerman, "The Genii," l. 271.
[325] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 168-70.
[326] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 273-4.
[327] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 275-80.
[328] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 284-6.
[329] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 393-5.
[330] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 380, 395.

> Thro' rolling ages, and the tide of time,
> In strength uninjur'd, piercing, and sublime,
> Your eyes shall stretch along the track of day,
> And scan its glories, –till they decay.
> –But, when the skies shall glow, in living fire,
> Your powers, your terrors, and your spells expire;
> Your reign is finish'd when, from shore to shore,
> The seraph's trump reveals, that Time shall be no more.[332]

Their reign is not unlimited and will come to an end. The glory, the riches and wealth of the Genii is, moreover, transient, as they will decay. The power they hold, will fade and as empires rise and fall, so shall the Genii expire from the world.

The destruction of the Genii can be placed within an eschatological frame, as the fire is said to devour the wicked in *Revelation* 20:9, and the "seraph's trump" announces that the "dead shall be raised incorruptible," as stated in *Corinthians* 15:52. The initial glimpse of relief in times of suffering halfway the poem comes to fruition. The millenarian expectations evoked by the cataclysmic events set off by the colonial enterprise of Spain and the ensuing battle of control where the sceptre passes from one nation to another eventually leads to the inevitable end. The poem does not explicitly pit nation against nation, but it does present imperial powers combatting one another for riches, as the Spanish seek the silver in the mines of Potosí, Portugal plays an important role in the mapping of the African coast, and Britain's growing dominance over the seas implicates them within a battle over the waves with the Genii. The impression of warring forces recalls the "days of vengeance," as described in the Gospel of Luke. He relates that nations and kingdoms rise up against each other, that great earthquakes will occur, certain places will be ravaged by famine and pestilence and "there will be terrors and great signs from heaven."[333] The doom and gloom following the Genii's whims heralds the coming of the end where the supplication for compassion can be read as a saving grace.

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[331] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 396-8.
[332] Bannerman, "The Genii," ll. 399-406.

"The Genii" interweaves scenes of destructions with visions of hope in which needless victims of imperial ambitions and individuals are saved by the kindness of benign beings. The unfolding narrative, in combination with the argument, connects the Genii to the ravage, suffering and destruction that befalls humanity. The Genii are established as powerful, unfeeling and omnipresent forces in the world. They are tyrants who rule an empire and who do not condone contenders to their throne. Though the British Empire is never mentioned, their imperial practices are implicated in the poems through the parallel with other imperial empires such as Spain. Moreover, as Behrendt argues, female poets who explicitly take a stance against the policies of the British Empire risk to be cast out of the public sphere or deprived of any male assistance.[334] To bypass this danger, female authors developed strategies such as focussing on pathos and sentiment to make their case, as well as remaining unspecific, instead of implicating a particular war or event, they demonstrate the universal consequences.[335] Bannerman adopts these strategies and appeals to sentiment and compassion, and foregrounds the practices of other empires. In so doing, she implicates Britain and holds it accountable, yet she does not explicitly denounces the Empire.

However, the poem shows how the battle for dominion unravels as others come to seek out the riches of the world. The confrontations between imperial powers and the collateral damage – the disenfranchised, such as the miners and the slaves – foregrounded in the poem's narrative examine the dark-side of empire, namely the exploitation of human beings in the search for riches. The demonstration of these excesses and the inescapable and cruel reckoning of the Genii with these victims raises the question of justice and morality. The vision of ruin of the Genii portents the ruin of empire. Unlike Barbauld and Smith who present a ruination without a promise of the future, Bannerman's "The

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[333] Luke 21:10-11.

[334] Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 86.

[335] Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 87.

Genii" promises the End for the faithful. The question is, will the British Empire, with its imperial ambitions and established rule, survive the fiery tides sent down from above?

4.3. "Conquest Rides the Crimson'd Waves:" An Illumination of the Deceitful Charms of Victory

The paratext of the "Verses" intimates that the poem will provide a nuanced account of victory and an interrogation of the praise accorded to the victorious. The poem itself opens with a pompous celebration of the victory. The "trumpet's voice" heralds the victory and the shouts of the triumphant resound in the night.[336] The "note of joy" does not last long as it is quickly undercut by the blood that was spilt to gain the victory: "Rejoice ; it is the shout of victory! / Rejoice o'er thousand in untimely graves ; / Rejoice! For Conquest rides the crimson'd waves."[337] The anaphora of "rejoice" stresses the celebratory sentiment of a victory. However, while initially "the shout of victory" gives a reason to celebrate, the other two lines give it a bitter note as the attention is drawn to the bloodshed that preceded the victory. The costs of victory are made tangible, as thousands have found an untimely grave, indicating that their lives have been cut short. The imagery of the "crimson'd waves" brings to the fore how much blood has been spilt to achieve victory, as the normal blue waves are now tainted with blood. The celebratory joy of the victorious party is disrupted by the emphasis on the bloodletting and dead that is rarely taken into account upon celebrating. The poem makes the contrast explicit and raises the question of whether "triumph and applause" are in order when "glory flies / [t]o heap the pile of human sacrifice."[338] The celebration of the glory that comes from victory is once again related to an imagery of dead and bloodletting. Similar to the epigraph taken from Rousseau's "Ode VI," the opening verses demonstrate how warped our sense of judgement is because we applaud triumph and victory that came at the cost of ravage and carnage.

The initial scene foregrounds how victory comes at a cost of human sacrifice, an anonymous, unknown mass. To make this loss more immediate, scenes of mourning are presented: a weeping widow and a "frantic mother" who implores Heaven with her cries.[339] This appeal to sensibility demonstrates that death happens to other people. The soldiers are gone, defeated, but they leave their loved ones behind and a new dawn does not bring them any "respite" nor can "their breaking hearts" be cheered up by the "golden day."[340] Akin to the scene of mourning presented in "The Genii," the loss felt by the mother and widow are universal and interchangeable. They are not linked to a specific culture and because they are not located in space, the mourning can be for the "youthful warrior" from either the victorious or the losing side.[341] The affect laden scene and the pervading sense of misery appeals to the sensibility of the readership and illustrates the costs on a more personal level as it shows how war affects the home front. The scenes of mourning underscore the inhumanity of war using the unique perspective of grief-stricken widows and mother to address the justification of conquest.

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[336] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 1-5.
[337] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 1, 6-8.
[338] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 9-12.

4.3.1. "Accurs'd the Deed:" The Arts of War

The hypocrisy of celebrating triumph and violence is also highlighted throughout the poem. The "Verses" show how an "uncultur'd savage spurns the arts of peace," as he seeks out his foe, "impell'd by hatred, and revenge his guide."[342] As they engage in battle, the atmosphere becomes gloomy and Gothic-like:

> […] afar he sees a form,
> Half-viewless, stalking thro' the misty storm
> Nearer he comes ; his frantic eye-balls glare,
> And yells inhuman ring along the air:
> They meet, engage ; affrighted Nature flies ;
> A fearful darkness dims the low'ring skies ;
> Revenge beside them points th'envenom'd stings,
> And murder shrouds them, with his gory wings.[343]

The foe appears as a spectral form, shrouded in mist that obscures him and as he draws near he becomes a threatening being who emits an inhuman yell. The ominous atmosphere and the battle in which they engage makes Nature fly hinting that hand-to-hand combat does not sit well with the order of the world.

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[339] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 13-6.
[340] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 17-20.
[341] Bannerman, "Verses," l. 16.
[342] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 22-3.
[343] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 31-8.

This unnaturalness is made more palpable by the obscured setting, the skies are dimmed and darkness descends. The Gothic imagery is played out to the fullest, as murder and revenge are personified as monstrous beings that envelop the combatants. The representation of revenge as a venomous creature underscores the ability of revenge to infect humans with its venom. Likewise does the presentation of murder as a winged entity make the bloodletting tangible, as its wings are stained with gore, underscoring the carnage it can inflict. The threat of bloodshed and the inhuman character of it that sends Nature running highlights the monstrousness of combat and takes away the possibility of perceiving it as righteous or noble. The Gothic atmosphere thrills the reader with its depiction of darkness and violence, but also interrogates the repercussions of aggression and violence.

Whereas the previous scene focused on the "uncultur'd savage," the following scene aims to illuminate the hypocrisy of the "Sons of Europe." Where the savage is propelled by revenge, the sons of Europe are less forward with their motivation. To the violence amongst the savages they respond with disgust, as they cry "accurs'd the deed."[344] However, as the poem continues, it becomes clear that they do the exact same thing. They "boast" that "milder mercy gilds [their] favour'd clime."[345] The use of the verb "gild" intimates an embellishment, a layer of polish that makes their wars justifiable, as they pursue mercy and seek to end oppression as to "lull the jarring universe to peace."[346] Like the hand-to-hand combat of the savage, the sons of Europe "wrap Destruction in his native night" and "scatter death around."[347] The outrage at the display of violence of the savage is not felt upon their own outpouring of "a torrent's force," as they stand "unmov'd," and "view the living tide."[348] The lack of indignation at their own violence echoes the opposition Rousseau identified in his "Ode VI," where he states that the conquering spirit of Alexander the Great is praised and celebrated, but the same spirit of Atilla the Hun was scorned.

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[344] Bannerman, "Verses," l. 39.
[345] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 41-3.
[346] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 43-4.
[347] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 46, 50.
[348] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 51-2.

This observation shows how important the perspective of the fighter is and whether they feel it to be justified. If the conquest and combat is enacted in the service of a national cause and aimed at expanding their own territory, it is deemed justifiable, but when it is not placed in such a context or when European nations are threatened, it is no longer just, but a sign of uncivilised behaviour. The hypocrisy of the European comes to its climax as the poem states that "untutor'd Murder low'rs, / [b]ut all its keener, deadlier arts–are ours."[349] Earlier, murder was personified as a winged monster, but here it is shown as an unguided instrument that is turned into a deadly art by the Europeans. The committed atrocities are the result of strategic planning and human efforts, and the instrumentality of these arts is, much like violence, a means to an end. The end, conquest, justifies murder as it is situated within the European sanctioning of war to expand or defend their own lands.

4.3.2. "The Last Shriek of Nature:" Aggression, Violence and Compassion

The poem questions the justification of war not only through representing Gothic-tinged scenes of combat and bloodshed, but also in construing conquest and war as antithetical to nature. In the above described hand-to-hand combat with the savage, Nature flew from the scene, "affrighted." This polarity between war and nature is also implied when Nature is introduced in the beginning Nature, upon observing the "bloody scene," "mourns her broken laws."[350] If war breaks the laws of nature, then its opposite, peace, provides a natural state. The want for peace is first intimated when a "Spirit, from fields of day" is invoked and presents a scene of tranquillity after the visceral display of violence. The idyllic locale from where the spirit hails is described as light, airy, flowery and colourful, which provides a counterweight for the darkened and gloomy atmosphere from the combatting forces. The spirit is then taken out of the "Gay Beauty" and the "clear conclave of unclouded blue" and placed "where the hostile armies join, / [b]y the red waters of the rushing Rhine."[351] The tranquil atmosphere is broken and again replaced by darkness as the battle unfolds and "the full tide of Desolation spread[s]." The poem details how the spirit would pause at such a scene and how he would "seek, in vain, to find / some trace, in Man, of an immortal mind ; Man, who can glory in a scene like this."[352] Akin to the affrighted nature, this gentle spirit would be in shock and wonder how men can not only exhibit such violence, but also how they can rejoice in the desolation it brings. The spirit, moreover, would look "in vain" for "an immortal mind," intimating that the salvation of the warriors is in jeopardy because of their behaviour.

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[349] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 53-4.

[350] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 10-1.

[351] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 61, 64-66.

As if to remind these soldiers of salvation, the darkness of the scene once more gives way to a promise of peace, because even in the darkest of times, one can still "look to brighter worlds, for endless bliss!"[353] The contrast between the promise of peace and the destruction presented before is emphasised through the poem's intertext with Cowper's *Task*. The "Verses" exclamation, "O! for a lodge, where Peace might love to dwell," is linked to the opening lines of the second book of Cowper's poem via a footnote.[354] Bannerman's footnote cites the following lines: "O for a lodge in some vast wilderness, / some boundless contiguity of shade."[355] Cowper's extensive poem is an overall reflection on rural life and nature, as well as a "prophetic work" that contains a "vigorous attack on the lax social and political attitudes of the time."[356] He is, amongst others, dissatisfied with the carelessness of youth, who prefer "dalliance to soldiering" and the self-indulgence and luxury that threatens the social fabric and political apparatus.[357] The second book is entitled "The Time-Piece" and the argument details that the opening presents a reflection on the "conclusions of the former," and the first part of the book deals with the "peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow."[358] Book one concludes with an empire under threat of ruin, "a mutilated structure soon to fall," due to the negligence of the youth.[359] In the opening of second book, the poem's speaker is weary of the constant stream of reports about "unsuccessful or successful war" and the "wrong and outrage with which the earth is fill'd." He mourns the broken brotherhood and the war amongst nations that could otherwise be kindred regions.[360]

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[352] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 71-3.

[353] Bannerman, "Verses," l. 74.

[354] Bannerman, "Verses," l. 75.

[355] William Cowper, *The Task,* quoted in Bannerman, *Poems,* 31.

[356] William Cowper, John D Baird, and Charles Ryskamp, *The Poems of William Cowper*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) xii.

[357] Cowpers, Baird and Ryskamp, *The Poems,* xiv-v.

[358] Cowper, Baird and Ryskamp, *The Poems,* 137.

[359] William Cowper, *The Task,* I, ll. 773-4.

[360] William Cowper, *The Task,* II, ll. 4-8.

The opening of Cowper's second book resonates with Bannerman's poem, as it also reflects on the meaning of victory. Cowper's ruminations contemplate the situation as it is, the "Verses" imagine a space of peace away from the war. It envisions a "fairy isle" where "War ne'er led his victims to the grave."[361] The presentation of an idyllic locale, with "tufted groves," engenders a transporting experience that activates Fancy and helps to picture scenes of an eternal spring.[362] The promise of "endless bliss" and "blooms perpetual, thro' the vernal year," serve to "sooth" the "pensive breast."[363] The dream of peace is a reverie, drawn from the "poet's fancy" who seeks to balance the visceral scenes of bloodshed with a hope for a brighter world.[364] This scene of "Rapture" is fleeting, as soon "mad Ambition bade the battle rage, / [a]nd Man with Man eternal warfare wage."[365] Where earlier revenge was identified as instigator of battle, here the poet's speaker recognises "mad Ambition" as the culprit of war. The singling out of ambition has bearing on the justification of war. The poem already interrogated the sanctioning of war in defence of national territories by implicating the strategic input of human intellect in practicing the "deadlier arts," the imputation against ambition accentuates this, as it also indicates an actor.

The actors of violence throughout the poem are always male, as the warriors are designated by "he," "sons," and "brothers." Remarkably, the visceral scenes and the bloodthirsty behaviour of men is set off against the female compassion. I already discussed the poem's appeal to sensibility and compassion in presenting a weeping widow and frantic mother, but the poem also presents Nature in a state of mourning, as she observes the damage done by war. Conversely, women do not partake in the violence, but they do carry the costs of war, as they are the ones that mourn the dead. The implication of this opposition between a feminine Nature and a male aggressor is, moreover that women, as outside observers can distance themselves from the conflict. As non-participants, they are better apt at casting a moral judgement, because they, unlike the "unmov'd" fighters, they are moved by the violence. The polarity created in the poem then reflects the position of female poets in the public sphere during the 1790s as they can hold the nation accountable for its deeds.

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[361] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 77-8.
[362] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 79-86.
[363] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 74, 84, 87.
[364] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 89-90.
[365] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 90-2.

Though the poem already demonstrates the destructive effect of war on the family situation, a recurrent trope in female poetry about the war, the poem also shows the corrupting influence of war on the soldiers.[366] The soldiers have been hardened by war and have been taught to long for glory and victory, at the cost of their own "glowing soul."[367] The Spirit, upon observing the commencement of the battle, did no longer find the "immortal mind" of men, implying that their soul was in danger. In a later section, the "immortal mind" is linked to the sensibility and potential to feel empathy and compassion. These men have been trained how to wield the "avenging steel" and during battles, "amid the multitudes his arm has slain, / yields his fierce soul."[368] Murder taints their soul and dulls their ability to feel. Moreover, the constant demand for soldiers, the public commemoration of war and the awarding of glory has a polluting effect:

> The polish'd youth, whom Europe rears to arms,
> And glory flatters, with deceitful charms,
> Chills each fine impulse of the glowing soul,
> And, pressing onward to the laurel'd goal,
> Forgets that feeling ever warm'd his breast,
> Or Pity pleaded for the heart opprest.[369]

The celebration of victory does not only point to our twisted sense of rejoicing in human carnage, but it also creates a generation of men who lose their sense of compassion as they are driven by the promise of glory. Glory, however, is deceitful, as she blunts the capacity to feel pity, oppressing the heart of the soldier to render him capable of the display of violence necessary in war.

The commentary on war and the havoc it wreaks on both soldiers and the home-front, intimates a consideration of peace instead of war on foreign land. Unlike "The Genii," the poem does not end in fire, but it does insinuate that the course of empire must be altered to arrive at days of bliss. Like the distraught spirit who observes the violence and bloodshed in which mankind glories, so should the readership be shocked and outraged at such a display. The "Verses" functions like a mirror, it shows the excesses of war and the celebration of victory and underscores the importance of compassion and pity to find salvation. The "Verses," like "The Genii," concludes with the promise of the End Times: "Time's feeble barrier bounds the painful course, / [b]ut joy shall reign, eternal as its source."[370] The suffering and the sorrow of the world is an intermediary state, but one day it will cease and everyone shall find peace and joy. Where "the Genii" ends with their destruction through fire, the "Verses" promotes understanding and kindness, as opposed to war and mutual destruction.

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[366] Behrendt, *British Women Poets,* 87.
[367] Bannerman, "Verses," l. 109.
[368] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 100, 104-5.
[369] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 107-12.

4.4. "The Seraph's Trump:" Epiphany and the Glimpse of Relief

The interwoven visions of the past, present and future presented in "The Genii" and the "Verses" provide a fragmented narrative. The spectres come and go, some signal the continuous struggle for power, while others serve as an interpellation, showcasing the excesses of empire. As a whole, the poems interrogate the current state of the world and foreground the devasting fates of the disenfranchised and the victims of the politics of empire, war and colonialism. The discourse of sensibility is aimed at eliciting an emotional response, but is, as discussed in chapter three, dependent on the existence of an empire and its victims. The specific historical events displayed in the poems depend on imperial and colonial ambitions. These horrors might not happen on the British motherland, but that does not mean that the public should turn a blind eye. The poems draw attention to the fact that people are dying and that war and imperial ambition are to be held accountable for those deaths. The very reality of the situation cannot be denied, and though the poems intermingle history with universal scenes of pathos and affect, it raises awareness for the dispossessed. In so doing, the poems render visible another historical truth and make the voice of the disenfranchised heard. It appeals to the imaginative capacity of fancy as a social figure to contemplate the consequences and the suffering of others, but also appeals to the Gothic sublime to force the readership to imagine the potential threat and to shock them into awareness.

The spectral forms in the two poems – whether it be the destructive Genii or benign spirits – signal both a return of the past and a coming of the future. In the case of the Genii, they raise awareness of the horrors of empire and the search for riches. They underscore the unfortunate fates of the instruments of imperial greed through the use of affective scenes and universal human suffering. In so doing, they disfigure the present: they bring in tragedies from the past to have bearing on the present dealings of empire and to contemplate a different future. Moreover, the poem intermingles the destructive tendencies of the Genii with the benevolent spirits that can break through their power, highlighting that kindness and compassion are stronger than the devastation wreaked by the Genii. "The Genii" shows the way out of the endless cycle of empires rising and falling; it intimates a vision of an end in fire for the Genii, but the promise of salvation for the faithful and the kind-hearted. The "Verses" professes a similar outcome. The endless wars and male aggression is shrouded in Gothic imagery, revealing the terror and gloom of murder and vengeance. The poem posits female compassion as an alternative to the bloodletting and the glorification of war. Again it uses pathos with the aim of impelling a different course for the future: the past might be filled with conquest, bloodshed and ambition, but that does not need to determine the future. Like the spirits of eternal spring, the readership should be shocked by the visceral display of violence and ruination and no longer rejoice in a victory that comes at the cost of human carnage. Instead, the poem proposes to steer a course away from war and celebrations of victory and to focus instead on compassion and domestic joy.

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[370] Bannerman, "Verses," ll. 141-2.

The conclusion of the poems with an apocalyptic vision and the End of Time implicate a ruination of empire. Like the visions of Barbauld and Smith, Bannerman's poems advance a logically projected future of the current politics of empire, war and domination. The destruction of the Genii through fire illustrates the fate of greed and imperial ambition, the wicked shall be purged from the earth. In the "Verses" the message is more implicit, yet also shows how the soul's salvation hangs in the balance. The emphasis on the costs of war and empire critiques the course of modernisation. It interrogates the notion of progress and advancement as it foregrounds the dehumanisation and aggression that is coupled with it. The poems create a moral interpellation and hold up a mirror to the nation through raising the question of whether the bloodshed, war and dispossession is worth the advancement that is practiced.

The visions presented in the "Verses" and "The Genii" still cling to the belief that a different trajectory that takes morality, compassion and kindness into account is still possible. The imaginary potential of poetry and fancy can still invoke alternative narratives and imply that the past does not have to determine the future. The poems discussed in the following chapter are more fatalistic and do not offer a vision of hope, only one of destruction. Where this analysis implicated fancy as a social figure, capable of creation, the following chapter details the obliterating capacities of fancy and how it fuses with sublime terror and violence.

5. "I Mock Destruction on His Tow'ring Seat:" Voices of Storms, Ruin and Reckoning

The previous chapter addressed two narrative poems that fused past, present and future to contemplate an alternative historical trajectory. This chapter discusses a small selection of odes and sonnets from Bannerman's *Poems.* The scope of this thesis does not make it possible to address the entirety of the collection and I therefore focus on the poems that explicitly celebrate or foreground destructive forces in relation to the ocean. This selection is based on the fact that the ocean functions, as Backscheider notes, "as powerful symbol of the global reach of empire."[371] The command of the waters and the naval capacity of Britain was important to the preservation of their empire.[372] As Thomson's "Rule Britannia" attests, the dominance of the British on the seas was a theme in the popular imagination. Conversely, Bannerman's poem showcase the threat of the ocean and its unpredictable nature, demonstrating the indiscriminate force of it. Such representations, I argue, undermine any claim to domination and question the imperial ambitions of the nation. When oceans rise, empires fall. The two sonnets, "Sonnet I. The Watch-Man," and "Sonnet VI. To the Ocean," foreground the obliterating and indiscriminate force of the waves. The speakers of the odes, "Ode I. The Spirit of the Air," and "Ode II. The Mermaid," are first person narrators who are emboldened and fierce, using the powers of storms to wreak havoc and to lead sailors to their death. These spirits appear as champions of the weak and dispossessed, yet as these odes progress, the violence grows more arbitrary until ruin and oblivion remain.

Where the narrative poems do not correspond to a circumscribed form, the sonnet and odes are traditional verse forms and evoke specific expectations that come with them. Bannerman's recourse to these traditional poetic forms places her work within the wider entanglements and experiments of Romantic poetry. Her engagements with the sonnets in her first collection are extensive. Her ten original sonnets have varying subjects, such as "The Soldier," "The Norwegian," "The Cypress," and "The

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[371] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets,* 21.

[372] N.A.M. Rodger, "Sea-Power and Empire, 1688-1783," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*: *The Eighteenth Century,* edited by Peter James Marshall and Alaine Low, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 183.

Owl," tying in to the melancholic contemplation and the notion of exile. Aside from these, she also has eighteen sonnet translations or impressions based on the work of Petrarch, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), an episode from Book VII of *Temora* (1763) by Ossian and a translated sonnet from the Florentine poet Giovanni della Casa (1503-1556). The odes are also diverse in subjects, hailing a mermaid, as well as the spirit of the air, but also addressing a more melancholic pain, as well as a translation of an ode to the nightingale by Rousseau (c. 1723). The combination of original and translated pieces indicates an awareness of poetic traditions both historical, as the translations of Petrarch indicate, as well as contemporary, as Smith also wrote sonnets based on Goethe's *Werther.* Some of her odes and sonnets foreground the destructive force of storms, and as Craciun observes, they are "significantly different" from contemporary representations by other female poets, such as Felicia Hemans' "The Voice of Spring" (1823) in which the wind carries life.[373] Craciun links the "sublimity of destruction" in Bannerman's poems to the destruction of the creative potential of poetry.[374] This conception is, however, paradoxical, as Bannerman simultaneously invokes fancy and then ruthlessly negates it.[375] Whereas Craciun conceives this paradox in terms of poetics, I extend the reading to include the destructive potential as the transgressive acts that characterise the Gothic.

5.1. "The Destructive Deep:" The Dangerous Allure of the Seas

The sonnet is rigid in its form as it comprises fourteen lines, usually divided into an octave and sestet, or three quartets and a couplet. The verse form originated in Italy and knew its heyday in England during the renaissance, with authors such as sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542), William Shakespeare (1564-1616) and Edmund Spenser (1552/3-1599). These authors made use of the sonnet to develop a relationship between two lovers where the octave frequently functions as the exposition of the situation or incident and the sestet provided a resolution. The English sonnet, moreover, regularly imposed the final couplet as an epigram.[376] In the seventeenth century, the form had – despite its rich legacy – fallen into disuse.[377] The form was given new impetus at the close of the eighteenth century; Charlotte Smith "bequeathed" a "sophisticated poetic instrument" to explore extreme moods, sentiment and feeling.[378] Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784) were an important moment for the development of the Romantic sonnet, establishing the mode as an "evocation of a momentary emotional state."[379] Her blend of sensibility and melancholic contemplation extended the reach of the picturesque; it allowed her to combine a setting with a single mood evoked by the place, compressed into fourteen lines.[380] Following Smith's example, Romantic authors such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, engaged with the form and contributed to its revival. The condensed form of the sonnet allowed poets to examine polarity and tension between the lyric subject and the object of desire, between past and present, here and there. As Curran notes, the sonnet is keen to adopt "timbres of complaint" as it builds on the in-between spaces, straddling a macrocosm and microcosm.[381] In the case of "Sonnet I" and "Sonnet VI" the lyrical I is confronted with a sublime ocean scene and a tension is created between the allure of the ocean and its inherently threatening nature.

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[373] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 178.

[374] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 180.

[375] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 178-80.

[376] Abrams and Harpham, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 290-1.

5.1.1. "Murm'ring Sounds along the Waters Sweep:" The Deadly Watch

"Sonnet I" conjures up the allure of a storm in a sublime setting. The first quartet depicts an "autumnal storm" that hovers over the "lone light-house" that sits atop "some rude rock, that overhangs the deep."[382] The evocation of danger is already encompassed in the place, as a cliff is the ideal locale for a sublime experience as it provides grandeur and obscurity. Standing atop the rock, there is only the ocean and a gaping depth that suggests danger and confronts the beholder with their own mortality. The second quartet introduces the poem's speaker who observes the thunderstorm and perceives the watch-man who "sits, / [w]ith fearful heart, to view the lightnings play."[383] The watch-man is afraid, but he does not walk away. Rather, "[a]ppall'd, he listens thro' the midnight hour" as the ocean rages at the foot of the rock and thunder besieges "his rocking tower."[384] The tempestuous sea has an entrancing power; the watch-man seems aware of the danger it holds, but he remains seated. Finally, he "calls on Heaven," but there is no one that saves him as "[t]he billows urge their way, / [u]pheave the rooted base, and all is swept away."[385] The ocean does not spare him and crashes down on the rock and takes it all back to the sea.

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[377] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets,* 317-8.

[378] Michael O'Neill, "The Romantic Sonnet," in *Cambridge Companion to the Sonnet,* edited by A.D. Cousins and Peter Howarth, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 186.

[379] Curran, *Poetic Form,* 30.

[380] Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets,* 320.

[381] Curran, *Poetic Form,* 56.

[382] Bannerman, "Sonnet I. The Watch-man," ll. 1-4.

[383] Bannerman, "Sonnet I," ll. 5-8.

The indiscriminate power of the ocean is also showcased in "Sonnet VI." The poem opens with a more tranquil scene. The "stormy waves" are "hush'd" and a "genial air" glides along the sea's surface.[386] The peaceful setting is misleading, as "danger lurks within" and the "murm'rings" of the waves impart a warning – "beware."[387] Glancing upon the "smiling aspect" of the tempered ocean, the sonnet's speaker feels "despair," as their "corroded mind" is reminded of the destructive potency of the "angry whirlwind's sweep."[388] The final quartet brings in a memory of the ocean, "unpitying and untrue," who overwhelmed the "luckless crew" and "delighted in a scene so dark."[389] The calmness of the ocean is a façade as within the waters a ravaging force resides that takes pleasure in destruction. The final couplet underscores the damaging character of the seas: "[s]uch are thy dreadful trophies, ruthless main! / What are thy triumphs–but another's pain."[390] The couplet echoes the interrogation of victory in the "Verses," as it also demonstrates the twisted sentiment of celebrating the slaughter of other people. The ocean is described as collecting "trophies" which can be likened to the honours that are bestowed on soldiers for their merits in war. And like victory, the triumph of the ocean brings pain to other people, both to the victors and the losers, who have to cope with the aftermath of war and mourn the fallen.

Both sonnets contemplate the ruthless force of the ocean and its destructive capacity. They demonstrate the allure the ocean holds, but also the threat it poses to humanity. Where the ocean is an important aspect of the British Empire, symbolising the military prowess but also the trade routes through which the wealth can be amassed, these sonnets also intimate the destructive potency of the ocean. It might be peaceful now and aid you in your endeavours, but it can turn against you and sweep everything away. Moreover, the poem's speakers appear as isolated, staring upon the oceans and observing or reminiscing about the destructive force of storms. They almost literally stand on the edge of civilisation, the "tempestuous main" presenting a boundary, a well of chaotic energy that can strike at random. There is no order in the billows of the ocean, it can appear as calm and fair, but a threat is hidden beneath the surface. As such, it intimates how order can easily fall into disorder and chaos. These poems, written against the backdrop of revolution and war, can be interpreted as a warning against the dissolution of society and the potential carnage war brings.

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[384] Bannerman, "Sonnet I," ll. 9-12.
[385] Bannerman, "Sonnet I," ll. 13-14.
[386] Bannerman, "Sonnet VI. To the Ocean," ll. 1-2.
[387] Bannerman, "Sonnet VI," ll. 3-4.
[388] Bannerman, "Sonnet VI," ll. 5-8.
[389] Bannerman, "Sonnet VI," ll. 9-12.
[390] Bannerman, "Sonnet VI," ll. 13-14.

5.2. "Encompass'd by the Raging Storm:" Terrific Spirits and the Tempests of Ruin

The ode became a major literary form in Britain in the seventeenth century, with practitioners such as John Milton (1609-1674) and Abraham Cowley (1618-1667).[391] Both Abrams and Curran in their discussion of the ode observe a shift in the late eighteenth century. Where the ode initially functioned as public celebration and a eulogy, it became more internalised and personal. In the hands of Collins and Gray, the ode was gradually changed into a "dramatic, self-reflexive and dialectical from," that would come to full fruition with the Romantic poets.[392] Abrams notes that the Romantics meditative and passionate description was founded on an "outer scene," such as P.B. Shelley's "Mont Blanc," which devolved into an attempt to address "either a personal emotional problem or a generally human one."[393] The first two odes in the *Poems* focus on two intangible beings, powerful, relentless and sublime. The odes present their perspective from a first-person narrative and detail their growing penchant for destruction. These entities present the raging potency of storms, torrents and the seas. They appear as both harbingers of doom and agents of death. The odes do not immediately appear as the self-reflexive and self-questioning form intimated by Curran's discussion of the Romantic ode. A personal experience is presented in the ode, but they simultaneously display destructive and intangible forces whose violence appears to be celebrated.

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[391] Curran, *Poetic Form,* 64-5.

[392] Curran, *Poetic Form,* 66.

[393] Abrams and Harpham, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 198.

The evaluations of Curran and Abrams are largely based on male-authored odes. As addressed in the second chapter, female poetic output does not always fit into such categories. Backscheider hints at the important role of women authors in the development of the ode, but does not discuss the form in her study on female poetry of the eighteenth century.[394] Esther Schor's chapter on "The Romantic Ode" is more informative as it details engagements of both male and female authors with the form.[395] She posits the ode as the "lyric afterlife" of the "Enlightenment rhetoric of progress and the culture of sentimentalism."[396] Building on Curran's assertion of the internalisation of the ode, Schor examines how odes to liberty, the nightingale and melancholy conserve the eighteenth-century discourses of sentiment and progress. Her analysis foregrounds the dialectics between power and freedom, subject and disorder, and the "sympathetic entanglement" that characterise the interior space of the ode.[397] Her discussion of odes to liberty is especially informing for this chapter, as Schor observes a paradox within them. She argues that "pageants of progress" tend to be "disjointed, aborted or ironic" and identifies within such odes a "strategy of indirection" where the ode, instead of eulogising, reveals "a multitude of sins."[398] The odes reveal a dialectical dance and expose a tension between progress and power, where tyrants or overpowering emotions such as "rage, anger, horror, fear, and vengeance" always tower over the ode's interior space.[399]

Like the liberty odes identified by Schor, Bannerman's "Ode I" and "Ode II" underscore how freedom is an appeal to power and how the subject, in order to assert itself, becomes a chaotic force capable of destruction. The two odes that will be discussed do not offer a sympathetic entanglement nor an introjected, personal meditation, but underscore the dialectical play between power and freedom.

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[394] Backsheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets,* 317.
[395] Esther Schor, "'Stirring Shades': The Romantic Ode and its Afterlives," in *A Companion to Romantic Poetry*, edited by Charles Mahoney, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
[396] Schor, "'Stirring Shades,'" 107.
[397] Schor, "'Stirring Shades,'" 114.
[398] Schor, "'Stirring Shades,'" 109-110.
[399] Schor, "'Stirring Shades,'" 109.

The subject of the odes are overpowering and can be characterised as vengeful, horrific, terrorising and raging. The speaking voices establish their dominance over the winds and tempests and exercise their control over the storms as they rage over humanity.

5.2.1. "My Voice Shall Echo to the Waves:" The Sway of the Storm

The first ode consists of ten stanzas, comprising a total of 102 lines. The subject of "Ode I," the spirit of the air, does not immediately evoke an identifiable entity. As an aerial spirit, however, it shows some resemblance to Ariel, the spirit of storms in William Shakespeare's "The Tempest," and Ariel, the sylph from Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock.* That is not to say that Bannerman's spirit is based on these figures, but it does tie in to existing conceptions of aerial spirits that can influence the weather and bear some relation to tempests.

The opening stanza conjures up a storm with sweeping winds that rise, "resistless" over the "polar coast" which is then "lock[ed]" in "eternal frost" by the poem's speaker.[400] This "I" is depicted as a controlling force that tames these "angry winds."[401] Akin to the Genii, this spirit has a "will supreme" and "awful sway" over the "earth, the air, the sea" and its "power extends" from the "polar coast" to the Sahara's "burning sands."[402] The spirit is omnipresent and sees all, given that its "glance pervades the realms of space" and its reach extends across the "prostrate world."[403] The spirit itself is an ambiguous entity, as the second stanza makes clear:

> I come, on viewless winds reclin'd,
> To cheer the wretch, whom fetters bind,
> To crush the oppressor's giant crest,
> To hurl destruction on his breast,
> Amid the spoils his abject soul adores;
> And trembling earth recoils along her utmost shores.[404]

It proclaims itself as a kind of liberator, an avenging spirit that uses violence in the context of freedom from oppression. The oppressor is implicated in an imperial ambition, as he "adores" the "spoils" gained from the exploitation of the chained "wretch." His wealth is gained through the exploitation and manacled labour of others. The spirit seeks to free the oppressors' victims and construes destruction as a justifiable means to end the suffering and exploitation of others.

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[400] Bannerman, "Ode I. The Spirit of the Air," l. 1-4.
[401] Bannerman, "Ode I," l.1.
[402] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 1-10.
[403] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 7-9.
[404] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 15-20.

The ode's second stanza contextualises the violence and the third stanza makes the object more concrete. The scene opens with a "form," "half-hid in air," a spectral being that is obscured but is identified as "Freedom."[405] The disposition of freedom is not joyful, as the speaker notes her "deep despair" and the "torrents" that "roar" around her "pale brow."[406] Freedom identifies the cause of her despair, "point[ing] to Afric's bleeding shore."[407] The spirit watches, "with wild horror" as a son is roughly taken from his mother and put in a ship.[408] The mother's cries for mercy are ignored, the "monsters" do not "spare her agonies."[409] The mother follows suit, tracing the "vessel's side" and "flies, and, plunging, sinks beneath the billowy tide."[410] The poem does not explicitly mention that the monsters are slave traders, but the scene's setting on the African shores insinuates as much. Moreover, as it is Freedom who despairs, it also implicates that the stolen child will no longer be free. The scene is also laden with affect, as the individual situation of the mother and child are foregrounded. The stanza can thus be read as abolitionist, an agenda that was also present in "The Genii" and demonstrates the excesses of colonialism. In this ode, slavery's disrupting influence is illustrated on the homeland, underscoring that it rips families apart.

The fourth stanza moves away from the shores and onto the open seas. The ship has taken off and the "men of blood" proceed "unmov'd."[411] However, the spirit pursues them and warns them to "curb your joy," as it will meet them once they reach their "happy homes."[412] When they embrace their loved "a ghastly form" will stand before their eyes and she will "o'er her infant weep, and wave her beck'ning hand."[413] Refusing to let the men have peace, the spirit summons a haunting image to invade the domestic tranquillity of these monsters. Where the mother drowned in an attempt to save her son, these monsters can reach their home safely, but they are not allowed to have peace. Instead, they need to be confronted with their actions, the lives they have destroyed and the families they have torn apart. The "ghastly form" is Gothic in its nature, as the adjective means terrible and frightful but also functions as a kind of omen that heralds their end. Ghastly is also used to describe a very pale white appearance, almost like the dead and can thus be related to a revenant, coming back from the dead to haunt the living.[414] Haunting implicates repression and this weeping mother presents an uncanny reminder of their deeds. Moreover, the movement of the mother's hand, a beckoning wave, signals the impending doom of the men. Soon, they shall join her in death.

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[405] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 21-3.
[406] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 22-3.
[407] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 24.
[408] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 25-7.
[409] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 27-8.
[410] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 29-30.
[411] Bannerman, "Ode I," l. 31.
[412] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 35-9.

A similar act of reckoning unfolds in stanzas five and six. The setting is "the desert's frightful sand" and the guilty party are an "Arab" and his "daring band."[415] Their crime is war with the aim of gaining a "glorious spoil."[416] They seek to return "victorious," but the spirit "vengeful, on the rushing wind" comes to "toss the sandy waves" to overwhelm "the spoilers of their kind."[417] Where the previous conflict was more clearly implicated within the slave trade, this scene is more difficult to situate. The indications are scarce, hinting only at it taking place on Arabian soil, and, "the spoilers of their kind" can implicate tribal feuds, or plunderers that move from village to village. The stanza further indicates that they fling a "livid flame" that incites fear and reddens the sky, which suggests burning and pillaging.[418] This fire is also "the herald of impending fate" as the spirit unleashes a "suffocating blast" so to end "nature's conflict" "[i]n clouds of fluid fire."[419] The spirit, though initially implicated as a force of air and water, can apparently also conjure up fire and lay waste to the desert.

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[413] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 38-40.
[414] "ghastly | gastly, adj.". OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/78040?rskey=2wskbq&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed 4 Aug. 2020).
[415] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 41-3.
[416] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 45-8.
[417] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 51-3.
[418] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 55.
[419] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 58-60.

In the “Verses,” war was construed as antithetical to nature, yet here, the poem speaks of “nature’s conflict,” rendering it more ambiguous as to what it entails. The Arab’s band is the actor who prepares for war and seeks to combat an unidentified foe, the spirit drives them to their “untimely graves,” intervening in the conflict and instrumentalising the tools of nature. It can be interpreted as the resettling of peace over a region where war rages, ending the conflict, through the descending fire. There remains a vacancy, since the stanza does not specify exactly what the fire consumes, whether it swipes all away or only the supposed perpetrators and warmongers. If all is reduced to ashes, the spirit appears as an cruel actor of reckoning who intimates a world without humans.

The destructive potential of the spirit grows more arbitrary as the ode progresses. The initial justifiable retaliation against the slave traders makes way for a less identifiable conflict and ambiguous outcome on Arab soil, to eventually target at random. The ocean forms the backdrop of stanza seven, where a vessel is tossed along the stormy coast near the Strait of Magellan that connects the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. The spirit observes the course of the ship and watches as a storm captures it. The “fainting form[s]” aboard the ship are seized by horror as the “fury of the storm” bears down upon them.[420] This scene of sublime terror arrests the spirit, who does not intervene when the “sufferers” plunge into the deep, “sink, and die.”[421] The opening stanza of the ode established the “will supreme” of the spirit over the winds, demonstrating how it could “lock” them in “eternal frost.” However, in this instant, the spirit does nothing: “I see the living current freeze.”[422] The spirit does not complain, nor avenge their fates, instead it calls upon the “spirits of the waters” to weep and pledges that its “harp shall join in solemn strains; / my voice shall echo to the waves, / that dash above your coral graves.”[423] The spirit indicates that their fates are a blessing: “[b]lest be the gloom, that wraps each sacred head.”[424]

The lack of response of the spirit strikingly contrasts with its confident retaliation professed in the preceding stanzas. Yet here, the spirit implies that these souls are better off as “luckless tenants of the deep."[425] The setting does not indicate much, as it lies on the west of the Atlantic, it was not a route for slave traders. The Strait was a contested territory, free for the different nations to explore the seas. The poem does describe the seas as "unfathom'd," indicating that they were of "unascertained depth," as well as referring to its unknown and unexplored state.[426] Given the poet's earlier commentaries on colonisation and exploitation, it is possible that the spirit gives free range to the tempest to destroy the ship, as the vessel holds sailors searching for wealth and gold. The shipwreck can then be warranted as it puts an end to the presumably nefarious and greedy expedition of an imperial power. The strains of the harp can then serve as a warning to others who dare to trespass on the domain. The echoing voice of the spirit can be likened to a siren's song, luring sailors to their dead.

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[420] Bannerman, “Ode I,” ll. 67-8.
[421] Bannerman, “Ode I,” ll. 65-70.
[422] Bannerman, “Ode I,” ll. 66.
[423] Bannerman, “Ode I,” ll. 76-8.
[424] Bannerman, “Ode I,” l. 79.

This reading is possible, but the solemnity of the scene, where the sprits of the waters weep and the harp strums indicate a commemorative function, heightened by the notion of a blessing. The stanza's conclusion that blesses the "unbroken sleep, and silence of the dead," signals a sense of relief. Echoing the end of the conflict of nature from stanza six where the Arab and his band were most likely destroyed by fire, the silence that follows after the drowning of the sailors gives back the power to the elements, who can roam as they please. Subsequently, the vacancy suggests a world in ruins, void of humanity. If the fire, winds and waters destroy all human life, indiscriminately, an earth without humans and only nature can be envisioned. The elements can do as they please and regain dominion over the world. As such, the destructive acts can appear as a purge: humans only destroy and conquer, and they might be beyond saving. Or the only way to save humanity, is by ending their existence, as the sleep is a blessing, intimating peace at long last.

The peace that descended over the dead is carried over into the next stanza. The deep waters make way for the clouds, as the spirit soars through the air and finds itself a "cerulean seat" from where to survey the "fainting earth."[427] As the spirit "ride[s] sublime thro' aether blue," it observes the "summer dew."[428] The spirit, in this moment of tranquillity, "bid[s] the rose in crimson glow, / and spread the lily's robe of snow," indicating that it brings the dew drops to the flowers.[429] It brings "from heaven the balmy breeze, / that sighs along the sleeping seas."[430] When the spirit is occupied with these tasks, it does not rage over the seas, indicating a moment of peace. The stillness of the ocean, as the spirit makes its way across the pure blue skies, occurs when the "power of heat" reigns.[431] The power of heat can implicate the sun, which is suggested in the following stanza that places the spirit beyond the "solar blaze."[432] During the fiery reign, the spirit is quiet and appears as the gentle presence that "soothe[s] the parting soul."[433]

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[425] Bannerman, "Ode I," l. 72.

[426] "unfathomed, adj.". OED Online. June 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/213231?rskey=TflVDj&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed 30 Jul. 2020).

[427] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 80-4.

However, when the poem reaches its concluding stanza, the spirit re-emerges, more powerful and unapologetic, continuing its "rapid flight:"[434]

> Exulting in immortal might.
> O'er me nor cold, nor heat, prevails,
> Nor poison from malignant gales;
> I glide along the trackless coast,
> That binds the magazines of frost;
> Encompass'd by the raging storm,
> I smile at danger's threat'ning form;
> I mock destruction on his tow'ring seat,
> And leave the roaring winds, contending at my feet.[435]

Anything soft and calming falls away as the spirit establishes its dominance over the elements. It appears to clad itself in the raging storm, that like an armour protects the spirit from everything, ice, wind and fire. It continues its way, triumphant and defiant, undaunted by the threat of destruction. Moreover, where the ode opened with the spirit inquiring the winds to "[b]e hush'd," the conclusion leaves them "roaring."[436] The contrast reflects the transformation of the spirit: initially a champion of the repressed and dispossessed, it becomes an entity that destroys indiscriminately. Where the spirit initially imposed a reckoning based on the *ius talionis* principle, the presented scenes become less historically grounded and the circumstances in which to situate the spirit's violence become more obscure. As a result, the spirit's violence becomes more threatening because its actions seem arbitrary and can target anyone.

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[428] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 82-4.
[429] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 85-6.
[430] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 87-8.
[431] Bannerman, "Ode I," l. 83.
[432] Bannerman, "Ode I," l. 91.
[433] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 14.
[434] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 91-2.
[435] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 94-102.
[436] Bannerman, "Ode I," ll. 1, 102.

5.2.2. "In Seraph-strains, Unpitying, to Destroy:" The Desolation of the Mermaid

A similar devolution appears in "Ode II. The Mermaid," consisting of seven stanzas and seventy lines. Like the Genii, the mermaid is a figure of the imagination that conjures up a range of associations. A figure of maritime folklore, the mermaid is often related to tempests and storms, and the Christian reinterpretation of the siren, she symbolised material wealth and beauty that could endanger the soul of men.[437] Bannerman's mermaid, like the spirit of the air, is violent and destructive, but also signals a creative capacity of female poets. Research on the depiction of the mermaid by female Romantic poets is hard to come by, so it is perhaps premature to speak of a female tradition. However, Craciun's *Fatal Women* hints at the existence of a female tradition of mermaid poetry, as she observes that both Bannerman's and Landon's mermaids tend to ignore or deny the materiality of the creature. Mermaids in male-authored poems and medieval romances tend to portray a "darkly eroticised celebration of the mermaid's fleshly alterity."[438] Conversely, Landon and Bannerman move away from the corporeal representation of the mermaid and foreground the symbolic and immaterial nature of the creature.[439] Craciun's reading of Bannerman's mermaid, moreover, establishes a connection to creative genius. She asserts it as a "supernatural ode sung by a siren poet" who challenges the idea that the "demonic or Satanic poet is consistently male, and that mermaids are simply objects of male fear of desire."[440] For Craciun, the ode presents and celebrates an alternative model for the female poet, who herself becomes a *femme fatale* and destroys the "ideal of the proper poetess" that was expected of female poets.[441] Much like Dacre, Mary Robinson and Letitia Landon, Bannerman challenged the norms for female poets in foregrounding destructive *femme fatales* and thereby lays claim to genius, transcendence and sublimity. The mermaid is not presented as a passive observer, but her voice becomes her defining feature that mimics the creative potential of female authors, but as I contend in the following pages, the mermaid also functions as a figure of subterfuge, signalling the vitality of traditional lore.

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[437] Donald Haase, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, (Westport (CT): Greenwood Press, 2008), 620.

[438] Sarah M. Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories': Collecting, Translating, and Imagining Mermaids in Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland," *Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities* 30 (2011): 36.

[439] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 271.

[440] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 177.

[441] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 183.

5.2.2.1. *"My Soul Fulfils Her Fearful Destiny:" The Song of the Mermaid*

The ode is prefaced by an excerpt from *The Rambler* that recounts a Danish legend about Ajut and Anningait. *The Rambler* is a periodical that ran from 1750 to 1752 and was written by Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). The two citations printed in the *Poems* are taken from the final page of the tale and function as inspiration for the ode. The legend revolves around two lovers, Ajut and Anningait. The latter has gone missing at sea and Ajut sets out in search of her lover, "without hesitation."[442] She found a fishing-boat, "rowed away with great swiftness, and was seen no more."[443] Johnson adds to the conclusion, stating that the "fate of these lovers" gave rise to various tales, some conjectured that they were turned into stars, others were of the opinion that Anningait had been thrown against the rocks and that "Ajut was transformed into a *Mermaid,* and still continues to seek her lover in the deserts of the sea."[444] The excerpt breaks off at the transformation into a mermaid, but the original account adds that the "general persuasion" believes them to be in "the land of the souls where the sun never sets."[445] In leaving out the final part, the poem is implicated in the final endeavour of Ajut, namely her transformation into a mermaid and her search for her lover on the open seas. However, as the ode develops, the mermaid ceases to look for him and instead finds her own destiny.

The first stanza opens on a rocky cliff, where the ode's speaker holds a "solitary watch."[446] Given the preface, we can surmise that the speaker is Ajut, who waits for her lover to return. The setting evokes the sublime: the "death-fraught whirlwinds" blow and the speaker is standing "high" on a "cliff, which darkness shrouds."[447] The scene combines grandeur and obscurity, the cliff gives out on the ocean and the "turbid deep / groans to the raging tempests."[448] The surroundings induce danger and threat, yet the poem's speaker, does not shrink back. She just stands and listens to the "demons of the gulf below."[449] Even as a human, Ajut is represented as undaunted and connected to the ocean, being able to hear the voices of the waves and the raging tempest. She does not pull back from "their desolating force" and remains unmoved by the threat they pose.[450] Instead, as the second stanza unfolds, she moves along the sublime scenery to finally become part of it:

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[442] Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler; In Four Volumes*, (London: A. Millar e.a., 1763) Vol. IV, 136.
[443] Johnson, *The Rambler,* 136.
[444] Samuel Johnson, *Rambler no. 187,* quoted in Bannerman, *Poems,* 61, italics are added by Bannerman.
[445] Johnson, *The Rambler,* 136.
[446] Bannerman, "Ode II. The Mermaid," l. 7.

> Along this wild untrodden coast,
> Heap'd by the gelid hand of frost;
> Thro' this unbounded waste of seas,
> Where never sigh'd the vernal breeze;
> Mine was the choice, in this terrific form,
> To brave the icy surge, to shiver in the storm.[451]

She chose to take on the form of the mermaid when she learnt of her lover's fate, who lies "within [the water's] caves."[452] Ajut weeps for him, but refuses to let "slumber lock my streaming eyes," and opts to brave the waters and their destructive potential.[453]

She goes from standing amidst the sublime scenery to become part of its sublime force, as she takes on the "terrific form." In this shape, she enters an altered state, as she asserts, "[m]y heart, my soul, / retain no more their former glow."[454] She has shed not only her human skin, but also her human heart and soul. Ajut's self-chosen metamorphosis changes her both inside and out. The loss of the glow could indicate a loss of humanity and in a sense a loss of consciousness, since the ode shows how the mermaid enjoys the destruction she causes. The ode describes how she destroys "with callous heart."[455] The fourth stanza displays this capacity in detail, describing how amidst "the wild wind, with awful sweep" the mermaid "lend[s] new fury to the blast."[456] She gazes on her victims, watching as the "hardy cheek grow[s] pale, / [a]nd the proud sons of courage fail."[457] The mermaid remains until the "torn vessel drinks the surging waves."[458] She not only aids the tempest in its destruction of the ship, but also watches as the sailors realise that they will die and that they cannot do anything about it. There is a certain perversion in this scene, as Ajut's lover most likely experienced the same fate, being taken by the waves, and now, she has become that which has destroyed him and takes pleasure in the bringing of death. That she no longer feels the loss and pain of his parting, might be the result of her changed heart and soul. Human love and compassion have become alien to her new form that only understands the sublime and destructive power of the storms.

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[447] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 1, 5.
[448] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 8-9.
[449] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 3-4.
[450] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 10.
[451] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 15-20.
[452] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 11-2.
[453] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 14.
[454] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 21-2.
[455] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 69.

The mermaid is thus a cruel, ruthless and unfeeling creature, and has nothing of the alluring beauty nor of the monstrous appearance usually ascribed to the mermaid in tales, travelogues and descriptions.[459] Instead, Bannerman's mermaid never materialises. She remains unfixed and does not inhibit the classificatory otherness of the mermaid as half woman, half fish. Alternatively, the mermaid is one with the storms and tides, working as an extension of the sea, conjuring winds and luring sailors through their death. As such, she takes on the more dreadful characteristic of the siren as she "lure[s] the sailor to his doom" and "pour[s] the syren-song of woe."[460] In this description the mermaid reveals herself as the counterpart of the siren of antiquity whose songs entrance sailors, resulting in fatal shipwrecks. Her voice becomes the sole marker of her being, without it, she is nothing but the tempests and billows of the oceans. Craciun has argued that the lack of a material form resists the depiction of women as an object of male desire, and the appropriation of the mermaid by male authors.[461] The mermaid's voice, Craciun states, serves as a token of female poetic genius that is self-possessed and self-generating.[462] The enchanting capacity of the siren's voice is thus likened to the creativity of the female lyricist, capable of conjuring up figures of the imagination.

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[456] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 34-6.
[457] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 37-8.
[458] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 39.
[459] Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories,'" 20.
[460] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 26, 28.
[461] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 176-7.

Seemingly powerful, the mermaid also becomes an instrument who does the bidding of the "gifted wizard."[463] A footnote once again refers to Collin's "Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands," this time citing lines from the fifth stanza about a wizard of the Isle of Skye.[464] The stanza can be interpreted as the mermaid responding to the wizard's call and working according to his spell. The phrasing, however, suggests the opposite: "On me the gifted wizard calls."[465] The fact that the "me" precedes the call of the wizard hints at the weakness of the wizard. His own spells are not powerful enough to wreak such destruction, so he must call upon the mermaid to do so. She is, moreover, supported by "embodied spirits" who "glide" "o'er the heaving surge."[466] The mermaid welcomes them to her "weary sight" and calls them "[a]venging ministers of wrath" who answered the "spell, that wakes the sleep of death."[467] These spirits can thus be read as revenants who come to enact vengeance and who leave their victims "shudd'ring" at their "potent agency."[468] Where the opening stanza indicated that Ajut could hear the "demons of the gulf below," this stanza implicates that she now controls them and that they aid her in engendering storms and to "scatter death."[469]

Destructive, violent and relentless in her actions, the mermaid personifies unrepentant rage and unadulterated devastation. The final of the stanza confirms her brazen character:

> When the keen north-wind's freezing breath
> Spreads desolation in its course,
> My soul, within this icy sea,
> Fulfils her fearful destiny.
> Thro' time's long ages I shall wait
> To lead the victims to their fate;
> With callous heart, to hidden rocks decoy,
> And lure, in seraph-strains, unpitying, to destroy.[470]

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[462] Craciun, *Fatal Women,* 177.
[463] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 44.
[464] Bannerman, *Poems,* 63.
[465] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 44.
[466] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 50.
[467] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 51-4.
[468] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 55-60.
[469] Bannerman, "Ode II," l. 61.
[470] Bannerman, "Ode II," ll. 63-70.

She embraces her fate, given that this outcome is her destiny and remains remorseless and unmoved in her doings. She will hover along the rocks and lure sailors to their doom using her voice. The remainder of the mermaid's existence will be one of death and destruction, her wickedness masked by an alluring voice. She is an unguided projectile, a force of wrath and ruin, her violence unhinged and unprovoked. A creature born from loss, grief and mourning, the mermaid becomes a monstrous being that exists only to destroy, to rage and to indulge in the violence and havoc her "terrific form" enables her to inhabit.

5.2.2.2. *"Mermaid of the Northern Nations:" The Cultural Significance of the Mermaid*

The figure of the mermaid, unlike the other subjects of Bannerman's poetry, is intimately linked to folklore. Traditional lore has a regional specificity and the mermaid is no exception. She is especially prevalent in (pen)insular regions, such as Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Scotland, and Ireland.[471] Sarah Dunnigan observes that during the Romantic period, a "cult of the mermaid" emerged.[472] Antiquarians and folktale collectors sought to preserve the traditional materials and started writing the lore down. The fascination of the Romantics with the supernatural heritage is partially impelled by "political and nationalistic concerns," and by "nostalgia for a fading British past."[473] The mermaid in Scottish lore builds on the reservoir of legends about water creatures, such as merfolk, selkies and seal-people, figuring in traditional ballads that recount erotic liaisons between mortals and fairy-folk.[474] The transcription of regional lore, moreover, is often combined with the notion that these beliefs and legends are fading; to capture them in writing is to keep them safe for prosperity. The mermaid can thus be conceived as "culturally elegiac" figure, a relic of the a disappearing past.[475]

These efforts, however, betray an attempt to subjugate the politico-nationalist alterity of the mermaid. As tokens "of national culture, or of distinct topographical regions" they can be subversive and culturally resistant, a differentiating marker of identity.[476] Chapter one addressed the increasing attempt to locate Scottish national distinction in the past, and regional beliefs and local lore can be instrumentalised within a politico-national narrative. Scottish literary output of the Romantic era draws from popular lore and aestheticizes these superstitions, lending an almost ethnographic character to literary texts. The passion for the popular also includes digressions of the origins of certain superstitions. This is for instance the case in Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,* where his *Tam-Lin* ballad is prefaced by a discussion on the origins of fairies. The appropriation of these beliefs in writing mummifies these traditions: they are moulded into an account about beliefs of a bygone age. As a scriptural tomb, such writings locate the superstitions in a previous era and close them off to future generations; fairy beliefs are relics, no longer a living tradition. The operation creates a selection of exemplary texts and practices designed to override and eliminate disturbing elements from the popular, rendering the oral tradition obsolete.[477]

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[471] Haase, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia*, 620-1.

[472] Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories,'"21.

[473] Carole G. Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 10.

[474] Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories,'"21.

[475] Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories,'"21

[476] Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories,'" 21.

Bannerman's mermaid ties into the traditional depiction of the Scottish mermaid as terrific and violent. John Leyden, an acquaintance of Bannerman, in his preface to his own poem "The Mermaid," notes "[i]n her dwelling, and in her appearance, the mermaid of the northern nations resembles the syren of the ancients."[478] These sirens are most known through Homer's *Odyssey,* where these creatures are presented as seated on rocks and their songs are said to be able to tell you the truth about yourself. Alluring, yet threatening, the sirens of classical antiquity have enchanting voices that draw the sailors to the rocks and lead to shipwrecks. Remarkably, folktales, ballads and fairy tales of the Romantic era increasingly tame the wildness of the siren, effectively rendering her "mute, shadowless and soulless," as opposed to the "powerful, siren-voiced temptress" some legends claim her to be.[479] This shift is noticeable in the Scottish portrayals of the mermaid as well. Locating Bannerman's ode within the context of Scottish literary output on the mermaid, her portrayal differs significantly from that of her male contemporaries. Dunnigan's discussion places Bannerman's ode alongside the imaginings of James

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[477] Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia and Jacques Revel, "The Beauty of the Dead: Nisard," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: UMP, 1986) 119.

[478] John Leyden, "The Mermaid," in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border:: Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads, Collected in the Southern Counties of Scotland; with a Few of Modern Date, Founded Upon Local Tradition. In Three Volumes... Vol. 3*, edited by sir Walter Scott. (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1803) 297.

[479] Haase, *Greenwood Encyclopedia*, 621.

Hogg (1822), Allan Cunningham (1810), William Motherwell (1827), and Leyden (1803). Dunnigan demonstrates how the mermaids of Cunningham, Motherwell and Leyden remain "complete in their moral and sexual 'otherness,'" appearing as the seductive and sinful temptress who lures men to their doom.[480] These poems underscore the erotic aspect in the sense that the mermaid seeks out a mortal lover, effectively creating a creature that hungers for society and civility. Hogg's mermaid appears more subversive, in the sense that though the mermaid is still an object of desire, but she is "elusively figured," her voice is the sole means of identification, her body is not presented.[481] Bannerman's mermaid is similarly identified through her voice, but she is no longer an object of desire, rather, she becomes a formidable force of destruction. Dunnigan notes the "first-person voice gives the mermaid an overt rhetorical agency."[482] Bannerman's mermaid asserts her own destiny, roaming free across the seas and away from society.

The imaginative portrayals of mermaid by these Scottish authors foreground different aspects. Bannerman's mermaid differs in her freedom and self-possession from later depictions building on similar traditions. The free-fought siren of the ode is not elegiac, she thrives, riding the waves and raising storms. Subsequently, Bannerman's mermaid can be read as culturally resistant, suggesting the vivacity of traditions and the poetic freedom to appropriate legendary creatures and to create an alternative narrative. Bannerman, in her second volume, *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry,* would make this claim explicit in her treatment of Arthurian legend. In a footnote she writes that her rendition might not "perhaps be very consonant to popular feeling, that legendary tradition has been violated in the fate and disposal of this great, national hero. But it is fairy-ground, and a poetical community of right to its appropriation has never been disputed."[483] This conception is reminiscent of the Humean undercurrent in Scottish Romantic literature. Memory is intersubjectively construed, and the imagination functions as a means to interpret our experiences. Tradition is based on consensus and can thus be altered through the imagination.

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[480] Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories,'" 36.
[481] Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories,'" 36.
[482] Dunnigan, "'Strange Stories,'" 37.
[483] Bannerman, *Tales,* 144.

Likewise can the mermaid be hailed as “fairy-ground,” whose legendary tradition can be configured in any way by an author. The mermaid as a cultural figure resists subjugation and refuses to be captured in a single mould, as indicated by the immateriality of Bannerman’s siren. Instead of a relic of a fading past, the mermaid’s voice breaks apart the tomb and rages across the open seas, a reminder of the unsung stories and legends that have the capacity to linger and haunt. A sublime spectacle and violent force, the mermaid can signify the repressed and foreground their voices, upending societal order and creating chaos to draw attention to the arbitrary nature of the conventions. A figure of subterfuge and projection, the mermaid symbolises the remaining potency of female voices to make injustices and wrongdoings heard.

5.2.3. “Avenging Ministers of Wrath:” Transgression, Empowerment and Dissolution

The odes celebrate and endorse violence, showcasing destructive forces in the shape of intangible beings. The spirit first appears as an avenging vigilante who punishes the wicked for their wrongdoings. It stands up for the victims, the dispossessed and the disenfranchised and acts on their behalf. The initial stanzas of the ode impart an enactment of violence, contextualised as a retaliation. As the poem develops, the unpredictable nature of the spirit is showcased. It can strike at will and indiscriminately, even when the situation does not explicitly warrants a reckoning. The mermaid, from the poem’s commencement, displays unpredictable violence. There is no context, no justification, no end that is pursued through the mermaid’s violence except that fact that she can enact it. The initial personal loss that paved the way for her self-imposed alteration turns her into a destructive force that will forever haunt the waves. Like Dacre’s Victoria, neither the mermaid nor the spirit of air repine their actions but take pleasure from them. In this reading, the violence appears as a cathartic and freeing force, as identified by Fanon. Instead of practicing virtues of compassion, kindness and benevolence, as preached by the benevolent spirits in Bannerman’s narrative poems, the odes endorse destruction, ravage and carnage. The excess and transgression encapsulated in the poems empower the mermaid and the spirit, providing them with a potent agency that lifts them above the mortal frame and grants them supernatural powers.

Intangible and elusive, the mermaid and the spirit of air are spectral forms. Unlike the spirits in “The Genii” and the “Verses,” these spectres do not signal hope or eternal bliss. Alternatively, they claim a position of power they would not be able to occupy were it not for their supernatural powers. Through their powers, they defy the “logical, physical and moral structures” that exist in our physical reality.[484] Because of this, the spirit and mermaid can generate and constitute their own arbitrary non-law, as they are not bound to the governing structures of the human world. In so doing, they reveal the artificiality of the norm, because within the text world these creatures inhabit, there is no power that holds them accountable, nor a moral interpellation that interrogates their behaviour. The Gothic fantasy enacted by these spectral entities imagines an alternative world where women can claim power, conjure up storms and summon elemental spirits. The freedom intimated through these first-person speaking voices that would otherwise be repressed, suggests an inversion of the dominant order. It subverts the norm and points toward disorder and chaos that falls outside the governing structure. Consequently, their violence is inherently transgressive, their supernatural potency and spectral nature defies conventional laws.

Their appropriation of violence, moreover, shows where patriarchal power has failed: Ajut’s metamorphosis stems from the loss of her lover and the spirit of air repeatedly demonstrates the failures of mankind, from slavery, to plundering and lack of compassion. Power – understood as the property of a group that acts in concert, such as the nation or family – fails to protect the innocents and contributes to a system of oppression.[485] Violence as an instrument in the hands of such institutions can be sanctioned as a means of control and preservation of power. However, in the hands of the spirit and the mermaid, violence no longer functions within a means-end strategy. The mermaid and spirit do not have power, as they are individuals and as such, their violence “is no longer backed or restrained by power.”[486] Violence no longer serves an end, and as Arendt observes, a “reversal in reckoning with means and ends has taken place. The means, the means of destruction, now determine the end with the consequence that the end will be the destruction of all power."[487] The mermaid and the spirit, as individual entities, use violence for violence's sakes and do not seek to establish their dominance or maintain control. It is not aimed at self-preservation, and where the spirit's violence initially functioned as a form of cruel reckoning, it devolves into indiscriminate attacks that – at best – can be interpreted as pre-emptive strikes.

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[484] James Wade, *Fairies in Medieval Romance,* (New York (N.Y.): Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 76.

[485] This conception of power is proposed by Arendt, and indicates that power can never belong to an individual, see: Arendt, *On Violence,* 44.

[486] Arendt, *On Violence,* 54.

Though empowered, these beings have no place outside of their text worlds. The mermaid and the spirit fall outside of the order of society and their violent behaviour alienates them from the civilised world. Their fate appears to be that of an eternal wanderer, dwellers on the margins of the earth, namely in the air and the seas. As sublime forces, overwhelming and terrorising, they solely aim to destroy, and cannot improve the conditions of the disenfranchised or the victims of empire. Like the villains in Gothic tales, the violence of the spirit and the mermaid threatens "to consume the world of civilised and domestic values."[488] Acting from the margins, their violence is without justification and guidance, they strike erratically and unpredictably. They rage and ravage, enjoying the havoc they bring and pose a threat to any structure, because there is no purpose to their destruction. The claim to freedom and self-assertion turns them into chaotic and disruptive forces that have no place within a regulated society. The devolution of the mermaid and the spirit intimate the stark reality that women cannot conjure up storms and summon elemental spirits to fight for their place and cast down their oppressors nor avenge the mistreated. The freedom of the spirit and the mermaid cannot exist in the everyday existence of the author: she is unable to harness such powers outside of her imagination. Generally, female authors can proclaim the wrongs in the world, they can write about them, but they are not in a position to fundamentally alter the situation. In other words, women cannot be in the room where it happens, because they have little political power in this period.

Fancy and sensibility can conjure up alternative visions and they can give a voice to the oppressed and dispossessed, but in the end, it is not always enough to bring about a change in the world. The odes' conclusion implicates the mermaid and spirit as eternal forces, static and permanent, intimating a vision of ruin. Where the narrative poems discussed in chapter four proposed a vision of female compassion to combat male aggression, these odes suggest a more ruthless avenger that no longer seeks to amend the course, but who initiates destruction. If liberation implicates destruction, these phantoms obliterate the limitations on the spaces of power and redraw them, assigning themselves sublime potential. In so doing, they partake in the ambivalent play of Gothic transgression. As discussed in chapter three, the transgression displayed in the Gothic illustrates the interdependency of opposites and creates a continuum between contraries. It shows how "the normative of the one unravels in the transgressive space of the other."[489] The need to impose limitations indicates the arbitrariness of categorisation and the spirit and mermaid offer a space to contemplate the governing structures of society. The spirit toes the line between responsibility and exploitation, going from exposing wrongdoings and punishing the oppressors, to randomly targeting humanity. The mermaid questions the boundary between agency and objectification, as well as seduction and domination, her voice charms sailors, yet her body remains immaterial, asserting her agency and refusing to adhere to the expectations of the mermaid figure as object. Suspended between states, they undermine the boundaries that safeguard societal order and hint towards dissolution and the variability of limits.

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[487] Arendt, *On Violence,* 54.

[488] Botting, *Gothic,* 3.

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[489] Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing, 1750-1820: A Genealogy*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 200.

Conclusion

Like the monuments and statues lining the streets, the literary canon is increasingly interrogated and scrutinised. Assumptions about Romantic literature and the importance of the London-based publishing houses are challenged as the academic focus moves across regional borders. The revaluation of Scottish literature has demonstrated the vitality of the regional public sphere and their contributions to literary developments of the period. Authors such as Robert Burns, Walter Scott and Joanna Baillie were known across borders and carved out a name for themselves and the literature of Scotland. The continuous reassessment of female-authored texts also puts a strain on literary categories and models, pushing conventions to its limits and breaking out of the moulds and classifications critics have established based on male-authored texts. In other words, if we listen to subaltern voices, other narratives emerge.

In particular, the research done in this thesis benefited from the recent recognition of a Scottish inflection of the Gothic. Scholarship on the Scottish Gothic has contributed to a different consideration of the Gothic as an aesthetic which renders visible the process of historical fragmentation and the interpretation of the past. As such, this thesis sought to establish the Gothic as an aesthetic that can illuminate alternative histories in terms of subterfuge, projection and identity-formation. It proposed to read the Gothic as an aesthetic that allows an examination of the process of history-making through fragmentation and disfigurement. In so doing, it argued that the Gothic interrogates the linear narrative of modernity and the notion of progress. It focused on the Gothic spectres and how it creates ruptures that interrogate advancement and foreground the horrors and victims of this forward movement, begging the question of the morality of progress. This study set out to examine an author who wrote from a subaltern position both in terms of gender and in terms of national and cultural identity. Anne Bannerman's poetry was singled out to address this question, as she – a Scottish author and female poet – bridges the gap between female Romantic poetry and Scottish Romantic literature. The aim of this thesis has been to read Bannerman's poetry as a haunted memory; a site where the ghosts of the past refused to remain buried. In so doing, it sought to implicate Bannerman's poetry in the entanglement of the Scottish Gothic and to address how she question modernisation in contemplating the advent and politics of the British empire.

The themes brought to the forefront in this analysis were founded on the general engagements of female poets during this period. Recent discussions of Romantic-era female authors have illustrated how these women sought out the public sphere and how they gained an authority on moral issues. Writing against the background of war and an expanding empire, female poets used a language of affect and sentiment to instrumentalise the rhetoric of sensibility to raise awareness of social issues and to advocate change. Their interventions gave a voice to the disenfranchised and the dispossessed; those who, like these women, found themselves in a marginalised position. The politicisation of fancy, an imaginative faculty, to contemplate prospective scenarios gave these authors a tool to address moral and social dimensions of the current state of the world. Fancy provided a view from above, assuming the higher ground to interrogate the politics of empire and war. The social figure of fancy was likened to the Gothic spectre, whose haunting capacity signalled the return of a displaced past as well as contemplating future prospects. The transformative impulse, in which the past came back to disfigure the present to point toward an alternative trajectory for the future, addresses the meaning of the past in the present. It provides an interpellation for the current politics and enables to interrogate the process of modernisation and the advent of the British Empire.

As such, it opposes the Whiggish historiography which proposes to build a scriptural tomb. It seeks to create a place where the dead can be buried, so the living can exist elsewhere, meaning that the unsavoury elements of the past are closed off and rendered inactive. Conversely, the destruction proposed in Bannerman's poetry breaks open this tomb. It displays the violence of the past, making the voices of the victims heard and disrupts the present in allowing them to haunt. As such, they question the costs of a forward movement and illuminate that in this so-called advancement, atrocities happen. War destroys, empires are transient, and wealth can be taken away. While not explicitly implicating the British Empire in her poetry, the parallels with other imperial forces – not in the least the Genii – suggest a similar fate for Britain. The devastating and indiscriminate force of the ocean stresses the fleeting nature of empire, as nature will somehow take back with is hers. The projected outcomes envision a state of disintegration and oblivion.

Bannerman's poems discussed in this study revisit history through fancy's eye and conjures up a past rife with suffering, dispossession and carnage. Her poems showcase the destructive capacity of imperial greed and conquest, illuminating the ravages of war and colonialism. Though the scenes frequently take place overseas and away from the British homeland, they render visible the effect and costs of war and conquest in the domestic sphere. "The Genii" and the "Verses" create a transformative impulse, intimating a prospect of hope, bliss and joy, but only after the breakdown of the politics of empire. The theme is continued in the sonnets and odes, but the hope for the future is abandoned. Instead, these poems foreground destruction through the violent, raging forces of storms and oceans. As such, they suggest the failure of fancy to bring about fundamental change and indicate a vision of oblivion, chaos and disruption.

The imaginative flights of Bannerman's poems straddle the past, present and future. The very act of bringing the past to the forefront unravels and turns into an unholy exercise. It implicitly raises the question that, if modernity is a forward movement, if historical progress means evolving from a primitive to a civilised society, why does the Empire continue to wreak havoc in the world and to perpetuate suffering and exploitation? The Gothic aesthetic, through its phantoms and haunting, renders these elements of history visible in a visceral manner, displaying the aggression and violence of the past. Bannerman does not directly engage with the turbulent aspects of Scottish history, but she interrogates the condition of empire and in so doing she implicates the incorporation of Scotland within the empire and the rewriting of history in one mould.

This study is tentative, a foray into a new territory and it sought to recover a female voice in a male-dominated literary circle. The proposed framework to analyse the disfigurement and fragmentation in the selected poetry of Bannerman is not infallible. It is a preliminary assessment of the interconnection between fancy, phantoms and transgressive violence. I do not claim that it is universally applicable, I have put it forward to craft a structure that can bridge the gap between Scottish Gothic and Romantic female poetry. Further research into these connections is necessary to assert it as representative of a tradition, and more broadly applicable to female authors writing from a similar position as Bannerman. Given that the themes in Bannerman's poetry are similar to that of other female poets of the period, foregrounding moral questions and affective language, Bannerman can be perceived as a product of her time and of the female poetic tradition that has already been identified in scholarship. However, the violent nature of her poems, especially that of storms and tempests, appears as singular, intimating the existence of a Scottish (female?) tradition that uses a similar imaginary of raging seas and the speaking voices of storms. Further research into a perhaps female poetics of that kind is warranted, as well as its relation to the Gothic aesthetic as a means to engage with the question of the national and cultural past. The wild and vicious character of the mermaid might be indicative of such an undercurrent, where Scottish authors reimagine folktales and legends, suggesting that the realm of history might be "fairy-ground" that can be reimagined through flights of fancy.[490]

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[490] Bannerman, *Tales,* 144.

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