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# Inhume, Entomb, Inurn, Immure:
# Cemeteries and Constructions of Britishness, 1767-1852

A Dissertation Presented

by

**Sarah Louise Hoglund**

to

The Graduate School

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**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

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Abstract of the Dissertation

**Inhume, Entomb, Inurn, Immure:**
**Cemeteries and Constructions of Britishness, 1767-1852**

by

**Sarah Louise Hoglund**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

**History**

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This dissertation examines the emergence of commercial cemeteries in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Britain, arguing that these spaces of the dead were a key site for the rehearsal of a middle class, British identity. Unlike earlier scholars, who tended to approach the nineteenth century as something like a golden age of burial, hoping to remind the reader of the sacrifices we have made to become thoroughly modern, I have instead attempted to use the cemetery as a way of engaging a series of current issues in the field of nineteenth century studies. Seeking to provide a transcultural, interdisciplinary framing of the early commercial cemetery, I have approached these sites as both empirical and imaginative spaces, presenting them not only as sites, but as idealizing representations of just what it meant to be middle class in Late-Georgian and early-Victorian Britain. To accomplish this, I have analyzed the commercial cemetery, first, in relation to two specific

bodies of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century literature: urban and public health histories and garden and landscape design treatises. For as much as public health debates may reveal about the anxieties that plagued nineteenth-century Britons – undoubtedly an important part of this story – they ultimately tell us very little about the cemetery's form. As my work demonstrates, the entrepreneurs and promoters behind these new commercial ventures used the language and theoretical underpinnings of the eighteenth century English landscape garden to promote the new burial grounds, surprisingly, as a populist project. Yet the story of burial reform cannot be told without considering Britain's, and Britons', relationship to the country's colonial investment in South Asia. Indeed, one of the central arguments of my dissertation is that imperial examples were central to the development of the cemetery as an integrated aspect of "English" national culture.

***Table of Contents***

List of Illustrations……………………………………………………………………………vi

Acknowledgments……………………………………………………………………………vii

Introduction: The Birth of the Cemetery…………………………………………………….1

1 – 'Of Garden Burial': the English Landscape Garden and the Cemetery…………………13

2 – The Function of the Form: Johns Strang and Loudon and Cemeterial Design…………47

3 – Monuments and Remembrance 'Amid the Stranger's Land……………………………90

4 – 'Graves of Departed Happiness': Anglo-Indian Burial-Grounds go to the Jackals…..125

5 – Hidden Agendas: the 'Secret' to Early Nineteenth-Century Burial Reform…………..155

Bibliography…………………………………………………………………………………178

***List of Illustrations***


Figure 1 “Merchants Park—Monument to John Knox,” *Glasgow Looking Glass* 1, no. 3 (9 July 1825): 3 – Source: Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, Sp Coll Bh14-x.8......................................59

Figure 2 James Forbes, “The Mausoleum of Bawa Rahan, near Baroche,” plate 51, vol. 2, *Oriental Memoirs* (1813) – Source: British Library, Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections, shelfmark 55.c.8........................................96

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[1] Credit for the title belongs to Evelyn Waugh, who elevated the euphemisms for death and mortuary rites and practices to something of an art form in his 1948 satire of the American funeral industry, *The Loved One*.

show, faculty members from disciplines elsewhere in the humanities played a significant role in my development as a thinker. In particular, I would like to thank Mary Rawlinson in the Department of Philosophy, and Nicholas Mirzoeff, once a key member of the Art Department at Stony Brook, for their help and inspiration.

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– Introduction –

## The Birth of the Cemetery

In 1832, the year of Parliamentary reform, and, coincidentally, the death of Jeremy Bentham, a truly (shockingly) utilitarian plan for disposing of the dead appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*. After recounting a brief history of burial "styles," the satirical piece's anonymous author suggested that the increasing number of dead Londoners could be put to real use. Far from a burden – be it financial, logistical or emotional – the dead in fact presented an opportunity; they offered themselves up for the betterment of the nation as a whole. Britons could only take them up on that offer, however, if cemetery design were fundamentally altered. The author thus enumerated a plan that "combine[d] all the glorious associations of the HEROIC method with the scientific, mercantile, and pious desiderata of the march of intellect in the present day."

> Let us suppose a company, formed on the plan of the "NATIONAL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, funds invested, and a convenient site chosen, as near to London as can be obtained. The proceedings of this company should be –
>
> 1. To erect a magnificent rotunda, with chapelries around, for use of the various sects and parties who might wish to perform their own funeral rites separately over the deceased "persons of quality" that would in the Christmas fogs, perhaps, arrive on the same day to honour the cemetery with their custom.
> 2. To erect a number of gas retorts, with suitable receivers of the various products arising from the "destructive distillation" of the human body, in connexion with the rotunda.
> 3. To erect machinery for the compression of the gas, and provide elegant, portable, un-shaped gas lamps, on which inscriptions might be engraved, and votive wreaths and tablets hung in the most classical style.[1]

[1] "The Climax of the Cemeteries," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* 5, no. 26 (March 1832): 152.

As much as this treatise, like many of the articles that appeared in *Fraser's*, was almost certainly a put-on of sorts, it nonetheless spoke to the increasingly common anxiety surrounding the apparent need for burial reform. And the author's solution, while starkly phrased, encapsulated a great deal of the debate surrounding the issue. Simply put, with churchyards unable to accommodate the increasing numbers of deceased Londoners, designers should take it upon themselves to devise a new space of burial, one that would meet the needs of the living.

Obviously, I am not the first to be interested in the emergence of the modern cemetery. Indeed, since the publication of Philippe Ariès's *The Hour of Our Death*, the first over-arching historical account examining the cultural manifestations of death in Western Europe, any number of historians have looked to tell the story not only of the modern cemetery, but of modern ways of death as such.[2] Ariès's work identified and traced a historical trajectory, over the last thousand years, where the acceptance of death as a natural part of life gave way to the cultural and social separation of the living from the dead. According to Ariès, the rise of individualism in Western Europe, which he dates from the late Middle Ages, directed this shift in attitudes. For my purposes, however, it is

[2] Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (London: Allen Lane, 1981). Originally published as *L'homme devant la mort* (Paris : Seuil, 1977). See also Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1974).

the interest in death rituals that Ariès' study has stimulated amongst British historians that I find more significant than his grand conclusions.[3]

In fact, any number of writers have chronicled the development of these rituals in nineteenth-century Britain. Perhaps the most well-known of these authors is James Stevens Curl, whose work, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, was among the first to consider these new sites of burial at length.[4] Curl's work, however, was not so much an examination of the historical shift that led to the new sites of burial but a study that paints the Victorian era as something like a golden age of burial, a moment prior to the shifts that have resulted in the degraded state of burial today. The nostalgia marking this and his subsequent work, *A Celebration of Death*, clearly speaks to his interest in preserving these now crumbling historic sites from decay and desecration.[5] For example, describing a brief period during which, due to the requisition of automobiles and petroleum for the war effort, between 1939 and 1945, Curl writes that horse-drawn coaches could be seen (and heard, "things were much quieter then") following the hearse to the cemetery:

> Soon, though, the war ended, and limousines replaced those marvelous elegant coaches: bombazine-clad aunts were no more, and visits to the

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[3] Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Peter Jupp and Clare Gittings eds., *Death in England: an Illustrated History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Ralph Houlbrook, ed., *Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (London: Routledge, 1989); and Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).

[4] James Stevens Curl, *A Victorian Celebration of Death* (Stroud: Sutton Press, 1972). For another early text that (for better or worse) has framed the discussion of burial reform in the early-nineteenth century, see John Morley's exhibition catalogue of a show at the Victoria and Albert, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971).

[5] James Stevens Curl, *A Celebration of Death: An Introduction to Some of the Buildings, Monuments, and Settings of Funerary Architecture in the Western European Tradition* (London: Constable, 1980), republished in 2002 as *Death and Architecture: An Introduction to Funerary and Commemorative Buildings in the Western European Tradition with Some Consideration of their Settings* (Stroud: Sutton Press, 2002).

> House of Death became somehow less real, for the dead became invisible as the coffins were invariable closed. Gone is that theatrical, sobering, utterly memorable funereal menace of yesteryear.

For Curl, Victorian funeral practice was characteristic of an age that, due to its simplicity, allowed for a truly restful eternal slumber.[6]

Unlike Curl, and others who have written on the history and current condition of individual cemeteries, in this project I use the cemeteries as a means of engaging broader issues within eighteenth and nineteenth-century British studies. Numerous scholarly engagements with class identity and formation have, in recent years, moved towards a recognition of the importance of linguistic analysis in explicating cultural and political identities. Patrick Joyce has suggested that class identity could be more productively analyzed if situated alongside other popular modes of understanding societies.[7] For Joyce, class makes the most sense when analyzed in terms of how contemporaries actually discussed the social order – when, for example "the people" or "humanity" was used in contemporary parlance to refer to what most historians would see as the "middle" or "working class." As one of the most prolific and persistent historians of class, Joyce has recently updated his arguments to stress the importance of narrative in analyzing nineteenth-century subjectivities. As he writes, "to make sense of life is to make it into a

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[6] Curl, *Victorian Celebration of Death*, 205-206. Other's have echoed Curl's sentimental imaging of the past; cf. Theon Wilkinson's nostalgic account British deaths during the Raj, *Two Monsoons: The Life and Death of Europeans in India* (London: Duckworth Press, 1976). Curl's interest in historic preservation has left an indelible mark in the literature of the cemetery and endures, in one form or another, as the standard by which the validity of subsequent investigations, and indeed access to the material remains of the cemetery, have been judged by the groups and agencies presently responsible for the superintendence of the sites themselves. Thus, it is not uncommon to find many subsequent studies uncritically, and/or perhaps unwittingly, reproducing the agenda/means to an end – the Whiggish tendencies of cemetery's mid-late twentieth century chroniclers.

[7] Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

story." Thus concepts like improvement, providence and liberty were important as they help structure individual and collective identities. These storylines, as the following chapters demonstrate, were literally and figuratively embodied and performed in the cultural space of the cemetery.

More recently, Joyce has addressed the cemetery directly, arguing that its formation be understood in light of Foucault's insistence on the close connection between changing ideas of freedom and an emerging (neo-)liberalism.[8] For Joyce, the modern cemetery comes into being with the forms of modern governmentality, whereby metropolitan burial, like other problem spaces (the slaughterhouse, etc.) is shifted beyond the limits of the nineteenth century city. Following a similar line of inquiry, Thomas Laqueur has recently turned his attention from sex and the living body back to an earlier interest in death and the dead. Laqueur has revisited his early intriguing study of the pauper grave in an attempt to show the ways that, in the early-nineteenth century, burial cannot be separated from a larger, biopolitical project.[9]

While I am undoubtedly sympathetic to the arguments of Joyce and Laqueur, my own work approaches the cemetery slightly differently, approaching these sites, first, from two key bodies of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century literature: urban and public health histories and garden and landscape design treatises. Nineteenth century

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[8] Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003), 89-91.

[9] Thomas Laqueur, "Bodies, Death and Pauper Funerals," *Representations* 1 (1983), 109-131. For more on the intersection between death and in the nineteenth century, see Julie-Marie's informative *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) expanded from her essays in *Past and Present* and *Social History* as well as Elizabeth Hurren and Steve King, "'Begging for a Burial': Form, Function and Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Pauper Burial," *Social History* 30, no. 3 (August 2005): 321-341.

cities were frequently linked to anxieties over disease and contagion. And although most commentators connected "fevers" and cholera with the filth of poverty, these same sicknesses were known to spread beyond the poor and infect the "innocent" rich and middle class. Public health officials, as well as those concerned with sanitary reform, sought to eliminate the vectors of these infectious diseases. In their efforts, the problems raised by intramural burial, such as the effects of miasmas and putrefaction on surrounding communities, were no different than those surrounding inadequate sewage or rubbish collection. An understanding of public health debates is thus crucial to any understanding of the emergence of these cemeteries, for they were seen as ridding the city centers of the overcrowded burial grounds commonly associated with atmospheric pollution and the threat of disease.[10]

But to tell the story of the commercial cemetery's development as a simple matter of urban "hygiene" would be to ignore a critical force in its formation. For as much as public health debates may reveal about the anxieties that plagued nineteenth-century Britons, they ultimately tell us very little about the cemetery's form. To interrogate the aesthetics of the cemetery, therefore, this project has also drawn on a wide range of scholarship in the field of landscape architecture and garden studies. Promoters made sure to point out that the cemetery's horticulture was carefully selected and the plantings calculated, for the grounds, though decidedly anti-urban, were to be a controlled organicism. For example, the historical significance of particular plants was commonly highlighted in company prospectuses and cemetery guidebooks. As the following

[10] Dorothy Porter, *The History of Public Health and the State* (London: Routledge, 1999).

chapters demonstrate, these new commercial ventures used the language and theoretical underpinnings of the eighteenth century English landscape garden to promote the garden cemetery as a new, ostensibly populist, cultural phenomenon. In the cemeteries, as in country estates, the verdant surroundings, winding walks and paths, deliberate landscaping, and architectural styles, were very much compositional elements - rather than ends in themselves. To truly understand the utilitarian underpinnings of burial reform, therefore, it is essential to consider the English landscape garden's longstanding commitment to the connection between "design and social morality."[11] For this reason, the work of scholars like John Dixon Hunt and Simon Pugh, specifically their treatment of the changing theories and practices of landscape design and architecture throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, has been indispensable in my framing of the garden cemetery.[12]

Yet, the story of burial reform cannot be told without considering Britain's, and Britons', relationship to the country's colonial investment in South Asia.  Indeed, a main contention of this dissertation is that imperial examples were central to the development of the cemetery as an integrated aspect of "English" national culture.  In Calcutta, for example, urban burial space was limited and overcrowded, and the colonists, who died at much higher rates than the native populations in most of the Empire, needed spaces in

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[11] John Dixon Hunt, and Peter Willis, ed., *The Genius of the Place: the English Landscape Garden, 1620-1820* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988).

[12] John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting, and Gardening During the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992); Simon Pugh, *Garden, Nature, Language* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); and Mark Laird, *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden: English Pleasure Grounds* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

which they could erect monuments on a scale to compete with the grandest of those built by the native inhabitants.  These factors led to the creation of the South Park Street Cemetery, which, as I will show, featured quite prominently in the writings of various Anglo-Indians prior to the passage of the East India Act of 1813. Prior to the influx of Christian missionaries, these "gated communities" of the dead served as a visible assertion of the power and status necessary to justify the domination of the living. After 1813, however, attitudes toward Indian and Anglo-Indian burial practices seemed to turn from admiration/fascination to a generalized scorn, one expressed all too often in terms strikingly similar to those used to call for burial reform in England. For these reasons, among others, it is necessary to consider British burial reform not as a phenomenon restricted to the "centers" of culture, but as one that took shape almost simultaneously both in metropole and colonies.

As cemeteries provide both material artifacts in their sepulchre and architecture, and literary artifacts in the social tracts proclaiming their value and prescribing their forms, the following chapters, each one in its own way, attempt to provide a cross-disciplinary framing of these sites.  They approach commercial burying grounds as an empirical as well as imaginative space, to present them not merely as sites, but as representations requiring visual, literary, anthropological, and historical analysis. The first chapter, "'Of Garden Burial': the English Landscape Garden and the Cemetery," compares descriptions of the garden cemetery to the body of eighteenth-century British literature devoted to the ideas of nature and landscape. For the garden cemetery, many believed, would fundamentally alter Britons' relationship to death by reestablishing a particular material

and conceptual connection between the body and “nature.” If the cemetery could only be formulated as if it were a garden with carefully arranged horticulture, floriculture and architecture all working together to dull the pain of death, Britons would be able to embrace burial as an opportunity for intellectual and social growth.

Chapter 2, “The Function of the Form: Johns Strang and Loudon and Cemeterial Design,” continues with this exploration of the cemetery conceived as a form of landscape architecture, following this interesting mixture of aesthetics and social and moral “hygiene” to Glasgow. For John Claudius Loudon and John Strang, the health benefits said to accompany the radical overhaul of burial practices were inseparable from the cultural benefits of a carefully constructed cemetery. Thus, in their proposals to found or redesign sites like the Glasgow Necropolis, Strang and Loudon suggested that the form of the grounds should compel visitors to behave appropriately. If designers would only employ the proper techniques, they argued, the “Cockney lovers of the picturesque” that critics like William Mudford so detested, would cease to be a problem. Though they may never have the money to purchase a plot, they were nevertheless civilizable, and the cemetery would play no small part in realizing that potential.[13] In 1830s and 40s Glasgow, they believed, the cemetery, like the museum and the public park later in the century, should welcome the masses so that they might reemerge as good middle class Britons.

In the third and fourth chapters I turn my attention to India, where colonial burying grounds and rituals of bereavement figure prominently in so many accounts of Anglo-Indian experience in the subcontinent. Chapter 3, “Monuments and Remembrance ‘Amid

[13] William Mudford, “Cemeteries and Churchyards: A Visit to Kensal Green,” *Bentley’s Miscellany* 9 (January 1841), 92-95.

the Stranger's Land,'" looks at the ways in which, for many late-Georgian/Hanoverian Britons, native sepulcher seems to have been an object of fascination. Through travel narratives, sentimental novels, Company surveys, learned Orientalist scholarship, and landscape paintings, any number of authors found wonderment in the forms of native obsequies. They wrote of the sites' monuments and landscaping, the natives' devotion to the memory of the dead, and, almost without exception, the grounds' extramural location. Some of these authors even suggested that in this realm Britons might take the natives as their model.

This interest and admiration was, of course, short-lived. Therefore in Chapter 4, "'Graves of Departed Happiness': Anglo-Indian Burial-Grounds go to the Jackals" I look at the ways in which British accounts of Indian cemeteries shifted dramatically in the 1820s from an orientalist fascination to an evangelical scorn, considering the potential connection between the growing intolerance of Hindoo/Muslim landscapes of death and the growing disgust for existing British/European burial grounds. While the growing missionary presence in the colony and calls for reform "at home" were undoubtedly important, it is nevertheless important also to consider changing ideas of the British as a people. For, as so many seemed to suggest, Britons should have been ashamed to bury their dead in spaces not even "savages" would consider fit for interment. This chapter thus digs deeper into the changing evaluations of Anglo-Indian burial grounds in the 1820s and '30s, raising in the process a series of questions about a crisis of British identity inseparable from the changing shape of empire.

In the final chapter, "Hidden Agendas: The 'Secret' to Early Nineteenth-Century

Burial Reform," this narrative returns home, so to speak. Following the anxiety over the inappropriate state of British burial grounds back to the metropole, this chapter looks at the ways in which, for so many in 1830s and '40s Britain, burial practices had come to be seen as nothing less than a "national evil." The social ills that plagued the nation, they averred, were the undeniable result of a failure to dispose of the dead in a proper manner. If only the bodies of deceased Britons could be tastefully hidden within the newly formulated cemetery, any number of problems would disappear. Much as they spoke of the need to keep the process of physical decay at a safe distance, the motivation for their arguments appears to have lain elsewhere. This final chapter therefore looks closely at the work of men like Walker, demonstrating that beneath his distaste for inner city burial lurked a desire to reconfigure the relationship between nineteenth-century Britons and the history of Western culture.

Though most of the authors I discuss in the pages that follow stop short of suggesting that the dead body might be used as a source of energy, there nevertheless runs through all of their discussions a fear that Britons had gone astray in their relations with the dead. They had ceased, to put it bluntly, to use the dead properly. The solution to this problem was not, no matter how often or how forcefully these authors may have suggested, to return to some timeless model of mourning, but to forge a truly modern form of bereavement, one interested in honoring the past not for its own sake, but as a portent of the present and, perhaps more importantly, the future. The garden cemetery provided a space in which the emerging middle classes could perform their social and national

aspirations and ideals.  In so doing, these sites enabled many Britons to project themselves into a history not yet written. Thus the cemetery, like a mirror, would serve in the end to clarify their present.

– Chapter 1 –

## "Of Garden Burial" the English Landscape Garden and the Cemetery

> Beneath the shade of a spreading tree, amid the fragrance of a balmy flower, surrounded on every hand with the noble works of art, the imagination is robbed of its gloomy horrors, the wildest fancy is freed from its debasing fears.[1]

At first glance, one might mistake the above lines a passage out of an eighteenth century treatise on landscape design. When these words appeared in print in 1831, however, they spoke not so much of the power of the cultivated aristocratic garden, but of the potential social utility of a large extramural cemetery. If the cemetery were created as a garden where the horticulture, floriculture and architecture would all come together to soften the experience of death it could reclaim the experience of burial as an opportunity for moral growth as well as intellectual and social advancement. The garden cemetery, it was said, would revolutionize the lives of its inhabitants by appropriating death in the service of "nature."

The idea that an explicitly landscaped space could evoke specific responses from viewers would have been familiar to many readers, for by the eighteenth century the idea that gardens and other "naturalistic" spaces could instruct visitors, raise moral questions, and demonstrate political ideologies was quite common.[2] In this chapter, I seek to re-

[1] John Strang, *Necropolis Glasguenis; with Observations on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture* (Glasgow: Atkinson, 1831), 61.

[2] Michael Charlesworth, ed., introduction to *The English Garden: Literary Sources and Documents*, vol. 2, (Helm Information: Robertsbridge, UK, 1993), 3.

situate the nineteenth century cemetery in relation to the eighteenth century landscape garden, the conventions of which, it has been argued "were ready to be adapted in the projects of the new cemeteries."[3] This history, of course, with its competing, contradictory and diverse narratives, is much larger than can be addressed in this chapter. Nevertheless it bears examination, as even a partial understanding reveals the profound influence that existing discussions of the landscape garden exerted on nineteenth century theorists of the cemetery. Revisiting this history, therefore, will lead to a reevaluation of the works of those who saw the cemetery as a landscape capable of stirring both intellect and emotion, and, more importantly, of the cultural agendas driving the push for extramural burial.

In this chapter, I analyze these early debates over cemetery design in relation to the recent arguments of Stuart Hall, W. J. T. Mitchell and Kathleen Wilson. Drawing on the works of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, Wilson calls on historians to address notions of national identity not as the outcome of various historical events, but as a process. Such an approach, she argues, allows one to recognize the ways in which identity, as a series of acts "is tentative, multiple and contingent, and its modalities change over time."[4] In looking at the cemetery, I argue, Wilson's claims regarding the sedimentation of national identities intersect quite strikingly with what W.J.T Mitchell describes as the process of landscape. For Mitchell, it is essential that we conceive of landscape as a "cultural practice," a verb rather than a noun. As he puts it, landscape

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[3] N.B. Penny, "The Commercial Garden Necropolis of the Early Nineteenth Century and Its Critics," *Garden History* 2, no. 3 (Summer 1974): 66.

[4] Kathleen Wilson, "Introduction: Histories, Empires, Modernities," in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840*," ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 6.

> doesn't merely signify or symbolize power relations; it is an instrument of cultural power, perhaps even an agent of power that is (or frequently represents itself as) independent of human intentions. Landscape as a cultural medium thus has a double role with respect to something like ideology: it naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable, and it also makes that representation operational by interpellating its beholder in some more or less determinate relation to its givenness as sight and sight.[5]

Here I explore the ways in which the garden cemetery functioned, or was intended to function, in society, arguing that, in the early discussions surrounding these new landscapes of burial, one finds a series of heated, messy quarrels over just what will constitute nature. Far from affirming or validating social and cultural identities and articulated relationships of power, the early-nineteenth century cemetery provides a unique glimpse of British social and cultural identity in transition.

**"Of Garden Burial"**

Seventeenth century gentlemen such as John Evelyn, well traveled and reared on the classics, sought to revive interest in the classical tradition of burial in a garden or other "natural" landscapes.[6] Evelyn, for whom conventional church burial was "a *novel* Presumption, undecent, sordid, and very prejudicial to health," desired for himself that wherever his "corps may be interr'd…let…it be not in the church or chancel."[7] In his 1664 essay on tree cultivation, *Sylva,* Evelyn detailed the history of burial in naturalistic

[5] W.J.T. Mitchell, introduction to *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1-2.

[6] For a recent examination of Evelyn's understanding of the garden as paradise in the post-lapsarian world, see Sandra Sherman, "Replanting Eden: John Evelyn and his Gardens," *Endeavour* 26, no. 3 (September 2002): 113-117.

[7] John Evelyn, *Silva; or a Discourse on Forest Trees*, 5th ed. (London: J. Walthoe, 1729), 297.

spaces, pointing out that even Christ "chose the garden for the place of his sepulchre." As Evelyn told his readers, this was not an unusual request. The cave in Machpelah, which Abraham reportedly purchased for the sepulchre of Sarah and his family, was "convey'd to him with particular mention of all the trees and groves about it." Thus,

> we do avouch, for many weighty causes, that there are none more fit to bury our dead in, than our gardens and groves, or airy fields, *sub dio*; where our beds may be decked and carpeted with verdant and fragrant flowers, trees and perennial plants, the most natural and instructive hieroglyphics of our expected resurrection and immortality.[8]

According to Evelyn, the elements in a garden, "instructive hieroglyphics," were second to none in underscoring the Christian vision of an eternal afterlife, for "the air and genius of gardens operate upon the human spirits towards virtue and sanctity."[9]

While Evelyn was perhaps the most famous early proponent of burial in the cultivated "naturalistic" landscape, others also expressed their approval for the practice before its more widespread adoption in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. Royal gardener Stephen Switzer, concluded his 1718 *Iconographia Rustica*, one of the first treatises on the new "naturalistic" style, by declaring his wish to be buried in the garden,

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[8] Evelyn, *Silva*, 280, 296. So interested in the subject of garden burial was Evelyn that his magnum opus, "Elysium Britannicum," unfinished at his death in 1706, was to contain an entire section entitled "Of Garden Burial." It does appear, however, that Evelyn asked for assistance from Thomas Browne, author of the influential 1658 treatise on funereal customs *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial, or a Discourse of the Sepulchral Urns lately found in Norfolk*, who agreed to submit essays on several subjects, including that titled "Of Garden Burial." See Simon Wilkin, ed., *Sir Thomas Browne's Works Including His Life and Correspondence,* vol. 4, (London: W. Pickering, 1835), 174; Edmund Gosse*, Sir Thomas Browne* (London: Macmillan, 1905), 131 and Frances Harris, "The Manuscripts of John Evelyn's 'Elysium Britannicum,'"*Garden History* 25, no. 2 (Winter 1997), 131-137.

[9] Quoted in J.D. Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting and Gardening during the Eighteenth century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 28.

"cover'd with flowers and free from noise and pain."[10] Contemporaneous with Switzer were the Quakers, for whom garden burial, practiced from the mid seventeenth century until local Meetings acquired land specifically devoted to burial, not only contravened no religious strictures, but actually supported their precept of simplicity. Because all land was "Gods ground," there was no need for, or recognition of, special consecrated burial space. In the garden early Quakers were able to enact, in death, the modesty and equality they strived for while living.[11]

In his 1829 history of gardening, Royal Society fellow, Samuel Felton included an essay "On Garden Burial," extolling the virtues of burial in "nature" in his treatise on gardening. Because trees had long served as "emblems of human life," and "affecting views and comparisons have been drawn of their progress from debility and infancy to youth, strength, maturity, and inevitable final decay," Felton believed it was only logical that gardens as groves should serve as spaces of burial.[12] Lest readers object that this notion was simply too outlandish, he reminded them that more than one noteworthy individual had requested a garden burial. "[O]ne of the finest circumstances in the history

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[10] Stephen Switzer's 1715, *The Nobleman, Gentleman, and Gardener's Recreation,* was expanded and republished in 1718 as the *Iconographia Rustica*, a how-to book in which he expresses his desire that "ever-greens the turfy tomb adorn."

[11] See Gwynne Stock, "Quaker Burial: Doctrine and Practice" in *Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in England, 1700-1850,* Margaret Cox, ed., (York: Council for British Archeology, 1998), 129.

[12] Samuel Felton, *Gleanings on Gardens; Chiefly Respecting those of the Ancient Style in England* (London: Lowe and Harvey, 1829), 47. Felton draws these words from a "charming little classic book" on botany, James Lawson Drummond's*, First Steps to Botany: Intended as Popular Illustrations of the Science, Leading to Its Study as a Branch of General Education,* 2nd ed., (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1826), 157. When *Gleanings on Gardens* was reissued in 1897, one reviewer noted that the chapter concerning "'Garden Burial' is specially worth the readers notice as relating to a practice in whose favour much might be said, but concerning which little has been written." "Felton's *Gleanings on Gardening," Athenaeum*, no. 3636 (July 1897): 37.

of rural burial," Felton wrote, was political propagandist and philanthropist Thomas Hollis's request that "his body…be buried in one of his fields at Corsham, in Dorsetshire, and the field…be ploughed over immediately after his interment."[13] Hollis died in 1774, but Felton also pointed out that seventy-five years earlier Sir William Temple's heart was interred, at his request, "under the sundial in his favourite garden."[14] This was not simply a modern British phenomenon. In his will, Greek philosopher Theophrastus designated his beloved Athenian gardens as the space "*for the repose of his own bones*."[15] Of course, Felton lamented, not all were so lucky. The radical Horne Tooke, for example, was buried next to his sister in an Ealing churchyard in 1812, even though he had prepared a tomb and vault on the grounds of "his richly cultivated garden at Wimbledon."[16]

In an 1836 article for his *Gardener's Magazine*, John Claudius Loudon called for the legalization of garden burial as a first step toward the establishment of extramural cemeteries.[17] Unlike Evelyn and Switzer, who spoke primarily to early modern aristocrats, Loudon believed garden burial should be available to a much wider populace. Every "man who had land"– not just those who owned it outright in perpetuity, but also those with spaces under leasehold "for a certain number of years"– should be given the right to

[13] "Feltoniana," *The Gardener's Magazine and Register of Rural & Domestic Improvement* 2, no. 8 (1827): 481; Felton, 43. Felton contributed "a large stock of gardening scraps and anecdotes," to Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine*. For a brief discussion of both gardeners overlapping interests and source material, see David Jacques, "William Forsyth and his Library," *Garden History* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1996): 54-65.

[14] Evelyn approved of Temple's unusual behest: "the late elegant and accomplished Sir *W. Temple*, tho' he laid not his whole *Body* in his *Garden*, deposited the better Part of it (his *Heart*) there." See Evelyn, 297.

[15] Felton, *Gleanings on Gardening*, 45.

[16] Felton, *Gleanings on Gardening*, 44. It should be noted that, upon his death, Evelyn's repeated requests for a garden burial were also ignored.

[17] For more on Loudon's manifold contributions to the discourse on cemeteries, see my discussion in Chapter 2.

"be buried in his own grounds in any manner he chose."[18] A true Utilitarian, Loudon believed that "every cottager" should be able to "make use of his garden," and "every farmer of his own farm," for it was "surely a purer and more noble idea, to contemplate the union of our bodies to the whole of nature," and "the sooner we are resolved into our primitive elements the better."[19] Throughout the eighteenth century, it became more common for the landed gentry to be buried in the grounds of their country estates. Thus for Loudon in the 1830s the idea of burial in one's own back garden was not that much of a stretch. Nor was it, for that matter, difficult to envision this practice on a national scale.

**Emblems/Signs of Death in the Landscape**

Before actual corpses were interred with any regularity on these grounds, monuments and memorials erected to the memory of friends, relatives and national heroes became increasingly common elements in the garden. In gardens across England from Stowe in Buckinghamshire, to Rousham in Oxfordshire, to Castle Howard in Yorkshire, these commemorative memorials preceded the interment of bodies in the gardens of the landed gentry.[20] During the seventeenth century, monumental structures such as columns, pyramids and obelisks were erected as decoration in the country estates of the landed gentry. But it was during the first half of the eighteenth century that architectural

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[18] "A Metropolitan Sepulchre," *Gardener's Magazine* 5 (1829): 214.

[19] "Metropolitan Sepulchre," *Gardener's Magazine,* 214.

[20] During the eighteenth century, in the American colonies, particularly in the south, family burials routinely took place on the grounds of large estates. Thomas Jefferson was interred alongside family members in the mausoleum at Monticello, and George Washington, though his body was moved to a new vault thirty years after his death in 1799, was always entombed at Mount Vernon. See Philippe Ariès*, The Hour of Our Death* (London: Allen Lane, 1981), 522. David Coffin offers a detailed discussion of the elegiac memorial in the English garden in *The English Garden: Meditation and Memorial* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

memorials became a much more common feature on the grounds of these estates.[21] Among the most famous examples of these eighteenth century gardens were those at Sir Richard Temple's estate at Stowe, in Buckinghamshire, designed and re-designed at various times by John Vanbrugh, Charles Bridgeman, William Kent, James Gibbs and Lancelot "Capability" Brown.[22] Temple's garden offers an illustration of the ways in which the English landscape developed into a space imbued with political and cultural meaning. As historian and theorist of landscape studies Michel Conan argues, gardens were "battlegrounds where elite factions confront[ed] one another in their attempts to establish a symbolic language conveying what they consider the most appropriate ideology to the lower and middle classes."[23] In the case of Temple's estate at Stowe, this was true not only of the garden as such, but also of the memorial sculpture within the garden, which was believed to be integral to the overall success of the space. One need only look to the three structures designed by William Kent in the 1730s, collectively known as the "Elysian Fields" at Stowe.[24] Modeled after the famed Temple of Vesta at Tivoli outside Rome, the

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[21] Coffin, *English Garden*, 138-148. In his 1731 principal *Epistle to Lord Burlington*, Alexander Pope explained that "nature" was present in constructed garden features:

> To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
> To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend,
> To Swell the Terras, or to sink the Grot;
> In all let *Nature* never be forgot.

See Pope, *An Epistle to Lord Burlington* (1731) in Hunt and Willis, *Genius of the* Place, 212. Pope put this theory into practice at his modest Twickenham garden, where he erected an obelisk in memory of his mother set amongst a grove of stately cypresses in 1735. See Coffin, *English* Garden, 202.

[22] In addition to Stowe, with its intellectually demanding Elysian Fields, the grounds of Rousham and Stourhead are representative of the style of landscape gardening that dominated the first half of the eighteenth century.

[23] Michel Conan, introduction to *Perspectives on Garden Histories* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1999), 4.

[24] Stowe and its Elysian Fields were much discussed in the first half of the eighteenth century. One of the earliest publications was Gilbert West's 1732 poem, *The Gardens of the Right Honourable Richard Viscount*

Ionic “Temple of Ancient Virtue,” was a sturdy construction set across from a semi-ruined (by design) Gothic “Temple of Modern Virtue.” Downhill from both sat the “Temple of British Worthies,” in which the busts of William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Locke, Alexander Pope, and other figures from the Whig pantheon looked up, literally, to their ancestors, across the river “Styx.”[25]

Historical and cultural allusions encoded in garden statuary, common since at least the Renaissance, persisted well into the eighteenth century. The “readable items” of the Elysian fields confronted visitors to Stowe with a formidable task. In the Temple of Ancient Virtue, visitors were expected to take note of its resemblance to the famed Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, and thus align England’s noble past with the greatness of antiquity. Ancient virtue was contrasted, of course, with modern vice, indicated by the ruinous Temple of Modern Virtue, which even included a decapitated bust of Robert Wolpole. At the Temple of British Worthies, visitors were to notice the way that Queen Anne’s conspicuous absence, combined with a critical line from the *Aeneid* admiring the priesthood, echoed anti-Stuart and anti-Catholic political sentiment. For John Dixon Hunt, such was the “learned subtlety” of the Temple of British Worthies, that not only must one “identify our Virgil but recognize how and why it is incomplete.”[26]

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*Cobham.* In 1748, William Gilpin published *A Dialogue upon the Gardens of the Right Honouable the Lord Viscount Cobham at Stowe in Buckinghamshire,* and Benton Seeley’s guidebooks to the garden were regularly revised and reissued beginning with the first edition in 1744.

[25] Stephanie Ross, *What Gardens Mean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 59-60.

[26] John Dixon Hunt, “Emblem and Expression in the Eighteenth Century Landscape Garden,” *Eighteenth Century Studies* 3 (Spring 1971): 300.

Since the 1970s, scholars have described these gardens, full of iconographic devices designed to encourage philosophic meditations, as "emblematic." As John Dixon Hunt points out, the "emblematic gardens" of the eighteenth century drew on the Renaissance practice of "embodying 'messages' in statuary, inscriptions, and eloquent (because clearly allusive) architecture."[27] According to David Coffin, the 1745 mausoleum at Lord Carlisle's estate, Castle Howard in North Yorkshire would have functioned in precisely this fashion. The "circular tomb silhouetted on a slight rise in the Yorkshire countryside," he explains, surely would have "recalled the Roman *campagna* to any Englishman who had experienced the Grand Tour."[28] This mausoleum was first conceived during the 1720s, while Vanbrugh, whom Carlisle had first commissioned to design Castle Howard in 1699, returned to stay with Lord Carlisle. It was during this visit that the pair began contemplating the "grandest and noblest of all garden monuments, a great mausoleum."[29] Vanbrugh, once a playwright and stage designer, saw the scenic potential of a landscape. Thus he envisioned the mausoleum as both an ecclesiastical space that would eventually house Carlisle's corpse, and as a compositional element, carefully placed to augment the beauty of the grounds. As Carlisle put it,

> I think this Burial place should be built in ye form of a little chapple to hold about 40 or 50 people with a Cupola, or Tower upon it & placed upon Lody

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[27] Hunt and Willis, *Genius of the Place*, 34.

[28] Coffin, *English Garden*, 132. The most authoritative history of the Castle Howard estate and its gardens remains Charles Saumarez Smith's *The Building of Castle Howard* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1990). For another important examination see John Dixon Hunt, "Castle Howard Revisited," in *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 18-46.

[29] Saumarez Smith, *Building of Castle Howard*, 159.

> Hill over against ye Hill where ye two high Beaches stand whereby it may be an ornament to ye Seat.[30]

Though Carlisle here refers to the mausoleum as a "little chapple," and elsewhere wrote of it as "the Church" or "ye Chappel," he initially believed the mausoleum should resemble a Greek temple. In fact, it was only after Vanbrugh's death in 1726 that Carlisle was persuaded by Vanbrugh's replacement, Nicholas Hawksmoor, to contemplate a design based on ancient sepulcher. In a 1726 letter, Hawksmoor underscored the impropriety of recreating a Greek temple: "the Gentiles, Jews or any other polite people had either Magnificent piles for Sepulture, but never buryed near their temples, or built their tombs in the form of any temple dedicated to divine honours."[31] The appropriate design would underscore Carlisle's "politeness" as Vanbrugh emphasized, the mausoleum would be "a Show, and a Noble one, to many future Ages."[32] Thus on Hawskmoor's urging, Carlisle chose the Roman Tomb of Caecilia Metella, on the Appian Way, as the basis for the structure. Both men took great pains to ensure the mausoleum's appropriateness and prominence – repeatedly revising numerous details until its completion in 1745, eight years after Carlisle's death. (Knowing this, one cannot help but smile at Hawksmoor's hasty praise for the monument as "Authentic and what is According to the practice of ye antients."[33]) The tomb's circular Doric colonnade was eventually capped with a small

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[30] Cited in Coffin, *English* Garden, 31-132.

[31] Quoted in Neil Levine, "Castle Howard and the Emergence of the Modern Architectural Subject," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 62, no. 3 (September 2003): 340.

[32] Quoted in Saumarez Smith, *Building of Castle Howard*, 160n, 17n.

[33] Hawksmoor to Carlisle, 10 Nov. 1727; Hawksmoor to Carlisle, 6 May 1729, quoted in Geoffrey Webb, "The Letters and Drawings of Nicholas Hawksmoor Relating to the Building of the Mausoleum at Castle Howard," *Walpole Society* no. 19 (1931), 118, 124.

clerestory and dome, as Carlisle had specified in his will, hoping that visitors to Castle Howard – at least those who had made the Grand Tour – would appreciate the allusion to Bramante's sixteenth century Tempietto.[34]

Hawksmoor found the mausoleum visually stunning, but it was also quite a cultural innovation. In fact, it was one the earliest spaces of burial explicitly constructed for the landscape garden, built well before family mausolea became common features in country estates during the later half of the century.[35] Prior to Castle Howard, the dominant monumental form in the garden was something much closer to the cenotaph, in which memory was represented in absence of the body, than the mausoleum, which functioned as both commemorative space and crypt. Nevertheless, while it anticipated future trends in garden design and burial practice, the mausoleum also spoke to conflicting and evolving ideas about the propriety of burial in the garden. It sat between the urban or architectural and the rural or "naturalistic" site of burial. On one hand, the mausoleum evinced a nascent desire to bury the dead outside of customary religious settings and closer to "nature." Indeed, Carlisle and Vanbrugh shared strong anti-clerical opinions, with Vanbrugh claiming a historical precedence for burial in the garden mausoleum, which had been "practis'd by the most polite peoples before Priestcraft got poor carcasses

[34] Levine, "Castle Howard," 343-344.

[35] Until he was re-interred in the Pantheon in 1794, Rousseau was buried in the natural surroundings where he died in 1778; his tomb was set at the center of a small island surrounded by poplars in Rene Louis Giradin's romantically conceived *jardin anglais* at Ermenonville, outside Paris. Amongst the more famous English garden mausolea include those erected on the estates of Bowood in Wiltshire, commissioned in 1761; West Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, completed in 1765; Cobham Park in Kent, completed in 1783; Brocklesbury in Lincolnshire, completed in 1795; Blickering Hall in Norfolk, completed in 1797. See Coffin, *English Garden*, 138-144.

into their keeping, to make a little money of."[36] On the other hand, however, the chosen form of the mausoleum indicates not a desire for the complete immersion of the body into the natural world, but of a need to uphold the connection between interment and ecclesiastical authority. This connection was challenged, but not entirely shaken, in the early nineteenth century cemeteries.[37]

## Stylistic Foundations

The design of Castle Howard's landscape was much discussed in eighteenth century treatises on contemporary garden design. Thomas Whately, for example, documented the decline in popularity of the architectural features favored by Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor in the landscape garden, and passionately proscribed their future resurgence. Expressing the growing sentiment for subjective rather than didactic encounters in the garden, Whatley held the "emblematical" features common to gardens such as Stowe to be redundant in well-designed contemporary landscapes. "Ingenious contrivances" like temples, grottos, monuments and pyramids were "*Emblematical* rather than expressive," they conjured "absent ideas to the recollection but [made] no immediate impression, for they must be examined, compared, perhaps explained, before the whole design of them is well understood."[38] For Whately rather than presenting "objects bearing

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[36] Quoted in Saumarez Smith, *Building of Castle Howard*, 159.

[37] Arguments against the practice of burial in churches were becoming increasingly common when Vanbrugh and Hawskmoor were designing the mausoleum at Castle Howard. For a full discussion on the links between empire, the development of the free-standing family mausoleum, Vanbrugh and the East India Company, see my discussion in Chapter 5.

[38] Thomas Whately, *Observations on Modern Gardening, Illustrated by Descriptions,* 3rd ed. (London: T. Payne, 1771), 151; For a famous discussion of Whately's distinction between "emblematic" and "expressive" gardens, See John Dixon Hunt, "Emblem and Expression in the Eighteenth Century Landscape Garden," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 3 (Spring 1971): 294-317.

allusive references as *emblematic* devices," the landscape garden should speak to visitors by "providing environments that stimulate emotive *expression*."[39]

Lancelot "Capability" Brown too, was uninterested in erecting temples and statuary in his abstractly expressive landscapes.[40] "Brownian" landscapes, as they have come to be known, were concerned with human emotion and employed abstract means of cultivating diverse moods in individuals. Carefully situated groves of trees, for Brown, conveyed solemnity, while the placid water of an irregularly contoured lake suggested peace and tranquility. Following William Hogarth's "line of beauty," the view that there was more beauty in the sinuous than the straight, Brown designed his landscapes, over 170 in his career, to feature curves exclusively. In belts of trees, walkways, lakes, even the contours of the land itself, there were to be no straight lines.[41] Rather than revealing a scene in a single glance, the curvilinear passage offered only a glimpse of distant prospects. These curving walks thus encouraged one to enter the garden, either on foot or in a carriage.

The picturesque style that captivated many promoters of the early cemeteries, owes much to the work William Gilpin, Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight. Sketchbook artist and travel-writer Gilpin's tremendously successful books led many to analyze landscape in terms of the picturesque, which he understood as particular scenery that lent itself to depiction, or, as he put it, "expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty, which is

[39] John Archer, "Landscape and Identity: Baby Talk at the Leasowes," *Cultural Critique* 51 (2002): 170.

[40] Brown's (1716-1783) nickname derives from his fondness of referring to the great "capabilities" for improvement that the estates of potential clients possessed. The malapropism stuck, and under Brown, gardens would continue to have capability, rather than potential.

[41] In his 1753 essay, "The Analysis of Beauty," Hogarth claimed wavy lines more inherently pleasing to the eye than straight. See William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty: Written with a View of Fixing the Fluctuating Ideas of Taste* (1753; repr., London: R. Scholey by T. Davison, 1810), 26-28, 54-59.

agreeable in a picture."[42] Yet it was not "nature" as such that was the subject of his many works, but the natural world as seen through the lens of art. A rough outcropping of rock, for example was "picturesque" only insofar as could be transformed into a two-dimensional image. Seeking to clarify and expand Gilpin's understanding of the picturesque, Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight contended that all landscape gardeners should familiarize themselves with the works of seventeenth century masters like Claude Lorrain, Nicholas Poussin, Salvator Rosa. The gardener must also, they argued, demonstrate a familiarity with the basic principals of painting, which according to Price were "general composition – grouping of the separate parts – harmony of tints – unity of character."[43]

Brown's self-appointed successor, Humphry Repton (1752-1818), was the first to call himself a "landscape gardener."[44] Repton relaxed many of Brown's proscriptions, thereby pointing to the "gardenesque" style popularized by John Claudius Loudon in the early-nineteenth century. For example, Repton routed the driveway directly to the house and reintroduced the balustrade to tie the house and the garden together visually. Spurred by the growing interest in botany, Repton began to plant exotic species loathed by Brown and the picturesque theorists. He was incredibly successful, in part, because of his "Red Books" – before and after watercolors that depicted rural estates awaiting improvement

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[42] William Gilpin, *Essay on Prints* (1768), xii.

[43] Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (1794; repr., London: J. Mawman, 1810), 13.

[44] Although, to be fair, most scholars agree that William Shenstone was the first to use the term "landscape gardening," and Loudon was the first to apply it to his style of gardening. Shenstone, *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening* (1764).

and their appearance after he had transformed them. Along with his later writings, these Red Books explicated the sense of "good taste" that directed all of his landscape work.

Earlier in the century, Vanbrugh's sense of taste was influenced by his theatrical experience, on which he drew in staging a more "naturalistic" style of landscaping, his fellow Whig, Joseph Addison, called for a landscape garden filled with overt political symbolism.[45] In 1712, Addison, articulated his abhorrence to the presence of French- and Dutch-inspired topiary and clipped hedges in English gardens. For Addison, freeing the English garden from contrived designs went hand in hand with the liberation of Britain from autocracy. Writing in the *Spectator* in 1712, he bemoaned gardeners who, "instead of humouring nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible." "Our Trees" he lamented,

> rise in cones, globes, and pyramids. We see the marks of the scissars upon every plant and bush…I would rather look upon a tree in all its luxuriancy and diffusion of boughs and branches…and cannot but fancy that an orchard in flower looks infinitely more delightful than all the little labyrinths of the most finished parterre.[46]

Unadulterated "nature" was infinitely preferable to the artificial and constricted; an unpruned tree served as a living, growing symbol of the individual freedom of liberalism.

Over the course of the century, various commentators articulated a belief in "liberty" and "freedom" as features in the English garden. In a mid-century work by artist and clergyman William Gilpin, one fictional visitor to Stowe explained to another that there "is nothing so distasteful to the Eye as a confined Prospect, especially, if a dead

[45] Addison shared Vanbrugh's interest in sepulcher, commenting on funereal matters with some regularity in the *Spectator*. See chapter 5 for more discussion.

[46] Joseph Addison, "On the Pleasures of the Imagination," *Spectator*, no. 414 (June 25 1712): 143.

Wall, or any other such disagreeable Object steps in between. The Eye naturally loves Liberty."[47] Likewise, William Mason's 1772-82 poem, *The English Garden*, reiterated the aesthetico-political supremacy of the rolling grasslands of the naturalistic garden. For Mason, as for Gilpin and Addison, "freedom" in landscape design was a powerful metaphor for political liberty:

> Each plant that springs
> Holds, like the people of some free-born state,
> Its right fair franchis'd [48]

Horace Walpole's explicitly political, teleological history of gardening styles*, The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening,* elaborated how the English landscape garden represented the fulfillment of English culture and liberty. His now famous binary opposition between informal and formal styles of gardening links the former with British liberty and the Constitution and the latter with absolutist tyranny.[49] As Hunt explains, in Walpole's argument the "'modern' garden had become at once 'natural' and 'British'; it was said to have triumphed over 'foreign,' 'archaic' and 'unnatural' or 'artificial' styles."[50] French and Italian styles of gardening, based on geometrical precision and mathematical

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[47] William Gilpin, *Dialogue Upon the Gardens of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Cobham at Stow in Buckinghamshire* (1748; repr., Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976): 54.

[48] William Mason, "The English Garden" Book III, *The Works of William Mason*, vol. 1 (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1811), 268; For an insightful examination of the perceived parallelism between eighteenth century garden aesthetics and parliamentary liberty see Samuel Kliger, "Whig Aesthetics: A Phase of Eighteenth-Century Taste," *ELH* 16, no. 2 (June 1949): 135-150.

[49] Horace Walpole, *The History of Modern Taste in Gardening* (1782; repr., New York: Ursus Press, 1995). Walpole's text first appeared in print as the last volume of Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting* in 1780. It was also published variously as *On Modern Gardening* and *The Modern Taste in Gardening*.

[50] Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 84. For a detailed discussion of the legacy upon a generation of scholars that Walpole's narrative of the English garden the "more perfect perfection," see Michael Leslie, "History and Historiography in the English Landscape Garden," in *Perspectives on Garden Histories,* Michel Conan, ed., (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1999).

lines, were contrasted with the English love of informality – of serpentine paths and lakes, open pastures and irregular tree planting – especially as practiced by William Kent, and his presumptive successor 'Capability' Brown, which for Walpole amounted to a love of liberty. "Nature," after all, "abhor[ed] a straight line."[51]

For Walpole and others, the "English" landscape garden developed outside foreign influence. So persuasive was Walpole's polemic, that well into the twentieth century many garden historians structured their analyses around his nationalistic model.[52] An appreciation of the unflappable partisanship of Walpole's argument reveals not only its dependence on notions of political and cultural superiority, but also, as we will soon see, its underlying anxiety. As Walpole was well aware, by the 1770s the naturalistic, "English" landscape garden was quickly gaining popularity on the continent, particularly in France. In fact, by 1804, a sepulchral adaptation of the English "more perfect perfection" could be found in Paris's *Père la Chaise* cemetery.

### *John Strang and the Garden of Père la Chaise*

In 1822, English poet Horatio Smith described to the readers of the *New Monthly Magazine* a "variegated and wide-spreading garden, consisting of hill and dale, redolent

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[51] Walpole, *Modern Taste in Gardening*, 49.

[52] The "English" landscape garden, for Walpole and many of its other promoters, developed outside foreign influence. For recent scholarship discussing the political and cultural significance of this myth of origins, see Stephen Bending, "Horace Walpole and Eighteenth-Century Garden History," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57 (1994): 209-26; and "A Natural Revolution? Garden Politics in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 241-266; as well as John Dixon Hunt, "How English was the English Landscape Garden?" in *Garden and Grove: the Italian Renaissance Garden and English Inspiration, 1600-1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 180-184.

with flowers, and thickly planted with luxuriant shrubs and trees." It possessed a "striking assemblage of tasteful decoration…and was profusely planted with flowers, and overshadowed by poplar, cypress, weeping willow and arbor vitae interspersed with flowering shrubs and fruit-trees."[53] The summit provided a picturesque scene of a city laid out "with a panoramic and lucid sharpness." So impressed with the scene was Smith that he doubted a "candid traveller" could not spend a morning at the garden without "forming a more pleasing estimate of human nature in general."[54] Similarly strong praise for this same garden was offered in 1823 by a contributor to the *European Magazine,* who claimed that he had never "passed a few hours more delightfully" than amongst the "gloomy foliage of the waving cypresses which surrounded me." The pseudonymous author echoed Evelyn's belief in the transformative power of the garden, claiming everything he saw "was calculated to detach my mind from worldly thought, and to inspire me with feelings of seriousness and devotion."[55] "Opidex" promised readers of the *Monthly Magazine* in 1818 that the ornamentation and symbolism of the garden would "affect the soul, and so rivet the attention, that the tongue, as it were, becomes mute,— you are plunged into a profound reverie; and, as if you were no longer of this world, but

[53] [Horatio Smith], "The Cemetery of Pere La Chaise," *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 4, no. 13 (January 1822): 155. The attribution is drawn from *the Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900: Volume III*, Walter E. Houghton, ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 179.

[54] [Smith], "Cemetery of Pere La Chaise," 159.

[55] D. F., "Evening at Pere at Chaise," *European Magazine, and London Review* 83 (February 1823): 128.

belonged to another, your whole existence seems absorbed in meditation."[56] This garden was unlike any other the authors had encountered; it was a garden of the dead.

Established in 1804, the Parisian cemetery of Père la Chaise was visually and ideologically quite different from the churchyard with which most Britons were familiar, and it would play a profound role in British discourses on burial space in the nineteenth century. For Thomas Laqueur, Père la Chaise "was, and was understood at the time to be, a radical innovation in the spatial geography of the dead in relation to the living and of dead bodies in relation to each other."[57] While I am unwilling to claim, as some historians have, that Père la Chaise was the original from which the new Georgian cemeteries were copied, it is nonetheless important to acknowledge the Parisian cemetery's role in shaping public attitudes toward burial provisions in Georgian and Victorian Britain. As some scholars have astutely noted, it is difficult to ascribe to Père la Chaise "the critical lead" in spurring on a cemetery "movement" in Britain. Both assumptions, however suspect, have formed the standard interpretation since James Stevens Curl's pioneering work in the 1970s.[58] But while Curl may have overestimated the importance of British discussions of Père la Chaise, other scholars, rightly taking issues

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[56] Opidex, "Summary View of the Three Great Cemeteries in the Neighbourhood of Paris," *Monthly Magazine, or, British Register* 45, no. 309, (March 1818): 97.

[57] Thomas Laqueur, "The Places of the Dead in Modernity," in *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820,* Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman, ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 18.

[58] See for example, William Taylor, *The Vital Landscape: Nature and the Built Environment in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Alan Shelston, "Dickens and the Burial of the Dead," in *Babylon Or New Jerusalem?: Perceptions of the City in Literature,* Valeria Tinkler-Villan, ed., (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 81; Graham John Oliver, "An Introduction to the Epigraphy of Death: Funerary Inscriptions as Evidence," in *The Epigraphy of Death: Studies in the History and Society of Greece and Rome,* Graham John Oliver, ed., (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 3.

with Curl's often inconsistent, unsubstantiated, and strangely moralistic historical conclusions, have *under*appreciated British receptions to Père la Chaise.[59] For Julie Rugg, the lack of a unified early British consensus on Père la Chaise (it was not roundly praised until the 1830s), negates Curl's rather simplistic interpretation, one based, she argues, on an anachronistic reading of primary sources. Yet, I would argue in favor of this very ambiguity. It is important precisely because it possessed such a contested appeal for the British as they were beginning to form, on a grand scale, the first new spaces of burial since the introduction of Christianity sanctioned burial within city walls. These disagreements concerning Père la Chaise reveal a great deal about the ways in which Britons conceived of themselves.

At first, when burial in Britain was largely restricted to the churchyard, reactions to Père la Chaise corresponded in large part to the speaker's social position. At one end of spectrum, those representing the aristocracy, who, clearly, had more to lose in a revision of historical burial practices, condemned, among other things, the "novelty" of Père la Chaise. However, critics in the 1810s and 20s also fell back on the rhetoric of French effeminacy, embodied literally, they suggested, in the "fanciful" behavior and theatrical anguish of Parisian mourners, and figuratively in the frivolously manicured landscape. These behaviors and designs were contrasted with the stoicism of British grief and the manliness of British burying grounds.

[59] See James Stevens Curl, *Celebration of Death*; *Victorian Celebration of Death*; Julie Rugg, "The Rise of Cemetery Companies in Britain, 1820-53" (PhD. thesis, University of Stirling, 1992); and Robert S. Morrison, "John Howison of 'Blackwood's Magazine,'" *Notes and Queries* 42, no. 2 (June 1995): 191-193. Tara Kee White, in articulating her disappointment that in spite of the disturbing quality of his scholarship, Curl remains a central figure in the field, has argued that his argued that his works, "could be dismissed if it were not for the influence they seem to have wielded." See White, "No Place for the Dead," 40.

Romantic poet Robert Southey, anonymously writing in the April 1819 *Quarterly Review*, conceded that Parisian sepulchral monuments were "generally in good taste, better than is usually found in England," and their inscriptions, "sufficiently French in sentiment," directed vitriol towards the extra-funereal function. "Burial grounds *à la pittoresque*, laid out for a promenade," were simply not "consonant to good feeling." Not only was there a "Guide to the burial-grounds as a fashionable promenade," but a more "frightful picture" of French "insensibility," were that "taverns and drinking-houses should be established close beside them, for the accommodation not only of these parties of pleasure but of the mourners also!" Such "mortifying facts" would never happen in London.[60] The social functions of the Parisian cemeteries would continue to vex British commentators throughout the 1820s and into the 1830s. The fact that the French cemeteries were always open to the public and more frequently visited "than the proverbial gaiety and frivolity of the Parisians would lead us to expect," made it difficult to separate authentic emotion from artifice. Or as a contributor to the monthly *London Magazine* had it, "their fondness for display, and their affectation of sentiment, may contribute as much as their taste for contemplation or their strength of attachment." This general sense of fabrication led him to question even the sincerity of the sentiment inscribed on the sepulcher, which was consistently praised in early British commentary on Père la Chaise. There was neither taste nor good sense on display in the design nor inscription of the sepulcher. "We find, it is true," our author continued, "the parade of sorrow, the masquerade of sentiment, and pedantry of knowledge, but no indication of

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[60] [Robert Southey],"Promenade aux Cimetieres de Paris, aux Sepultures Royales de Saint Denis, et aux Catacombes, &c.," *Quarterly Review* 21, no. 42, (April 1819): 392-394.

profound feeling, and no appreciation of real worth."[61] This atmosphere of incongruent emotions produced a great deal of guilt for a group of Britons touring Père la Chaise in 1826. It was impossible "to muster up a due degree of gravity or seriousness" that they felt was demanded of the British while in a landscape of the dead. At Père la Chaise they found a "sort of vivacious bustle amidst the tombs… which the tenantry of the tombs were ready and willing to partake," but which they "could not easily persuade ourselves that we were not forming one of a merry party in 'a dance of death.'" Rather than a "sense of sympathy," their visit left had left them with "uncongenial and really reprehensible feelings."[62]

For William Hazlitt, "national antipathies" were responsible for this French insensibility toward death, "the lean abhorred monster."[63] Was not Père la Chaise, "tricked out and overacted… as if there were nothing sacred from impertinence and affectation?" The French repeatedly demonstrated this affectation of sentiment, when choosing not to "meet sad thoughts, and overpower or allay them by other lofty and tender ones," but rather to "shun them altogether, to affect mirth in the midst of sighing, and divert the pangs of inward misfortune by something to catch the eye and tickle the senses."[64] At Père la Chaise, the "general mourner" was likely to be "some pretty Ophelia… playing her fancies over a nation's bier, to have been scattering 'pansies for thoughts, rue for remembrances.'" Is this not, asks Hazlitt "fantastical and light-headed," a

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[61] "New Cemetery Project and Cemeteries," *London Magazine & Review* 2 (July 1825): 363-370.

[62] "Pere la Chaise," *London Magazine* 6, no. 24 (December 1826): 487.

[63] William Hazlitt, *Notes on a Journey through France and Italy* (London: Hunt & Clarke, 1826), 110.

[64] Hazlitt, *Journey through France and Italy,* 111.

self-indulgent gesture closer to "a childish game of *Make-Believe*?" In addition, are such displays not a more serious reflection of a systemic deficit in national character?

> does it not imply a certain want of strength of mind, as well as depth of feeling, thus to tamper with the extremity of woe, and varnish over the most serious contemplation of mortality? True sorrow is manly and decent, not effeminate or theatrical.[65]

The French were incapable of "the silent manliness of grief," exulted by Oliver Goldsmith in 1770.[66] By the time of Gray and Goldsmith, as Esther Schor has noted, the shift towards a "masculinization of mourning" was firmly established, would remain the dominant discourse on mourning until it was "domesticated and refeminized" by the Victorians.[67] A hint of this female gendering of mourning is demonstrated in an 1830 criticism of Père la Chaise by the *Morning Chronicle,* who doubted that "the sentimentality of the French is communicable by means of tombs, or temples, or gardens, to the English, who prefer to indulge their sorrow in *domestic* privacy."[68]

In the penny and popular presses, though, one finds generally complimentary assessments of the cemetery, many of which expressed a desire for some type of cross-cultural imitation. Those impressed by Père la Chaise in the 1810s and 20s often spoke of the "appropriate" and "tasteful" appearance of the cemetery: graceful arborvitaes,

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[65] Hazlitt, *Journey through France and Italy,* 110-111.

[66] See Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village* 1770, I. 384. (Boston: S.E. Cassino, 1892), 19. In the first edition of *The Deserted Village,* Goldsmith spoke of the "*decent* manliness of death." Daniel Defoe made this connection between grieving and masculinity explicit in 1722. Describing a man who had arrived at the churchyard with his dead wife and children, Defoe tells his reads that he "mourned heartily, as it was easy to see, but with a kind of masculine grief that could not give itself vent by tears." See Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, George Rice Carpenter, ed., (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1896), 61.

[67] Esther Schor, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 19.

[68] "The National Cemetery," *Morning Chronicle*, April 12, 1830

mournful cypresses and weeping willows mingled with the myrtle and roses surrounding obelisks, urns and headstones.[69] For Horatio Smith, the "solemn beauty and touching interest," of the landscape was further "hallowed by the frequent presence of sorrowing survivors… seen trimming the foliage or flowers that sprung up from the remains of their kindred flesh." Such scenes, "pervading evidence of deep, lingering, heart-rendering affection for the dead," were the ultimate purpose of the cemetery's "tasteful decoration," and could not be matched in burial grounds in Britain or on the continent.[70] As many were quick to point out, such signs of lasting devotion for the dead were performed with great difficulty, if at all, in British churchyards. Indeed, the churchyard, according to one commentator in 1825, "always gives one the idea of being the very *last* place one would wish to go," and was typically treated "with as much indifference as a field of rubbish." Unlike those at Père la Chaise, British tombs were "monuments of oblivion, not remembrance—they designate spots to be avoided, not visited, unless by the idle curiosity of strangers."[71]

This is not to suggest that the "neglected and forbidding appearance" of the churchyard had never been appreciated in its own right. For much of the eighteenth century, the melancholy gloom and horrors of decomposition, literally and symbolically embodied in the churchyard, were a popular poetic theme. The desolate landscape of the churchyard was favored by the "graveyard school" of poets for their often disquieting

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[69] J. L., "The Traveller," *Kaleidoscope; or, Literary and Scientific Mirror* 8, no. 338 (December 1826): 189.

[70] [Horatio Smith] "The Cemetery of Pere La Chaise," *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 4, no. 13, (January 1822): 155.

[71] "New Cemetery Project and Cemeteries," *London Magazine and Review* 2 (July 1825): 363-370.

reflections on mortality.[72] Most famous was Thomas Gray's 1750 meditation on death, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*:

> Beneath those rugged Elms, that Yew-Tree's Shade,
>    Where heaves the Turf in many a mould'ring Heap,
> Each in his narrow Cell for ever laid,
>     The rude Forefathers of the Hamlet sleep. […]
>
> For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
>    Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
> No children run to lisp their sire's return,
>    Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.[73]

Incredibly successful, Gray's *Elegy* was regularly reprinted throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and inspired generations of Britons to include a visit to a churchyard in their tourist itineraries. However, Gray, of course, was talking about rural churchyards as opposed to urban ones. For Raymond Williams, Gray's *Elegy* reflects an understanding of mid-eighteenth century rural England, in which "humble and worthy characters, in a country setting, in a more or less conscious contrast with the wealth and ambition of the city and the court."[74] For Gray and his fellow "Graveyard Poets," these eschatological pastorals depended on a sense of seclusion, solitude and permanence that were not only

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[72] In addition to Gray's *Elegy,* the most important works of the "graveyard" poets include, Thomas Parnell's, *Night-Piece on Death* (1722), Robert Blair's *The Grave* (1743), Edward Young' *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742-45). James Stevens Curl has argued that the celebration of "sepulchral melancholy" by the "graveyard" poets were "begetters of the garden-cemetery," as their poetry "lead to the development of 'naturalistic' French gardens embellished with cenotaphs and tombs." Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* played a further specific role in the evolution of the garden cemetery, in its "departure from the Christian concept of eternal life to a growing influence on the value of the past, memory and commemoration." See Curl, "Introduction," *Kensal Green Cemetery: the Origins and Development of the General Cemetery of All Souls Kensal Green, London, 1824-2001* James Stevens Curl, ed., (Chichester: Phillimore, 2001), 14; "Young's Night Thoughts and the Origins of the Garden Cemetery," *Journal of Garden History* 14, no. 2, (Summer 1994).

[73] Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Gray* John Mitford, ed., (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1862), 96-97.

[74] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 72.

difficult to procure in many urban burial grounds by the early nineteenth century, but were under threat in the eighteenth century countryside as well.

By the time of Père la Chaise's celebrity, many Britons had begun to understand churchyards in towns and cities as materially dissimilar to their rural cousins. The virtues of country burial – simplicity, sincerity and security – were simply unavailable in the city. "Poetry and sentiment have consecrated the churchyard as sacred to feeling and reflection," began a contributor to the *Mirror of Literature* in 1830, "we think that the ardent muse would shrink from the scene as developed in the city… For amidst the adust and verdureless depositories of our metropolitan dead she would find little to call forth her poetical yearnings."[75] The resumption of continental tours following Waterloo saw hundreds of articles throughout the British press, from cheap weekly periodicals aimed at the working classes, to established Tory journals like the *Quarterly Review,* compare the unsightly appearance and unwholesome atmosphere of urban churchyards to the novel landscape of burial at Père la Chaise. Early impressions of the Parisian cemetery were predominantly positive, typically focusing on the beautiful, well-maintained landscaping and tasteful funerary monuments as "appropriate" to acts of commemoration. Memory, like a garden, required tending.

Regardless of their estimation of Père la Chaise, many commentators in the 1820s felt that even in spite of its flaws, the Parisian cemetery offered an improvement over British burial grounds, offensive in their own ways and in desperate need of attention. Criticisms concerning the overcrowding and insalubrious state of urban churchyards were

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[75] H., "On Crowded Churchyards, and a Metropolitan Cemetery," *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* 16, no. 446, (August 1830): 141.

hardly new in the 1820s, but the proposals for their amelioration certainly were. In cities and towns throughout the country the years between Peterloo and the 1832 Reform Bill were marked by a sustained attention on the landscapes of burial. It was in the English provinces that these discussions bore the earliest fruit.[76] Norwich can claim to have opened the earliest general cemetery, The Rosary, which opened in 1819, but by 1824 Manchester could boast of two: Chorlton Row/Rusholme Road in 1821 and Every Street in 1824. The two cemeteries established in Liverpool – Low Hill/Liverpool Necropolis in 1825 and St. James' in 1829 – were considered the most dramatic. Newcastle acquired its first cemetery, Westgate Hill, in 1831, though the site had been under discussion by the joint stock company that formed on its behalf since 1825.[77] Quite surprisingly, Londoners would not have their own garden cemetery until Kensal Green opened in 1832, a delay that belies the assumed centrifugal movement of cultural influence. In 1830, the Marquess of Lansdown noted that London had been outpaced by the provinces, when, at a meeting regarding establishing a cemetery for London, he asked if it was fitting that while Liverpool, "the great and worthy rival of this metropolis… the second town in the empire, possessed such an establishment, the metropolis should be without it?"[78]

As the Marquess would have been aware, discussions about forming a cemetery in Liverpool cemeteries had been circulating long before the idea was floated in London. The

[76] Indeed, spaces of burial unconnected with places of worship, cemeteries, can said to have been established in Belfast and Edinburgh in the mid-seventeenth century.

[77] See Chris Brooks, *Mortal Remains,* 8-9, 17. According to Brooks, because The Rosary struggled to attract many burials in its early years, and received little if any national attention, helps explain why historians have tended to overlook its originary status.

[78] "General Cemetery Company," *The Morning Chronicle* June 10, 1830

situation in Liverpool bears examination, however brief, as it touches on many of the issues throughout the period. A letter to the *Kaleidoscope* in September 1823, informs its readership of the plan by "a number of respectable gentleman, Dissenters," to construct a burial ground for "the inhabitants of this town, *of all religious denominations*."[79] Outside of the burial space that Quakers and Jews had formed for their own burials, the dissenting community had few alternatives to the parish churchyard, where interment was performed according to the liturgy of the Anglican church.[80] For the promoters of this new Liverpool cemetery, while interment in a dense population was "at least of questionable salubrity," it was even worse to think that, because death had become such a common sight to the living, burial had become prosaic, destroying its "moral effect." In addition to its "physical and moral advantages," however, the new cemetery could guarantee a post-mortem security unobtainable in the churchyard. Protection "against trespassers of every kind" meant the elimination of "those depredations so peculiarly distressing to the feelings of surviving friends."[81] Bodies laid to rest in the new cemetery were safe from

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[79] W., "New Cemetery," *The Kaleidoscope; or, Literary and Scientific Mirror* 4, no.169, (September 1823): 96.

[80] For more on Quaker burial grounds, see Gwynne Stock, "Quaker Burial: Doctrine and Practice" in *Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in England, 1700-1850,* Margaret Cox, ed., (York: Council for British Archeology, 1998). Julie Rugg has persuasively highlighted the centrality of Nonconformist desire for independent burial space in the development of the early nineteenth cemeteries. Of the thirteen cemeteries established before 1835, Rugg has noted that ten had strong links with Nonconformity. See Rugg, "The Origins and Progress of Cemetery Establishments in Britain" in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal* in Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth (New York: St. Martins, 1997), 109.

[81] The diary of "resurrectionist" Joseph Naples offers an illuminating first-hand account of the imbrication of grave-robbery and medical training. See J.B. Bailey, ed., *The Diary of a Resurrectionist, 1811-12* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1896). By the 1830s, the robbing of graves for use as anatomical subjects had largely been rendered redundant by the effective criminalization of poverty. The bodies of convicted murderers had previously been the sole legal source of medical corpses, but the Anatomy Act of 1832 dictated that the bodies of the unclaimed poor be put to use on the dissection table. For the poor, fears of being exhumed were gradually replaced by fears of dying destitute and friendless. See Ruth Richardson, *Death Dissection and the Destitute* 2nd ed., (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

exhumation by "body-snatchers" or "resurrectionists," who procured moldering bodies for dissection in the thriving anatomical schools.[82]

It is not surprising that the editors of the *Kaleidoscope*, a weekly paper that devoted much attention to the amelioration of social conditions, particularly child labor, and which detailed the activities of Liverpudlian body-snatchers in the 1820s, quickly supported the proposed new cemetery. Recognizing the power of landscaping to guide/manipulate the emotions, its editors hoped the proprietors would "plant the cemetery with trees, and by all other appropriate embellishments, render the spot as unlike as possible to our ordinary church-yards in the town, which inspire any kind of feeling but that which ought to prevail in such places."[83] Though the churchyards were rooted in a historical respect for the dead, they had grown "disgusting and unwholesome. For the *Kaleidoscope*'s editors, therefore, it was a "mistaken piety" to continue to "chain the living to the dead." "Our reverence for the dead," readers were advised, may "be retained without domesticating them among the living."[84]

Covering an early meeting of the General Cemetery Company that would found London's Kensal Green in 1832, *The Morning Chronicle* asked why, "in an opulent country like this, and near a metropolis like London," does one see "no such

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[82] Julie Rugg has documented the centrality that this fear of desecration had in the development of the early cemeteries. Of the eight of the cemetery companies established prior to the Anatomy Act of 1832, all eight "employed conspicuous security measures in their cemeteries." See Rugg, "The Emergence of Cemetery Companies in Britain, 1820-53," 44. For the more on these fears as a "catalyst" for the commercial cemetery, see especially chapter 2.

[83] "Burying Ground," *The Kaleidoscope; or, Literary and Scientific Mirror* 4, no.169, (September 1823): 96.

[84] "Cemeteries," *Kaleidoscope; or, Literary and Scientific Mirror* 5, no. 228, (November 1824): 155.

Establishment as that of Pere la Chaise at Paris?"[85] More than continental envy, imperial might was at stake, for the "most stupendous monuments of the ancients were their Sepulchral Sanctuaries," and "each capital had its Necropolis—why should not London…?" Seven years later, London was still without a "fitting" space for burial and commemoration. According to the *Literary Gazette*, that the "enlightened capital of highly civilized and intelligent England, should have been so long in adopting a measure so obviously called for by every circumstance which can be rationally considered either for the welfare of the living or the decent honour of the dead," was both "surprising and shocking."[86]

Clearly there was a concern that such "barbaric" burial provisions reflected poorly on the image of Britain. Even more worrisome, however, was the idea that British sepulchral practices should fail to meet the standards of even the most "savage nations." In an endlessly-reproduced tract of 1813, Catholic priest and travel-writer John Eustace (1761/2?-1815) exclaimed, "It cannot but appear strange that a people so dull and unenlightened as the Turks should in this respect shew more sense and even more taste than nations in every other respect their superiors."[87] For Whig journalist Cyrus Redding

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[85] "The London Necropolis," *The Morning Chronicle*, October 29, 1823.

[86] "General Cemetery," *Literary Gazette* 699 (June 1830): 387.

[87] John Chetwood Eustace, *A Tour Through Italy, Exhibiting a View of its Scenery, its Antiquities, and its Monuments; Particularly as they are Objects of Classical Interest and Elucidation: with an Account of the Present State of its Cities and Towns; and Occasional Observations on the Recent Spoilations of the French.* Vol. 2, (London: J. Mawman, 1813), 503. Between 1813 and 1841, *A Tour of Italy* went through eight editions and became "the standard vade-mecum of classical tourists," bringing Eustace fame. According to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1820, Eustace's "acquaintance was sought by almost all persons in this country distinguished by rank or talents. See G. Martin Murphy, "Eustace, John Chetwode (1761-1815)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press: 2004), *Gentleman's Magazine* 34, pt. 2 (1820), 372. Eustace's lines on the superiority of Turkish cemeteries were cited with consistent regularity throughout the first half of the century. A few of the repetitions include *The New Annual Register…for the*

(1785-1870), though it "may seem harsh to accuse a civilized people of neglecting the dead, when their memory is preserved in some countries with a religious veneration, and when even unenlightened nations exhibit an affectionate regard for them," such a conclusion was difficult to avoid. As Redding pointed out, "the American savage never forgets the tomb of his fathers."[88] However Redding was touched most deeply by the burial places or "*morais* of the South Sea Islanders," which had been favorably described by Sydney Parkinson and John Hawkesworth in 1773. The morai, Parkinson explained, "are paved, or rather covered with a sort of coral, and planted with various sorts of flowering shrubs, such as nonoah, etoa, and hibiscus."[89] Hawkesworth, Likewise, was impressed with the devotional landscapes of the burying-places at King George's Island. The islanders, he wrote, "had great veneration for their dead. They were situated under lofty trees, that gave a thick shade."[90] For Redding, the respect for their dead displayed in the Otaheiten (Tahitian) *morais* served only to highlight the general disregard of the British for places of burial. As cemetery director, George Milner quite plainly stated in 1846, "The morals of a people may be safely questioned, where the remains of their fellow-men

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*Year 1813* (London: John Stockdale, 1814); *London Magazine and Review*; John Strang; John Claudius Loudon; and George Milne.

[88] [Cyrus Redding], "Church-Yard Wanderings," *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 5, no. 19, (January 1822): 87.

[89] Sydney Parkinson, *Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas in His Majesty's Ship, The Endeavour* (London, 1773), 55, 70.

[90] John Hawkesworth's *Account of the Voyages in the Southern Hemisphere*, Vol. 1, (London: 1773), 138. Engravings made from voyagers drawings of the morai were included in Sydney Parkinson's, *Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas in His Majesty's Ship, the Endeavour (*London, 1773), James Cook's *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (London: 1784), and John Hawkesworth's *Account of the Voyages…to the Southern Hemisphere* (London: 1773).

cease to be revered, and the ashes of their ancestors are no longer considered, objects of pious regard. We have not, as a nation, it is to be hoped, thus far degenerated."[91]

Though most admitted this fear was faint, the frequency with which one finds references to barbarism in assessments of churchyard burial is nevertheless fascinating. In the early-nineteenth century, landscape gardening played a crucial role in forging a sense of British civility. Thus, it should come as no surprise to find that in the garden cemetery, verdant hillsides, winding walks and paths, deliberate landscaping, and architectural monuments were not ends in themselves but object lessons. By providing an "appropriate" space for the contemplation of life and the commemoration of the dead, the garden cemetery would produce "respectable" Britons and, by extension, a "respectable" Britain. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Mitchell and Wilson contend that landscape and national identity are little more than discursive effects, appearing natural only insofar as the process of their sedimentation has been effaced. While I find much to admire in their accounts of the historical production of subjectivities, the frequency with which advocates of the garden cemetery disparaged the churchyard and praised the utilitarian, socially productive capacity of successful landscaping, adds, I believe, another layer of complexity to the discussion. These public squabbles, which turned, quite openly, on the connection between landscape, commemoration, and "civilization," indicate the potential value of the cemetery in any attempt to understand the "nature" of modern British identity.

[91] George Milner, *On Cemetery Burial; or Sepulture, Ancient and Modern* 2nd ed., (London: Joesph Masters, 1847), viii.

– Chapter 2 –

## The Function of the Form<br>Johns Strang and Loudon and Cemeterial Design

While a concern for public health may have offered one reason for the reformation of burial practices, there was more at stake than a simple desire to safeguard the physical wellbeing of the people. For many, as one might expect, burial reform was necessary for the moral and mental health of Britons as well. However, it is fascinating to find that a number of the arguments regarding the moral benefits of extramural interment turned largely on questions of aesthetics. In his 1843 guide to London's Kensal Green cemetery, Benjamin Clark suggested that trees, shrubs, etc., were essential to a cemetery's overall visual effect.[1] Kensal Green, he wrote,

> adorned as it is with such a goodly variety of beautiful flowers, and freshest evergreens, presents a smiling countenance as well amidst the gloomy winter as in the sunny days of blooming summer, and, unlike the desolate pent-up burial grounds of the crowded metropolis, instead of repelling our approach, but when positive duty commands, allures us to enter its sacred precincts, both by the floral charms within, and the view afforded thence of all the extensive and pleasing surrounding scenery without.[2]

[1] One of Clark's most successful tracts, *Meditation with Self Examination for Every Day in the Year*, was described by the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1835 as "One of those excellent little works which composed with judgment and piety can never fail to purify and strengthen the heart to keep the conscience active and the flame of devotion alive." *Gentleman's Magazine*, n.s., 4 (November 1835): 530. Clark's other tracts on domesticity and religion in include: *Religion at Home; being a Series of Conversations, between a Mother and her Daughter, on Important Scripture Subjects* (London: W. S. Orr and Co., 1844), *The Domestic Sanctuary: being a Comment upon a Portion of God's Word for Every Day in the Year* (London: T. Allman, 1847).

[2] Benjamin Clark, *Hand-Book for Visitors to the Kensal Green Cemetery* (London: Joseph Masters, 1843), x.

The cemetery appears in Clark's account as a series of images, from the "smiling countenance" within to the "pleasing scenery without." Its placement, at the top of a slight hill overlooking London's West End, was thus crucial. As he later explained, having occupied such an enviable piece of real estate, its designers were able to draw on a unique set of geographical and topographical riches. As he observed, "From the Cemetery, which extended between the road and the Paddington Canal for a quarter of a mile, a very delightful view, bounded by the Surrey Hills, is commanded over the western environs of the metropolis; and, that this view may not be excluded, the high wall, which encloses the Cemetery, is in some parts broken by an iron railing of equal height."[3] Yet these views offered more than just picturesque landscapes. They presented Londoners with an opportunity to escape the less desirable aspects of the city, to luxuriate in the pastoral surroundings of an urban oasis. With all that Kensal Green offered, Clark wrote, it was only to be expected that "it would be deemed a favorite spot wherein to deposit the mortal remains of beloved relatives, and become likewise a place of so general resort, as it always has been, by the sober-minded part of the public, who wisely prefer a peaceful ride or walk thorough into the country, to the tumultuous revelry of the giddy throng."[4]

For Clark, and his precursors John Claudius Loudon and John Strang, the health benefits said to accompany the radical overhaul of burial practices were inseparable from the cultural benefits of a carefully constructed cemetery. Within the precisely landscaped grounds and neatly graveled walks, the populace would encounter forceful images of

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[3] Clark, *Kensal Green Cemetery*, 28.

[4] Clark, *Kensal Green Cemetery*, x.

national pride and domesticity, and thus, they hoped, be compelled to behave appropriately. Thus, the "Cockney lovers of the picturesque" that William Mudford so smugly derided, were ultimately believed to be the beneficiaries of these new spaces – if not as patrons purchasing a family plot, then as civilizable visitors enjoying a respectable day out.[5] In the 1830s and 40s, the cemetery, like the museum and the public park later in the century, was to welcome the "rabble" in the hopes that they would emerge as good middle class Britons.

## Glasgow and the "Genius of Memory"

In June of 1828, an anonymous article appeared in the *Scots Times* urging the citizens of Glasgow to consider the scandalous state of the city's burial grounds, which the author described as "little else than vast fields of the dead" and "disgusting charnel houses."[6] Glaswegians still felt, the author noted, that "to assist at the sad obsequies of a friend, and to follow his mortal remains to its last resting place," was "the most sacred debt due to affection and friendship, the most solemn respect he can pay to the memory of his departed companion." But this had become only a transient devotion. As soon as the "melancholy ceremonial" was finished, "the tomb is, locked, the cemetery is left," and relatives and friends "never dream of returning, till called upon to perform the same office

[5] William Mudford, "*Cemeteries and Churchyards: A Visit to Kensal Green*," *Bentley's Miscellany* 9 (January 1841), 92-95.

[6] [John Strang], "Cemeteries of Glasgow," *Scots Times* 3, no. 153 (June 14, 1828): 185. In his 1831 revision, Strang spoke of unkempt churchyard as ill suited for "religious meditation" rather than the original 1828 sentiment, "religious melancholy." John Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis; with Observations on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture* (Glasgow: Atkinson, 1831), 33.

to another."[7] Unsurprisingly, these abandoned "mansions of the dead" had grown stunningly dilapidated:

> tombs and epitaphs are left to be mutilated and covered with filth or rubbish, or are overgrown with gigantic nettles and the rankest hemlock, & where the monuments erected to celebrated men are seen crumbling into ruins without a descendant's hand… being stretched out to save them from farther destruction.[8]

Scottish, and particularly Glaswegian burial grounds were avoided by even "the most sympathising," according to the author, because they were "so unattractive," yet the longer they were ignored, the greater the damage to their appearance – more filth and rubbish collected, additional tombstones fell into disrepair and "noxious weeds" grew stronger and more prolific – an unremitting cycle of disregard and deterioration.

Notwithstanding this apparent disinterest, the unnamed author – future city father John Strang – was convinced of his fellow countrymen's concern with sepulchral aesthetics. Latent within the breast of every Scotsman (and woman) lay genuine solicitude for the graves of their fellow man – for though awareness of it had grown dormant, such feeling was intrinsic to the fabric of civilized society. For Strang it was thus important to determine why "the most pious people in the world," who were "so scrupulous about the sacredness of their sepulchres," would be "so careless about their outward appearance." In Glasgow and throughout Scotland, the tomb of a beloved sister was set not in a field of faithful violets, but surrounded by a dense thicket of "nettles or poisonous hemlock," and

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[7] While the bereaved may "perhaps drop a few tears on the spoiled turf" or "pour forth, in the bitterness of their sorrow, a short prayer to heaven" once the "tomb is locked" and the cemetery departed, they "never dream of returning" until obligated to attend another ceremonial. [Strang], "Cemeteries of Glasgow," 185.

[8] [Strang], "Cemeteries of Glasgow," 185.

"instead of being occasionally wet with the tears of grieving parents, is left to be watered with the dew of Heaven!"[9] This "disgusting aspect" dissuaded Glaswegians from "indulging in that religious melancholy, and heavenly communing, which a now and then visit to the tombs of our friends would so naturally engender."[10] Their aversion was of great consequence, for where but the tomb of a sister or parent, was the heart "likely to be so eloquently touched, or the memory to be so powerfully roused"? The author asked those who had "wandered into the mighty cineral depot which surrounds our venerable Cathedral," to consider whether the visit to the churchyard stimulated "feelings of apathy and derision" or "sympathy and sorrow?" Who, Strang asked, had visited the "romantic Cemetery of *Père La Chaise*" outside Paris, and not wished that Scottish churchyards be likewise "converted into a delightful garden, should prove also a resort and consolation to weeping individuals?" In "the varied and extensive enclosure," of Père la Chaise "situated on Mount Louis, the mind is impressed with the most pleasing and soothing melancholy," and "all the disagreeable sensations coupled with a church yard, are dispelled by the beauty of the garden." The new Parisian cemetery, carefully landscaped and maintained, invited its graves to be regularly "solemnized by the remembrance of the departed."[11]

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[9] [John Strang], "Glasgow Cemeteries," *Scots Times* 4, no. 227 (November 14, 1829): 353-354. Strang began the article with another allusion to the symbolic sweetness and faithfulness of the violet. In the fifth act of *Hamlet,* Laertes suggests that violets will bloom from Ophelia's grave:

> "Lay her I' the earth—
> And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
> May violets spring" (5.1.231-33)

[10] [Strang], "Cemeteries of Glasgow," 185.

[11] [Strang], "Cemeteries of Glasgow," 185.

Later, in his 1831 text *Necropolis Glasguensis*, Strang further explained the importance of Père la Chaise as a model. With an eye toward to persuading Glaswegians to convert the hill behind the city's cathedral into a space of burial, Strang repeatedly invoked the Parisian cemetery in hopes of stirring his countrymen to action. "Who, that has ever visited the romantic Cemetery of Père la Chaise" he says early on, "would not wish that there were, in this our native land, some more attractive spot dedicated to the reception of the dead, than those vast fields of rude stones and ruder hillocks, to which we are ever and anon called, when attending the obsequies of a kinsman or companion…" It was, in his opinion, a site "dedicated to the Genius of Memory."[12] Everything there, he continued, "is…tasteful, classical, poetical, and eloquent. In that asylum of the death, there is nothing found save that which should touch the heart or soothe the afflicted soul, nothing save that which should awaken tender recollections or excite religious feelings." Nothing in Père la Chaise would offend. Rather the entire space was calculated to inspire virtue and honor in its visitors. "At every turn," he writes, "the eye is arrested by the tender proof of some late friendly visitation." Tasteful cemeteries, in other words, beget tasteful mourners. And these tasteful mourners, in turn, enhanced the cemetery itself. For Strang, therefore, the proper cemetery form exemplified by Père la Chaise could ultimately hold a utilitarian value for Great Britain. More than 'merely aesthetic,' the design of burial spaces should also be functional.

It is worth noting that, by the time Strang was writing, a preoccupation with the emotions of the bereaved and notions of death as peaceful slumber were replacing

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[12] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis,* 31.

baroque understandings of death as terror and macabre bodily decomposition. And in his mind, the garden cemetery would be central to this new understanding of death. For it was during the "age of ignorance" that "preternatural terrors connected with death," which "appeared almost to make the resurrection an unhoped for, rather than hoped for event." This "slavish terror" came about by the "monkish artifice of associating man's end with all that was disgusting and horrible…penances and pilgrimages…midnight masses and bloody flagellations." He was convinced that it was from the "gloomy, naked and deserted cemetery that superstition drew her chief influence."[13] Neglected and overcrowded churchyards were, for Strang, antithetical to the proper expression of grief and offered little in the way of comfort to the bereaved. The garden cemetery, by contrast, was "the sworn foe to preternatural fear and superstition."[14] For beneath "the shade of a spreading tree amid the fragrance of a balmy flower, surrounded on every hand with the noble works of art, the imagination is robbed of its gloomy horrors, the wildest fancy is freed from its debasing fears. Adorn the sepulchre and the frightful visions which visit the midnight pillow will disappear."[15]

Of course, Strang assured his Liberal readership that all of this could be realized in Glasgow.[16] The appearance of the North West Burying-Ground, established in 1767, for example, could easily be improved by transforming "beds of noxious weeds, into a

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[13] [Strang], "Glasgow Cemeteries," 354, *Necropolis Glasguensis, 61*.

[14] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 59.

[15] [Strang], "Glasgow Cemeteries," 353-354.

[16] According to Glasgow historian James MacLehose in 1886, the *Scots Times* was started in the 1820s to "meet the views of the more advanced Liberals" in Scotland. See MacLehose*, Memoirs and Portraits of One Hundred Glasgow Men*, vol. 2 (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1886), 200.

succession of flowering parterres," breaking up "endless succession of graves by a few evergreens," and encouraging "proprietors to keep their tombs clean and painted," and preventing "idlers from the mutilation of monuments and inscriptions."[17] To be sure, some burial grounds, such as that of the High Church, were simply too crowded with graves to make anything more than cosmetic changes. But if one could to "tell the citizens, where something little inferior to that of *Père La Chaise* could easily be formed… why should it not be adopted?" For this reason he indicated that the Fir Park, so named for the trees that had long dominated the rocky hillside adjacent the Cathedral, "is in fact not unlike the situation of, and in many respects preferable to Mount Louis, and what is more, is already planted and laid out in walks and shrubbery." The owners of the property, the Merchant's House of Glasgow, may profit from forming a burial ground on this otherwise unproductive land, and, "for the citizens of Glasgow it would make the most splendid of cemeteries."[18]

Not surprisingly, members of the Merchants House had also begun to discuss this potential for financial and civic enrichment. Three weeks after Strang's essay appeared in the *Scots Times*, respected lawyer and Collector of the charitable and educational

[17] There had long been concerns about the insalubrity of the North-West Burying Grounds. In 1825, then Superintendent of Public Works for Glasgow, James Cleland suggested "arching over the burying-ground, and throwing it into a magnificent crypt," but abandoned the plan after "some difficulties presented themselves." Nevertheless, "still anxious for the removal of this nuisance, and for the introduction of a large, wholesome, and well-aired space, in the very centre of the population, which might be used for useful important purposes," Cleland proposed in 1838 eliminating the burial ground altogether. While largely unsuccessful in reforming burial provision, Cleland was responsible for a number of other urban improvements including the rehabilitation of Glasgow Green, the construction of a new cattle market, numerous roads, churches, and bridges across the Clyde. See James Cleland, *The Rise and Progress of the City of Glasgow; Comprising an Account of its Ancient and Modern History, its Trade, Manufactures, Commerce, Health, and other Concerns* (Glasgow: John Smith & Son, 1840), 47.

[18] [Strang], "Cemeteries of Glasgow," 185.

Merchants House, Laurence Hill, wrote to former Merchants House Dean of Guild and future Lord Provost and M.P., James Ewing on the same subject.[19] Without any mention of the newspaper article, Hill began by reminding Ewing (rather fawningly) that he had "first broached to the Committee of the Merchants House the conversion of the Fir Park into an ornamental Burying Ground similar to the Perelachaise at Paris, which in its position it somewhat resembles."[20] Hill was certain that Ewing, the presumptive Lord Provost and M.P., would give his plans to form a new space of sepulcher his "best exertions," as they would benefit both the institution and the city of Glasgow. It was both a practical and noble project, "calculated materially to increase the funds of the Charity," while also forming "an improvement worthy of the City & conducive to the cultivation of the moral and religious Sentiments of its Inhabitants."[21] Burial plots would not, Hill assured Ewing, "detract in the slightest degree" from Fir Park's "present beauty but [would] materially enhance it, to say nothing of the Superior character and interest the place would acquire." The time to act on these plans had arrived, as a month earlier the "Committee on the Fir measures regarding these properties as they shall see to be for the advantage of the

[19] James Ewing (1775-1853) "was at various times Dean of Guild, Lord Provost, and M.P. for the city, and a man held in high esteem by the citizens." Andrew Wallace, *A Popular Sketch of the History of Glasgow from the Earliest to the Present Time* (Glasgow: T.D. Morison, 1882): 104. According to Irene Maver, "Ewing dominated the Town Council from 1830 to 1832, until he was elected as one of the city's two MPs to the reformed Parliament." See Maver, "the Guardianship of the Community: Civic Authority before 1833," in T. M. Devine and Gordon Jackson, ed., *Glasgow: Beginnings to 1830*, vol. 1 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 261. But Ewing was also a successful West Indian merchant, and owner of a large sugar plantation at "Caymanas." See B. W. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2001), 151. *A History of the Merchants House of Glasgow* (Glasgow: T.L. Grahame Reid, 1967), 43.

[20] "Letter from Mr. Hill to Mr. Ewing as to converting Fir Park into a Cemetery & Mr. Gardens approval of the subject," 7 July 1828, Necropolis Committee Minute Books, 1828-1848, Glasgow City Archives, T/MH/52/1/1. Neither Hill nor Strang mentions the other, and it is unlikely that either was aware of the other's schemes for Fir Park.

[21] Laurence Hill to James Ewing, 7 July 1828, T/MH/52/1/1.

House."[22] For Hill, although the new properties improved access to the quarry owned by the Merchants House, they were "the very Antipode for building houses or favorable speculations of that description." But if enclosed and "added to the par and dressed up a little," Hill suggested that the "funds and the beauty of all our property may be increased and a great public good done by adopting your Suggestions of laying out the whole park and vacant ground acquired from the Buchanans as a Garden of rest – or Necropolis as Evelyn long ago recommended for London, but which would still be the first in this Country."[23]

This was not the first time the Merchants House had reconsidered the utility of Fir Park, which they had first acquired in 1650 for £1291 13s. 4d.[24] Before Hill and Ewing's suggestions for a garden cemetery, the most recent discussions concerning Fir Park took place in 1803/4 when its titular fir trees, which had gradually succumbed to industrial pollution and Glaswegian soot, were replaced with a wider variety of deciduous and coniferous species. For George Blair, author of a voluminous mid-century history and guide to the Necropolis, the replacement of the ailing firs marked "the commencement of a new era in the natural history of that beautiful cliff which is now the pride of Glasgow. From that time it was more highly valued and better cared for, as if a presentiment had

[22] 10 June 1828. John Buchanan, Andrew Scott and William Henry Hill, eds., *View of the Merchants House for Glasgow; Containing Historical Notices of its Origin, Constitution, and Property, and of the Charitable Foundations which it Administers* (Glasgow: Bell & Bain, 1866), 345-346.

[23] Laurence Hill to James Ewing, 7 July 1828, T/MH/52/1/1

[24] George Blair, *Biographic and Descriptive Sketches of Glasgow Necropolis* (Glasgow: M. Ogle & Son, 1857), 23.

already existed of its future consecration to a high and holy purpose."[25] Two decades later, walks were laid throughout the park and a "massive Doric pillar carrying a colossal statue," was erected at the summit in memory of John Knox, to whom Scotland owed more "than to any other one individual, except, perhaps Sir William Wallace, *for what she now is*."[26]

In his 1967 history of the Merchants House, J.M. Ried suggested that perhaps the monument to Knox was what led Ewing and Hill to consider the "possibility of monuments of another kind."[27] Indeed, Fir Park's sepulchral "capabilities" were publicly floated around this time in a short-lived, but groundbreaking, illustrated satiric periodical.[28] Written and illustrated by London artist William Heath, and edited by noted botanist and lithographer Thomas Hopkirk, the *Glasgow Looking Glass* satirized contemporary news and politics, as well as the fashions, habits, and manners of Glaswegians.[29] In its third issue, the *Looking Glass* offered a speculative visual

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[25] Blair, *Biographic and Descriptive* Sketches, 23.

[26] James Ewing was one of the subscribers that funded Knox's monument. For more on Ewing's involvement with the erection and dedication of Knox's marble plinth, see Blair, 171-178.

[27] Reid, 43. See also James Cleland, *Historical Account of the Grammar School, Glasgow and Account of Ceremonial at Laying Foundation-Stone of John Knox's Monument* (Glasgow: Khull Blackie & Co 1825), pg.

[28] Throughout its brief run, nineteen installments issued fortnightly … name change and move from lithography to engraving… The *Glasgow Looking Glass* was described variously as "possibly the first fully pictorial magazine" and "a comic illustrated paper… the first paper of the kind published here." etc… See *History Today* 2, no. 1-6 (1971): 351; Robert Turner, "Thomas Hopkirk of Dalbeth: A Sketch of his Life and Botanical Work," *Transactions of the Natural History Society of* Glasgow, n.s., 1, pt. 2 (1884-5), 252.

[29] Such publications would become increasingly common throughout the 1820s, but as Stuart Sillars explains, "the visual image remained the dominant partner," for "the link with the text was very precise, since the words provided a narrative context, developed a plot to the climactic moment shown in the print, or provided speech to extend or explain the visual meaning." For Sillars, Heath's *Looking-Glass,* and similar publications begun shortly thereafter – *Figaro in London*, *Every Body's Album and Caricature Magazine* – laid the framework for "not only for the serial fiction market in the 1820s, but also for the comic strips which were to become important at the end of the nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth." Stuart Sillars,

interpretation of Fir Park as a necropolis. Under the caption "Merchants' Park—Monument to John Knox," was Heath's sketch depicting Fir Park as garden of burial virtually overseen by the Scottish reformer. The accompanying text explained to readers that the "summit of the Merchants' or Fir Park, as it is called,"

> is now finally fixed upon as the situation for the monument to John Knox. It has been suggested that this piece of ground might be made use of for a burying place, a monumental garden we may call it, similar to the celebrated Père-la-Chaise at Paris; the effect would be beautiful, and its vicinity to the Cathedral would add much to its interest. We have given a sketch of the Park, supposing it turned to this purpose. A neat bridge might be thrown across the burn from the High Church-yard. We seriously recommend this hint to the Merchants' House, both as a matter of taste and in a pecuniary point of view.[30]

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*Visualsation in English Popular Fiction: Graphic Narratives, Fictional Images* (London: Routledge, 1995), 10.

[30] "Merchants Park—Monument to John Knox," *Glasgow Looking Glass* 9 July 1825 – Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, Sp Coll Bh14-x.8. As Robert Turner suggested to the Natural History Society of Glasgow in 1885, Hopkirk's suggestion that Fir Park function as burying space, was, a "happy anticipation of the future, for which the credit is undoubtedly due to him." In 1837, Turner claims that Hopkirk expressed "his gratification at having been the first to suggest the conversion of the Fir Park into a Necropolis." However, as Hopkirk's only 1837 publication was his anonymous botanical text, *The Juvenile Calendar, or, Natural History of the Year,* of which no copies have survived, it is difficult to verify this claim. See Turner, "Thomas Hopkirk of Dalbeth," 253-254.

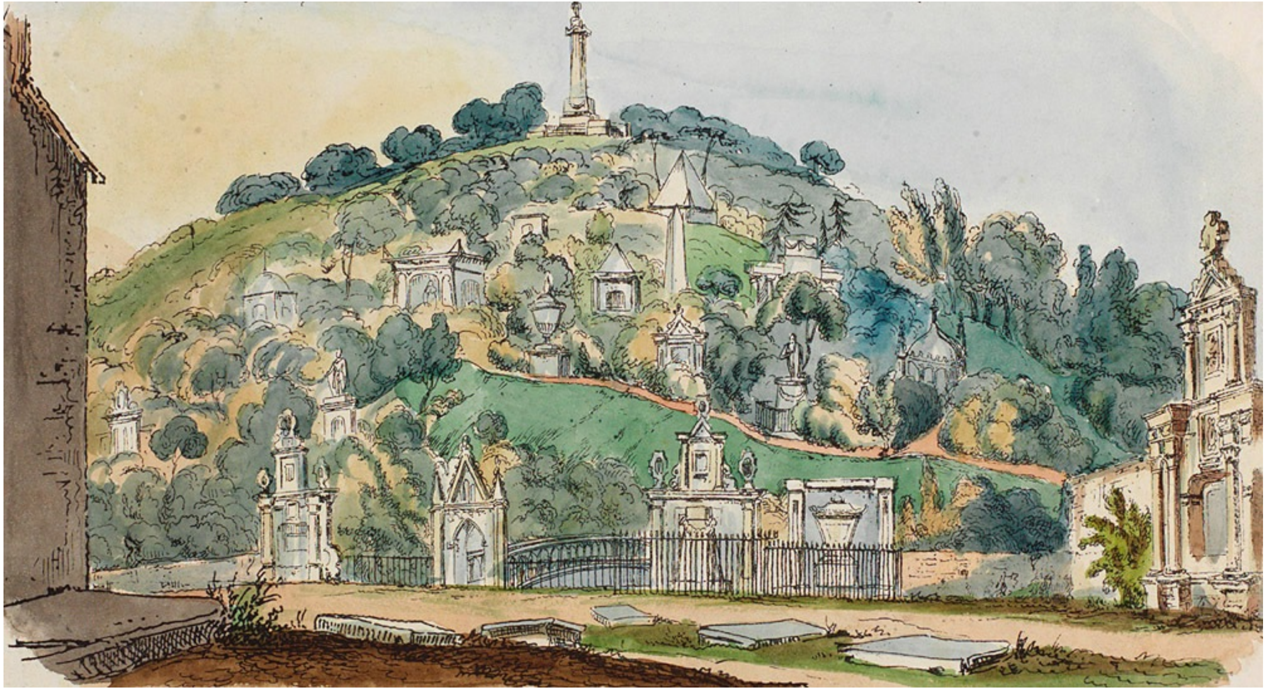

Figure 1

While it is unclear who originally foretold Fir Park's identity as a garden cemetery, Hopkirk and Heath's rendering in the *Glasgow Looking-Glass* was certainly one of the first proposals in print. However atypical these suggestions might seem in a paper typically focused on the city's eccentricities, they were not in fact so unusual. Appearing in the years between the climax of radicalism in the "Scottish Insurrection" of 1820 and the Parliamentary Reform of 1832, many of the *Looking-Glass*'s caricatures of the rapidly expanding city were infused with a rhetoric of improvement.[31] The paper commented on a

[31] In August and September of 1825, for example, the fortnightly periodical offered a series of ten caricatures examining the imperfections of "Modern Medical Education. These caricatures ranged from the culpability of medical schools never-ending demand for dissect-able bodies for sustaining grave-robbery by "Resurrectionists," to the inadequate training of students, supposed incompetence of doctors, and appalling scenes and conditions of Glaswegian hospital wards and operating theatres. "Essay on Modern Medical Education, no. 1, The Alarm, or the Kirk Yard in Danger," *Northern Looking Glass* 1, no. 6 (18 August 1825).

range of issues: the effects of increased atmospheric pollution, Mechanic's societies and expanded educational opportunities, mutual aid societies, medical education and its dependence on body snatchers for its supply of corpses, etc.[32] A "striking feature in the *Looking-Glass,*" according to Robert Turner, one that lay beneath "the humour and caricature," was the encouragement "given towards increasing the amenities of the city." The illustrations drew attention to unpleasant sights to speed their removal or refurbishment, thus demonstrating how "ordinary places [be] made ornamental, and how the natural beauty of others may be heightened." Hopkirk, after all, "loved agreeable surroundings, and

> was anxious…to secure them for his fellow-citizens. He was so fond of gardens and green fields that every neglected or waste piece of ground about the city was an eyesore to him as & lost opportunity of common good.[33]

Given the relatively broad public discussion surrounding the question of a cemetery at Fir Park, it is understandable that Ewing wasted little time in calling a meeting to discuss the "conversion of the Fir Park into an ornamental burying Ground Similar to Perelachaise in Paris." Many of Glasgow's eminent and influential figures, including Dennistoun of Golfhill, Mackenzie of Craig Park, and Douglas of Barloch, then Clerk to the House, met at Ewing's palatial Queen Street residence on 28 July 1828 for what may have been the first formal conversation on the subject. There Hill spoke of the project in language that combined sentiment and integrity with utility and profit. The space, he

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[32] "Consumption of Smoke: Present," and "Consumption of Smoke: Future," *Northern Looking Glass* 1, no. 8 (17 September 1825).

[33] Turner, "Thomas Hopkirk of Dalbeth," 253.

argued, was ill suited for agriculture, manufacturing or habitation, and remained "unfrequented and unproductive," barely yielding a "Shilling of rent or yearly revenue."[34] But even modest estimates suggested "at least 300 parterres or places of interment might be laid out in different situations," on the four wooded acres, "and thus in a few years £5000 might be made from sales of plots at the moderate sum £20." More importantly, there was a "ready demand" for these new spaces of burial. The population had been increasing dramatically – according to one estimate tripling between 1810 and 1829 – and no new burial provisions has been established since 1801. And, finally, Blythswood Hill, the nearby wealthy neighborhood, possessed limited interment options, as its parish "contains no special burying ground attached to its Church (except the area of the old Church)."[35]

These "gentlemen," Hill believed, would be enticed by the increased security a Fir Park cemetery could offer. Anyone, he said, "who has of late had the misfortune to bury a relative in an ordinary burying ground," can

> attest to the great expense incurred solely for the sake of obtaining Security for each interment, and the anxieties that still remain after every precaution has been taken short of an actual Iron tomb or palisading [sic] round, over, and to the full depth of the whole lair.[36]

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[34] Indeed Fir Park was the only property owned by the Merchants House, "in the neighborhood of the city," that was not in 1750, "when "Glasgow began to exhibit some indications of its future prosperity… feued out to different individuals and companies… in lots proportioned to the increasing demand… either because it was already partially quarried, or because it appeared to be not immediately calculated for any useful purpose, except as a plantation, for which it was accordingly laid out." Blair, 23.

[35] 15 July 1828. (…High Church burying ground, 1801)

[36] Emphasis in the original.

Fir Park, by contrast, offered the perfect landscape for more secure and affordable interment. More than merely surrounding the ground with protective fencing, secure vaults could be set into the exposed stone along "the numerous terraced walks." The single point of entry of these tombs would render them less susceptible to violation, especially if families alone possessed access by key. In addition, excavated catacomb construction would lower costs, as "a slightly ornamented stone or Iron Cover would alone be required."

The Committee approved of Hill's suggestions. Ewing, in particular, noted that Fir Park appeared an "admirably adapted…Pere-la-Chaise" whose use as a space of sepulcher would,

> harmonize beautifully with the adjacent scenery, and constitute a solemn and appropriate appendage to the Venerable Structure in its front; and which while it afforded a much wanted accommodation to the higher Classes of the public would at the same time convert a property at present unfrequented and unproductive into a general resort and a lucrative source of revenue to the Merchants House.

In subsequent meetings, the Committee worked towards a full proposal convincing the Directors of the Merchants House of the propriety of converting Fir Park into an "Ornamental Burying Ground." There was a great concern with the legitimacy of the project; thus the Committee prominently highlighted the proposal's endorsement from "Gentlemen of approved taste and professional skill."[37] They were also keen to highlight the proposal's financial imperative, suggesting, on one hand, that the five acres under consideration not only "afford no Revenue," but actually required a modest annual outlay to maintain the walks that few members of the House actually used. In contrast, a burial

[37] 15 Oct 1829, Necropolis Committee Minute Books, T/MH/52/1/1

ground could generate real profits, as it "invariably sells dearer and as readily as any other description of property." Furthermore, the "ready demand" cited by Hill in 1828 had only increased during the twelve months of deliberations; burial provisions had remained stagnant as the population continued to expand, leading the Committee to declare it "a fact that additional accommodation of this nature is a desideratum here."

The Report also called, however obliquely, upon historic civic rivalries as potential motivation for enlightened sepulchral action. Not only did the Committee note the "improved taste beginning to be displayed in ornamenting some of our neighbouring Churchyards," but also intimated that similar plans were afoot in Edinburgh. A large tract of land, "at the rate of from £9,000 to £11,000 per Acre," had evidently been purchased at Calton Hill – which, like the Fir Park, offered both a grand view of the city and a conspicuous monument to a national hero at its summit.[38] And although the Committee gloated that "the operations presently carrying on at Liverpool for obtaining, with a great expenditure and the assistance of Art, the same objects and advantages which are afforded in a much greater degree by Nature itself in the Property of the Merchants House," they nevertheless suggested a sense of urgency was warranted given the advanced state of construction of Liverpool's second cemetery, St. James'.

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[38] While Edinburgh may have beaten Glasgow, the new "the Second City of Empire," to this sepulchral and monumental urge – its towering column to Lord Nelson had been erected in 1815 and the burial ground than had been laid out on Calton Hill as early as 1718 was one of Britain's earliest spaces of burial unconnected to a church – the Committee could nevertheless rest easy that speculations concerning a grand garden cemetery for Edinburgh on Calton Hill, would persist well into the 1840s. Curl, *Death and Architecture,* 148. See, for example, *Gardener's Magazine* 17 (December 1841): 332, 590-1, for discussions of a "General Cemetery… on some ground which is beautifully varied on the surface, and abounds in rocks, and situations from which views of the sea are obtained," at Arthur's Seat, one of Calton Hill's two peaks. The second, Salisbury Crags, was also occasionally mentioned as a potential site of sepulcher. Moreover, the population of Glasgow surpassed Edinburgh's in the 1821 census.

On October 15, 1828, the final version of the report was read before the Fir Park and Quarry Committee who "recommend[ed] the proposal to the favorable consideration of the House." The "Report on converting the Merchant House Park into a Burying Ground," was printed and widely circulated, with copies mailed to the individual Directors, and published in local newspapers, "for the information of the Matriculated Members and the Public at large."[39] A month later, the House voted unanimously in favor of the "the general principle thereof," and directed the Committee, "to make out a more special Report on the details of the whole subject, and prepare relative plans for the future consideration of the House."

Eighteen months later, the House began advertising a design competition for an "Ornamental Public Cemetery in the manner which shall best combine economy, security, and picturesque effect." Sixteen plans were subsequently received and publicly exhibited for a month before the winners were chosen. Generous prizes, between £10 and £50, were awarded to the five submissions that offered "diversified objects of choice" in "suitable situations, various designs…of different modes of Sculpture in vaults or graves…with specimens of appropriate decoration and monumental architecture."[40] The selected plans were entrusted to three of the judges, Glasgow architects David Hamilton and John Baird, and Stewart Murray, Curator of the Botanic Gardens, who were to decide upon a design that would "not only combine their merits and avoid their defects but

[39] 12 November 1829.

[40] T/MH/52/1/1 – Committee Minute Books, 6 January 1831; 16 June 1831. The prizes ranged from £10 to £50, respectively, with a Mr. David Bryce of Edinburgh taking first place.

include such improvements as shall appear proper to themselves."[41] After studying the plans and repeatedly "perambulating" the ground, Hamilton, Baird and Murray, decided that because they lacked the requisite skill and taste, it was best to entrust the design of the Necropolis to a seasoned professional, "an experienced Landscape Gardener."[42] For this they hired landscape designer George Milne, on the recommendation of fellow horticulturalist Murray. Awarded an annual salary of £60, Milne was granted use of the lodge, which, it was noted, had recently been "enlarged and improved." By 1832 construction had begun in earnest, and it was reported that the "natural and graceful form" of the roads and walkways, which were completed at "the least practicable cost" reflected the "highest credit on the taste and diligence of William Milne and has amply justified the good character from Mr. Stewart Murray."[43]

As the project took shape, another anonymous appeal for a garden cemetery at Fir Park appeared in the *Scots Times*. Written by same pen that offered "Cemeteries in Glasgow" in June 1828, the author repeated many of his earlier suggestions, but strengthened the tone and sense of urgency attached to them. He had also clearly read the "Report…," repeating verbatim many passages, and elaborating on a number of the issues publicly raised by the Merchants House. The readers' attention was drawn to the "condition of our City Cemeteries," from which the author "deduced,"

[41] 16 June 1831. A respected Glaswegian architect, David Hamilton's classical design for the new Houses of Parliament won third prize in the 1835-6 design competition.

[42] 21 January 1832

[43] 8 October 1832. William Milne's surname is spelled as variously as Mylne/Milne in the Minute Books and other published sources.

> that the Churchyard was intended to serve, as it did in other quarters of the globe, as the most powerful talisman of the *extincta amabitur,* professed by the Roman Orator over the mortal remains of his daughter Julia—the most touching remembrance of the friendship offered at the couch of the dying—it would be then absolutely necessary that more care should be bestowed on its outward appearance than was to be seen in our western metropolis. Although our warning has had but little effect in producing improvements on the outward appearance of our crowded receptacles of the dead, or has, as yet, done little to rouse the living to purchase even the limited earthly *immortality*—if we may use the expression—even a tasteful tomb would ensure them; we are glad to think that our hint respecting a Cemetery similar to that on Mount Louis at Paris, has been taken, and that the hope we expressed of having a spot of sepulture something more picturesque than those we have been accustomed to is now in the way of being realized.[44]

The author thus directly addressed the Merchants House proposal. But instead of allowing it to dominate his piece, he framed his opinions in terms of truth and taste – his "sole object in offering remarks upon our City Churchyards, has been to make them merely what they ought to be, and what every man of feeling and taste must wish them to become." Ultimately, the tombstone was the "the chronicle of man's progress to Heaven," and the grave called attention to "the termination of this life's miseries on one hand, and the beginning of a blessed immortality on the other." For this reason, it was important that both be "more respected" than they were at present. Burial grounds ought to be "made so attractive as to become an occasional retreat and…solace to our citizens."[45]

For Strang, as I have already suggested, the social utility of a cemetery was inseparable from aesthetic considerations. On a very basic level, the "decoration" of the garden cemetery, which for Strang in 1829 consisted of "the beauty of its situation… the simplicity of its decoration… the taste of its works of art," was critically important, as it

[44] [Strang], "Glasgow Cemeteries," 353.

[45] [Strang], "Glasgow Cemeteries," 353.

encouraged visitors to "meditate over the repository of the ashes of departed friends and fellow creatures."[46] The ornamentation of sepulchral landscapes would "extend religious feelings" and "inculcate the salutary conviction upon man that the spirit lives eternally, while from the votive offerings to virtue there results a general attestation of the hope of future recompense." Carefully planned and maintained, the garden cemetery would thus help underscore the existence of an eternal spiritual life and act as an advocate for religious feelings generally.

However, the aesthetics of the garden cemetery also offered other, more distinctly secular, advantages to society. In short, it was "beneficial to public morals, to the improvement of manners, and to the extension of virtuous and generous feelings." At the grave, the individual is taught "the shortness and uncertainty of life… to love his neighbour… the value of mercy… and …the vanity of all earthly distinction…vice looks terrible, virtue lovely. Selfishness a sin, patriotism a duty."[47] Where could one "more eloquently and more effectively learn…that to be virtuous is to be happy?"[48] For all of these reasons, Strang had concluded by 1831 that the garden cemetery was the "tenderest and most uncompromising monitor of man."[49]

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[46] [Strang], "Glasgow Cemeteries," 353.

[47] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 58, nearly verbatim to passage in "Glasgow Cemeteries." Strang made a few key changes to this passage between 1829 and 1831. He dropped the line, "There is no sermon and no book of morals that teaches a more eloquent lesson than the sepulchre" and added, "vice looks terrible, virtue lovely. Selfishness a sin, patriotism a duty."

[48] [Strang], "Glasgow Cemeteries," 353.

[49] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 58. In 1829, Strang was more tentative in his assessment of the observational and cautionary capability of the burial ground, writing, "the churchyard is indeed the monitor of Man." In 1831, in addition to ascribing superlatives, Strang made a conceptual leap by not just observing the existing situation, but prescribing the social and cultural power of the new cemetery. [Strang], "Glasgow Cemeteries, 353.

***John Claudius Loudon and Functional Forms of Sepulcher***

Strang was not the only one to take the aesthetics of the British garden cemetery quite seriously. In spite of the widespread support these new cemeteries had received in the press, English landscape gardener and horticultural theorist John Claudius Loudon would argue repeatedly in the 1830s and 40s that the potential advantages of this new form of burial were ultimately mitigated by the way in which the new cemeteries had been designed. For Loudon, the private garden cemeteries erected throughout Britain in the 1820s and 30s failed in one crucial way. Working from the theories of landscape gardeners like Humphrey Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the designers of those burial grounds had failed to engage the cemetery for what it was. Simply put, in these early, private garden cemeteries, the form of the landscape failed to coalesce with its content.

To be sure, Loudon declared that he had "always been in favour of an extensive garden or arboretum" as a space of burial, and he spoke rather positively about a few of Britain's new cemeteries.[50] In August 1830, he praised the efforts of the "General Cemetery Company" to establish an extramural cemetery for Londoners, whose objective, according to Loudon, was more "a public good, and a grand ornament to the metropolis, than private emolument."[51] After visiting the new cemeteries in Manchester and Liverpool in 1831, he declared that, "large Public Cemeteries, unconnected with churches…ought to be formed on some general system by every town and village throughout the

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[50] See Christopher Brooks, *Mortal Remains: the History and Present State of the Victorian and Edwardian Cemetery* (Exeter: Wheaton, 1989) 8-9, 17; "Metropolitan Cemetery," *Gardener's Magazine*, 489.

[51] "Metropolitan Cemetery," *Gardener's Magazine*, 489.

country."[52] He later praised the new cemeteries at Sheffield and Birmingham, calling them "great public ornament[s]… judiciously… laid out with a great variety of trees and shrubs."[53] In 1838, he took great pleasure in seeing that the "New Burying Ground at Dundee" was often used as "a promenade, both by town's people and strangers," and that its trees and shrubs were individually labeled according to the Jussieuan classification system, which he would advocate in his 1843 treatise on cemetery design.[54]

Loudon was also generally quite pleased with the Glasgow Necropolis, which he visited in 1841 as part of a "Gardening Tour in the North of England and Part of Scotland." His initial impression of the Necropolis, which opened nine years earlier on an incline behind the city's medieval cathedral and its churchyard, was that

> studded with trees and tombs and scars of solid rock, when looking from the town, with the cathedral in the foreground, [it] is grand and melancholy; rising boldly in front; so that the spectator, finding himself in a commanding position, and looking down on the one cemetery, and up towards the other, has his mind filled with the subject to the exclusion of every other idea, and feels, in short, the effect on his mind to be sublime.[55]

It is important that not to allow this language of sublimity to lead one into thinking of Loudon as some sort of Romantic. He was overwhelmed in this instance not by a scene that seemed to exceed the powers of his understanding, but by the Necropolis's intoxicating rationality. It was tidy and well maintained, he said. And unlike any other

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[52] "Large Public Cemeteries," *Gardener's Magazine* 7 (July 1831): 527.

[53] "Recollections of a Tour chiefly between London and Sheffield made during the last three Weeks of May 1839," *Gardener's Magazine* 15, no. 113 (Aug. 1839): 435, 457.

[54] Ever interested in technological invention, Loudon praised the identifying/classifying labels themselves, which were made of patent zinc and inscribed with an ink that withstood the elements. "The New Burying Ground at Dundee," *Gardener's Magazine* 14, no. 103 (Oct. 1838): 495-496.

[55] "Recollections of a Gardening Tour in the North of England and Part of Scotland, made from June 22 to September 30. 1841," *Gardener's Magazin*e, 3rd ser., 18, no. 2 (Feb. 1842): 51.

British cemetery he had seen, the monuments seemed in good taste. From "magnificent combinations of architecture and sculpture," to "common gravestones," there was not a "mean, trivial, or vulgar" form amongst its sepulcher. All the monuments in the Glasgow Necropolis conveyed the "*dignified* idea of being built, and have not the mean appearance of being thrust in like stakes, or laid down like pavement." And, finally, the "low architectural parapets" that surrounded family burial plots, unlike the tall iron railings found in other British cemeteries, did not "*derogate* from the sacredness of the scene, by supposing it possible that the cemetery would be visited by persons incapable of conducting themselves properly."[56] There was no need for a show of security in the Glaswegian cemetery, for visitors conducted themselves with civility and restraint.

Loudon's praise for these cemeteries, however, did not extend to the majority of new British burial grounds. While he was pleased that, as a *concept,* cemeteries were becoming more common throughout the country, and remained hopeful that their proliferation would "excite the attention and criticism of thinking persons, which will in the end lead to the adoption of a better taste," he nevertheless disapproved of the ways in which most of these cemeteries translated theory into practice.[57] By 1843, when his writings from *Gardener's Magazine* were collected and expanded in the book *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries and on the Improvement of Churchyards*, cemetery burial had been available for two decades – all seven of London's

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[56] "Gardening Tour in the North of England and Scotland," *Gardener's Magazine*, 52-53.

[57] "Cemeteries," *Gardener's Magazine* 3rd ser., 18, no. 12 (Dec. 1842): 666.

joint-stock cemeteries had opened their gates, as had 50 others throughout the country.[58] Drawing on his broad horticultural and architectural knowledge, Loudon addressed a variety of topics ranging from public health advocates' preoccupation with drainage to aesthetes' concerns with the selection and placement of acceptable trees and shrubs. Determining the "the best mode of applying principles of design to any particular object," he wrote in the opening lines of this text, required a knowledge of the "purposes for which that object is intended."[59] When choosing the location of a primary school, for example, "the first consideration is, the physical health of the children; and the next, their moral health."[60] Cemeteries, of course, were to be no different. The "main object of a burial-ground," Loudon began, "… is the disposal of the remains of the dead in such a manner as that their decomposition, and return to the earth from which they sprung, shall not prove injurious to the living; either by affecting their health, or shocking their feelings, opinions, or prejudices."[61] Spaces of burial, in other words, should be a burden neither to the city nor to its inhabitants. Thus, for example, proper drainage was important in a cemetery, as wet soil inhibited bodily decomposition. For the same reason, he felt that cemeteries should be situated in "elevated and airy situation[s]," with southern exposure so that the surface might dry "during the winter months."[62] In addition to their role in maintaining

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[58] For a detailed discussion of this chronology, see Chapter 5.

[59] John Claudius Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries, and on the Improvement of Churchyards* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longman, 1843), 1.

[60] John Claudius Loudon, *Encyclopaedia [sic] of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longman, 1833), 727.

[61] Loudon, *Laying Out, Planting and Managing*, 1.

[62] [John Claudius Loudon] "Remarks on Laying out Public Gardens and Promenades," *Gardener's Magazine* 11 (1835): 667.

public health, however, Loudon believed that cemeteries also served a moral purpose. "A *secondary object,*" he wrote, "is, or ought to be, the improvement of the moral sentiments and general taste of all classes, and more especially of the great masses of society." The two functions were synergistically related, according to Loudon, as "*improving the moral feelings,* will be one of the results of the decorous attainment of the main object; for it must be obvious that the first step to rendering the churchyard a source of amelioration or instruction is, to render it attractive."[63] Only a properly designed and well-kept sepulcher could transform the immodest and immoral. Thus it was indeed troubling to note that most spaces of burial had had little success in improving the taste of the populace. The only explanation, for Loudon, was that their form, to paraphrase architect Louis Sullivan, had not followed their function.

Drawing heavily on the Scottish "Common Sense" School of philosophy, especially the writings of Archibald Alison, Loudon repeatedly stated that "fitness for the end in view" should be the guiding principle of architectural and landscape design.[64] As he told the readers of his wildly successful *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* of 1833, "The beauty of truth is so essential to every other kind of beauty, that it can neither be dispensed with in art nor in morals." Thus, a "barn disguised as a church would afford satisfaction to none but those who considered it as a trick."[65] The truthful expression of function was never more essential than in spaces devoted to

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[63] Loudon, *Laying Out, Planting and Managing*, 8.

[64] Loudon, *Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*, 1112-1113.

[65] Loudon, *Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture,* 1113.

specifically moral purposes. It was for this reason that Loudon grew so frustrated with the way early cemeteries seemed to resemble landscape gardens. For him, these new cemeteries had failed to proclaim their status as spaces of burial. It was crucial that the garden cemetery not be mistaken for some other type garden – it must have its own aesthetic identity.[66] The absence of an identifiable form rendered the function of the cemetery "subordinate to that of a botanic garden or an arboretum." This belief lay at the heart of Loudon's criticism of St. James's cemetery in Liverpool, for example, as "conspicuously liable to the faults mentioned as common to flower-gardens."[67]

Similarly, Loudon found the "planting" of private London cemeteries like Norwood, Kensal Green and Highgate, "highly objectionable" for they were "too much in the style of a common pleasure-ground, both in regard to the disposition of the trees and shrubs, and the kinds planted." Borrowing too heavily from the stylistic repertoire of the English landscape garden their designers had "confound[ed] things that are different… and interfere[d] with the idea of solemnity and consecration to the dead."[68] For Loudon, the winding avenues, suddenly revealed sights, "belts and clumps" of trees at Norwood, Kensal Green, Highgate and other cemeteries were inappropriate, as they drew too much inspiration from the tradition of the "English" landscape garden. He objected to the wholesale adoption of the mid-eighteenth century theories of Lancelot "Capability" Brown, for whom tightly massed trees imbued the landscape with a sense of mystery by offering only glimpses of what was to come. In the cemetery, Loudon felt, trees grouped in

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[66] [Loudon,] "Remarks on Laying out Public Gardens and Promenades," 669.

[67] [Loudon,] "Large Public Cemeteries," 527-8.

[68] [Loudon,] "Remarks on Laying out Public Gardens and Promenades," 669.

this fashion posed a health risk by impeding the “free current of air” and “the drying influence of the sun.” Moreover, individual trees and shrubs would allow for a more economical use of the burial space.[69]

Loudon’s most serious objections to these cemeteries, though, involved the apparent lack of any “leading principle[s]” to guide their construction. Inappropriate varieties of trees planted in the wrong spaces, some in thick belts “occupying … the finest situations” for graves, others scattered in random groupings, “destroy[ed] all breadth of effect, and produc[ed] neither character nor expression.”[70] “[F]astigiated, conical, dark needle-leaved evergreens,” such as the cypress, were most suitable for the cemetery, but, as he made clear, any kind of evergreen would have been better than a deciduous tree. Tapered evergreens, for example, were more compact, thus leaving more space for burials.[71] They also produced less “litter” and shade than “branchy” varieties, whose horizontal, rounded structure would inevitably encroach upon walks and graves. The contour of “trees clothed from the ground upwards” posed a threat to health through their tendency to “stagnate the air, and render the place unhealthy.” Rather than purifying the space, Loudon, influenced by the miasma theory of disease transmission, believed these low growing trees captured the “morbid poisons” given off by the decomposing body.[72]

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[69] Loudon, *Laying Out*, *Planting and Managing*, 69.

[70] Loudon, *Laying Out*, *Planting and Managing*, 69.

[71] [Loudon,] “Remarks on Laying out Public Gardens and Promenades,” 668. (1835)

[72] William Simpson, *Health of Towns. A Digest of Several Reports on Sanitary Reform: Containing the Views of E. Chadwick, Esq., C.B. Dr. Southwood Smith; Dr. Neil Arnott; Dr. Hector Gavin; George Alfred Walker, Esq., Surgeon; and others* (London: Henry Renshaw, 1849), 15. For more on miasma and the presumed public health threat posed by the decomposing or “putrefying” body, see Chapter 2.

Aesthetic and historical considerations as well pointed to the adoption of evergreens in the cemetery. The "unchangeable aspect" of the evergreen was, for Loudon, more solemn than the seasonable variations of the deciduous or flowering tree.[73] Likewise – and again in direct opposition to the writings of Capability Brown – Loudon believed cemetery walkways "ought to be straight, or, if curvilinear, the curves ought to be few; because there is neither solemnity nor grandeur where there is a great play of outlines and continued variation of scene." Curved walks, like deciduous trees, were neither solemn nor economical: "Every grave or tomb must be considered as either a parallelogram or a square; and there must always be a loss of space in disposing of rectangular figures within a curvilinear figure." For this reason, he argued, all burial grounds should be strictly rectilinear. As Loudon put it, straight lines were "desirable for almost every thing connected with a cemetery, as harmonizing better with the solemnity of the scene."[74]

When the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company advertised their new cemetery at Norwood in Southeast London with an engraving by Sir William Tite in 1836, Loudon seized the opportunity to give these theories visual form. Borrowing the successful business tactic pioneered in the "Red Books" of Humphrey Repton, Loudon presented a pair of engravings depicting the private London cemetery awaiting improvement and its potential transformation in accordance with his theories. In the official engraving, clumps of Oaks, Maples and Ashes mingle in the spacious lawn with the tombs and chapels. Loudon's view, on the other hand, showed "the different effect which dark-foliaged

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[73] Loudon, *Laying Out*, *Planting and Managing*, 54.

[74] [Loudon] "Remarks on Laying out Public Gardens and Promenades," 668.

fastigiate and conical trees would have." While he granted that not everyone would prefer his arrangement, he was confident that the majority would at the very least acknowledge that his view possessed "a distinctive character."[75]

While Loudon was perhaps their most forceful English critic, other, more prominent contemporaries also criticized the formal inconsistency of the new cemeteries. Architect and Gothic revival spokesman Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin felt the designers to have committed the "grossest absurdities" in their buildings and landscapes. In 1843, the same year that Loudon's *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries* appeared in print, Pugin likewise bemoaned the incongruous character of the new cemeteries. In *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England*, he disdainfully noted a "superabundance of inverted torches, cinerary urns, and pagan emblems, tastefully disposed by the side of neat gravel walks, among cypress trees and weeping willows."[76] Pugin, most famous for the newly redesigned Houses of Parliament, firmly believed that form and faith should be inseparable. And as the Gothic was, in his view, the "only correct expression of the faith, wants, and climate" of the country, the new cemeteries fell visibly short.[77]

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[75] While not common in Britain, Loudon reminded his readers that his "Cemetery Form" was the "character… aimed at in the new cemeteries formed on the Continent." There were also clear Ancient and non-Western precedents for his prescribed form: "the cemeteries of the ancients were characterised by the cypress. To show that this is also the case with the cemeteries of the East, we have given some views of Oriental cemeteries." Loudon, *Laying Out*, *Planting and Managing*, 69.

[76] Augustus Welby Northemore Pugin, *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England* (London: J. Weale, 1843), 12.

[77] Benjamin Ferrey, *Recollections of A.N. Welby Pugin, and His Father, Augustus Pugin with Notices of their Works* (London: Edward Stanford, 1861), 345.

The entrance gates to the cemetery Pugin depicted in his 1843 caricature replicated the appearance of an Egyptian temple, and the "dead" wall space near the gate provided advertising space for "blacking and shaving-strop manufactures." From across the street at the "Green Man and Dog public-house," he wrote, one could see a

> cement caricature of the entrance to an Egyptian temple, 2 1/2 inches to the foot, is erected, with convenient lodges for the policeman and his wife, and a neat pair of cast iron hieroglyphical gates, which would puzzle the most learned to decipher; while, to prevent any mistake, some such words as 'New Economical Compressed Grave Cemetery Company' are inscribed in *Grecian* capitals along the frieze, interspersed with hawk-headed divinities, and surmounted by a huge representation of the winged Osiris bearing a gas lamp.[78]

Employing so many different architectural styles in one building troubled Pugin, as did the cemetery's decorative façade and blank perimeter walls, and the generic chapel inside its gates. Where gothic architecture was the product of skilled craftsmen who labored with a sense of unity and purpose, contemporary architecture was industrial and prefabricated, nothing more than a pastiche of preexisting forms awaiting a meaning.

Pugin's criticisms of the new cemeteries, of course, were but one expression of an all-too-common anxiety regarding modern industrialism. Yet the clients of the cemeteries he derided were plagued by the very same fears. They found a sense of security in the knowledge that their final resting place was to be in the country. The search for "peace, innocence, and simple virtue," as Raymond Williams so famously put it, drove thousands to purchase plots from companies operating in both small towns and large cities.[79] Indeed the opposition of the country and the city was crucial to the promotion of the new

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[78] Pugin, *Apology for the Revival of Christian* Architecture, 12.

[79] Williams, *The Country and the City,* 1.

cemeteries. Given the overcrowding of the urban churchyards, and of urban space more generally, the image of "eternal rest" was quite persuasive. This is what makes the arguments of Loudon and, to a lesser extent, Pugin so strikingly ironic. While both were staunch advocates of garden burial, this was not because they believed in the value of nature as such. Unlike the designers of the 1820s and 30s, who looked to the history of landscape gardening in hopes of making their sites appear more "natural," Loudon distanced himself from this tradition. For him, moving burial grounds outside of the city presented an opportunity not simply to return to nature. Rather, extramural cemeteries provided, more than anything else, open space, a clean slate, as it were, which could be fashioned in a manner truly appropriate for burial and mourning. For Loudon, in other words, what lay beyond the city was not a reminder of Britain's idyllic past, but an arena in which the nation might formulate its future.

It should not be surprising therefore, that didactic concerns loomed large for Loudon as well. Spaces of burial, he believed, possessed an incredible potential for "*improving the taste*" of society, and thus urban cemeteries and rural churchyards, if properly designed,

> laid out, ornamented with tombs, planted with trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, all named, and the whole properly kept, might become a school of instruction in architecture, sculpture, landscape-gardening, arboriculture, botany, and in those important parts of general gardening, neatness, order, and high thinking.[80]

[80] Loudon, *Laying Out, Planting and Managing*, 12-13. "*The influence of cemeteries and churchyards in improving the taste,"* &c. I should rather consider the cemetery as the result of the taste of the community, than the cause of it; and I think, on reflection, you will admit that your suggestions, as to making it a place of instruction, are only applicable to the transition state of society in which we live. Thomas Wilson, Esq., March 24. 1843–Leeds)," *Laying Out, Planting and Managing*, 117.

A lengthy precedent supported this view, as for Loudon, "in all ages and in all countries," burial grounds were "scenes… calculated to improve the morals and the taste… and the intellect."[81] For those "uncultivated by reading," the churchyard was "their book of history, their biography, their instructor in architecture and sculpture, their model of taste, and an important source of moral improvement." While possibly not possessing the "habits of attention and observation sufficiently developed to derive improvement from the style or taste displayed in the architecture of the church," there was

> not one countryman that does not understand the difference between slovenliness and neatness, between taste and no taste, when applied to walks, grass ground, and gardens. All of them, therefore, may have their taste for neatness and order improved, or their habits of slovenliness confirmed, by the weekly impressions made on them while passing through the churchyard to the church.[82]

In 1836, Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* published a cemetery design by Bristol architect P. Massey, Jr., that spoke to this desire for a functional form of sepulcher. Massey conceived of his cemetery as a "public resort," complete with the cultural and recreational amenities he believed Bristol lacked. To this end, he attempted to infuse the cemetery's design with "that botanic character which would render it always sufficiently interesting and attractive" by planting sufficient trees along its walkways to suggest an arboretum.[83] Mindful of the fine line between appropriate and excessive, tasteful and gaudy, Massey took great care in composing this landscape. If the cemetery were "arranged in too gay a manner, the place would not be in unison with the feelings of those whose visits are

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[81] Loudon, *Laying Out*, *Planting and Managing*, 13.

[82] Loudon, *Laying Out*, *Planting and Managing*, 74.

[83] P. Massey, Jr., "Design for a Cemetery proposed to be formed at Bristol," *Gardener's Magazine* 12 (July 1836): 343.

directed to the tombs of their friends and relations; and, if too sombre [sic], it would not be sufficiently accordant with the feelings of those who visit it for promenade."[84] The ideal composition would balance the need for visibility and congregation with privacy for individual mourners, and produce "that degree of simplicity and hallowed peacefulness which would be most likely to harmonise with the feelings of each class."[85]

It is important to recognize that although both Strang and Loudon shared a belief in the transformative powers of the carefully designed and maintained grave, each did so with different audiences and aims in mind. Strang was primarily concerned that the new cemeteries improve the morals and manners of already decent middle-class Scots and Britons. Loudon, on the other hand, aimed to extend these benefits to a broader section of the population. Where Strang saw the cemetery as something of a finishing school, for Loudon it was a comprehensive, akin to the "National Educational Establishment" he proposed in 1829.[86] By admitting an undifferentiated audience, and risking the potential for disturbance, Loudon's cemetery offered, potentially, a much higher return. Of course, unlike Strang, Loudon would never have guaranteed the polite behavior of his would-be pupils. But, in his estimation, the proper form would mitigate the damage of any troublemakers by subjecting them to the eyes of their peers and their betters. He did not

[84] Massey, "Design for a Cemetery," 343.

[85] Massey, "Design for a Cemetery," 343, 346. Although his design for Bristol was never constructed, Massey's desire to infuse the cemetery with elements of the botanic garden grew in popularity and was realized most fully in Northwest London at Abney Park in Stoke Newington in 1840.

[86] See John Claudius Loudon, *Parochial Institutions: or, an Outline of a Plan for a National Educational Establishment, Suitable to the Children of All Ranks, from Infancy to the Age of Puberty; as a Substitute for the National Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1829).

have to offer assurances regarding individual behavior, in other words, because the disciplinary qualities of correct cemetery form would in themselves ensure compliance.

Much as Loudon sought to extend the benefits of garden burial to the poor, however, it was not necessarily a burial identical to that of their socio-economic superiors. In maintaining a distinction between burial grounds for the middle classes and the poor, Loudon was, in his own estimation, simply being realistic. As he pointed out, it was virtually impossible to establish a cemetery dedicated to burial of the poor near the city center, as the exorbitant real estate prices would demand a dangerous density of burial, critically concentrating too much mephitic gas in a single urban space. His endorsement of municipally owned extramural cemeteries was therefore grounded in a belief that the government could safely extend the social and cultural benefits of tasteful garden burial. Municipalities could convert, safely and efficiently, extra-urban land into affordable burial space. Such action was imperative, for as Loudon argued in 1829, "no public improvement is more wanted than the removal, in Britain, of burial places from the cities to the country." To this end, he proposed several large burial grounds, "of some hundreds of acres each, a few miles in the country, on the poorest soil, and planted as an arboretum,"[87] and, one year later, elaborated upon this imperative, suggesting that a huge cemetery be "planted" for Londoners. If

> we could purchase 500 acres of the poorest dry soil within twenty-five miles of London, we would lay it out as an arboretum and place of burial for all

[87] However, Loudon doubted that even these provisions were "adequate to the wants of an increasing population," and it was in this discussion that he advocated legalizing interment in individual gardens. For such an "innovation" to appreciably affect the scarcity of burial space, however, backyard burial had to be made an option for not only landowners, but also those who held their property under leasehold as well. "A Metropolitan Sepulchre," *Gardener's Magazine* 5 (Sept. 1829): 214.

> sects and parties, and, were it not for the church, we should say for the metropolis.[88]

The railways, of course, would ensure the distant ground was accessible, and reliably "convey corpses thither once a day, and company at all hours."

In a fascinating turn, Loudon the gardener was pleased to suggest that this proposed cemetery would be horticulturally useful as well: "the poor soil would become enriched and the trees would thrive."[89] This was not the first time he had advocated some form of human compost. In 1806 he wrote that that "even buried in the soil, what remains of man performs a requisite part in the general agency, and, moved by the grand system of action and reaction, contributes to the beautiful economy and endless appearances of nature."[90] Loudon remained committed to this theme of bodily remains as horticultural succor as an early proponent of cremation: In 1843 he suggested to the nation of gardeners that ashes of a loved one could be either "preserved in urns, or applied to the roots of a favourite plant."[91] Thus he proposed a second controversial scheme that year, advocating an explicit corporal enrichment of the landscape. Extending his long held view that the function and identity of burial grounds was neither singular nor static, that when cemeteries and churchyards could no longer accommodate corpses, they should be reinvented and re-presented as public parks and sculpture gardens, Loudon suggested in

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[88] "Planted Cemetery at Liverpool," *Gardener's Magazine* 6, no. 26 (June 1830): 353

[89] "Planted Cemetery at Liverpool," *Gardener's Magazine*, 353.

[90] John Claudius Loudon, *Treatise on Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806), 697.

[91] By his own admission, Loudon was "ahead of his time" in advocating cremation, establishing a system of national education, municipal provision of burial space. Loudon, "Hints for the Improvement of the Town of Southampton, with a short Notice of the Vineyard at Shirley," *The Gardener's Magazine and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement,* 3rd ser., 11 (November 1843): 591.

1843 that cemeteries should function only briefly as spaces of burial. "[T]emporary cemeteries" could be formed with few requirements on "merely a field"

> rented on a twenty-one years' lease, of such an extent, as to be filled with graves in fourteen years. At the end of seven years more it may revert to the landlord, and be cultivated, planted, or laid down in grass, or in any manner that may be thought proper.[92]

This call for short-lived spaces of burial was met, not surprisingly, with varying degrees of criticism. Some, like Thomas Wilson, a reviewer of Loudon's 1843 manuscript, reminded him that these ephemeral spaces of burial would not ensure the grave's long-term security. "The best purpose to apply what you have designated temporary cemeteries to," Wilson remarked, was to "plant them and keep them in timber, and so insure that the ground need not be disturbed at any rate not to a depth that would interfere with the interments."[93] Others worried less about post-mortem security than about the specific propriety of a burial that so dramatically transformed personal identity. In *Quarterly Review*, Thomas James criticized Loudon's text for its inattention to the religious significance of burial, and cautioned that it "falls short as a guide to what a Christian cemetery ought to be."[94] For James, Loudon's temporary cemeteries were really just a

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[92] Loudon, *Laying Out*, *Planting and* Managing, 49-50. Continuing, "Nor does there appear to us any objection to union workhouses having a portion of their garden ground used as a cemetery, to be restored to cultivation, after a sufficient time had elapsed." Loudon had, in fact, long advocated some form of temporary burial grounds. He briefly argued for the leasing of the grave, calling in 1830 for "the interments of renters of seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, made systematically, as at Munich." Metropolitan Cemetery," *Gardener's Magazine* 6, no. 27 (August 1830): 489.

[93] Loudon, *Laying Out*, *Planting and Managing*, 119. Wilson's suggestion echoes what Loudon had articulated in 1835 – that an open field was more liable to eventual cultivation than a copse or grove, and it was precisely this horticultural security that, "perhaps, may instinctively have led to the practice of burying among trees."

[94] [Thomas James], "Cemeteries and Churchyards, Funerals and Funeral Expenses," *Quarterly Review* 73, no. 146 (March 1844): 451.

"plan of employing the surplus corpses of London to fertilize the poor soils in its vicinity." This was utilitarianism gone too far: Even the well-reported "atrocities" of the Italian mass graves at Naples and Leghorn, "into which the corpses of the poor are indiscriminately tumbled, are to our mind less revolting than these nice calculations of getting rid of the greatest number of troublesome bodies at the least possible expense and to the greatest possible advantage."[95]

While no one else was willing to carry this line of thought quite so far, Loudon was hardly alone in predicting a widespread social significance for these new garden cemeteries. In 1851, for example, *Limbird's Handbook Guide to London* included a multi-sheet insert praising the sheer beauty of the new cemetery at Kensal Green. The grounds, it was approvingly noted, were "…surrounded by a lofty wall, with occasional apertures, and secured by an iron railing." It had "graveled roads" and was

> planted with forest trees and evergreens; in its parterres bloom for a season the gay flowers, fit problems for the transitory life of man, and harmonizing with the more costly memorials of his brief existence. The site is one of extreme beauty, and the view extends over the rich and varied scenery of the western environs of the metropolis, and a large tract of the county of Surrey. There are very extensive catacombs, and many of the tombs in the open ground are of elegant and elaborate design.[96]

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[95] [James], "Cemeteries and Churchyards," 451-452. A similar bewilderment would persist well after Loudon's death in 1843. In 1856, a self-described "Sexton of the Old School" found "rather remarkable" the "the cool, philosophic style, in which Mr. Loudon handles this interesting subject." In 1856, one self-described/ pseudonymous "Sexton of the Old School," found "rather remarkable" the "the cool, philosophic style," in which Loudon handled this "interesting subject." In these temporary cemeteries, Loudon was certainly "doing the utilitarian thing, with a vengeance. Quite a novel rotation of crops—cabbages following corpses." See [Lucius Manlius Sargent], "A Sexton of the Old School," *Dealings with the Dead* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1856), 213.

[96] *Limbird's Handbook Guide to London; or, what to Observe and Remember of the Public Buildings, Cathedrals, Churches, Halls, Parks, Theatres, and Exhibitions* (London: John Limbard, 1851), 195.

*Limbird's* praise of the new London cemeteries was not without qualification, however. While the insert praised Highgate cemetery in Northwest London for "occupying one of the loveliest sites for natural beauties of scenery and prospect in the vicinity of the metropolis" its internal, compositional elements were harshly criticized. Highgate, according to *Limbird's,* had "nothing of that solemnity which its purpose seems to call for, being decorated by shrubs and a profusion of catacombs in the Egyptian style, with crypt-like passages leading to sepulchral chambers."

Countless guidebooks to the nation's urban sights made similar arguments about the restorative power of the cemetery. More important for my own purposes, however, is the way in which the cemetery's countenances and vistas were so often depicted not so much as leisure grounds for those escaping the "giddy throng," but places of instruction that might, if used correctly, reform the city's "lesser" inhabitants. Much as one might assume that Strang's call for a cemetery that appealed to the most refined sensibilities would be quicker to find an audience capable of paying for its realization, it was in fact Loudon's interest in burial grounds as spaces of rational recreation that gained greater traction. The comprehensive title of one 1859 guidebook to London provides a clue in determining just why this might have been the case:

> *Elliot's New and Practical Guide through London, and its Environs, by Railway, Steamboat, or Omnibus, containing a complete list of the Free Sights and Exhibitions, and descriptive of everything really worth notice. Its Museums, Picture and Sculpture Galleries, Public Galleries, Public Buildings, Docks, National Portrait Gallery, Railways, Canals, Club Houses, Hospitals, Learned and Benevolent Societies, Mansions, Halls, Educational and Industrial Institutions, Churches and Chapels, Free and other Exhibitions, Libraries, Lectures, Parks, Gardens, Promenades, Bridges, Streets, Squares, Baths, Theatres, Amusements, Musical Entertainments, Palaces, Cemeteries, Curiosities, Manufactures, Trade, Commerce, &c, &c.*

Elliot's equation of the new cemeteries with London's "Free Picture and Sculpture Galleries" suggests the similar promise of *all* of these relatively new public spaces. "Surround a man with the choicest productions of the pencil and chisel" he writes,

> give him the poetry of colours, of form, and of thought, and you immediately lift him into a higher region, wherein he breathes a purer air, and has a nobler idea of his duties and relations to the world. Give the poor man a flower-garden, and a book of sweet thoughts, and you give him an inheritance which he cannot surpass. Give him a free garden, in which to wander after his hours of labour, and there he will commune with the things of beauty's world, and have spiritual as well as material refreshment. Trees, pleasure-grounds, parks, galleries of art, are all so many educators of the moral sentiments; they divert the mind from frivolous thought, and the sense from sensual indulgences. To make a people wise and happy, you must make beauty cheap, and scatter flowers amongst the dross of daily life.[97]

Placed next to Loudon's repeated calls to create burial grounds as sites of moral instruction, Elliot's explicit call to "make beauty cheap," to make it an integral and productive aspect of all spaces of public leisure, suggests that in the mid-nineteenth century the garden cemetery was but one part of what Tony Bennett has described as "a more general set of developments through which culture, in coming to be thought of as useful for governing, was fashioned as a vehicle for the exercise of new forms of power."[98]

Bennett, to be sure, is largely concerned with the "birth of the museum," which contrasted its order and rationality with the incongruous chaos of the early-modern *wunderkammer*, designed to evoke wonder or surprise as a collection of curiosities. A central function of the new museum was to make intelligible a scientific view of the

[97] Henry Elliott, *Elliot's New and Practical Guide through London* (London: H. Elliot, 1859), 13.

[98] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 19.

world, to focus on the typical, rather than the exceptional.[99] Collections were systematically organized; artifacts came to serve as allegories of an evolutionary progress. And the museum, as an institution, sought to distance itself from the disorder associated with places of popular assembly, like the fair and the public house. Rather, it was hoped that it would exert a rational and improving influence, akin to that of libraries and public parks. In the latter in particular, one found a place for "'organized walking' in which an intended message is communicated in the form of a (more or less) directed itinerary."[100] In these new spaces of "supervised conformity," advocates hoped new forms of behavior might, "in being internalized, become self-acting imperatives."[101] Thus, Bennett argues, the designers of the modern museum were faced with the question of how to regulate the behavior of their visitors, or, rather, how to lead their visitors to regulate themselves. They turned, therefore, to those contemporary spaces whose function dictated the admittance of an undifferentiated public, places like shopping arcades, department stores and railway stations. As a result, these new spaces of exhibition and display almost invariably adopted two related formal devices: "the clearing of exhibits to the sides and centres of display areas, thus allowing clear passageways for the transit of the public, and breaking that public up from a disaggregated mass into an orderly flow; and…the provision of elevated vantage points in the form of galleries," which "allow[ed] the public to watch over

[99] Promoter of public libraries, Thomas Greenwood, while pleased in 1888 that "order and system is coming out of chaos," bemoaned the incongruity of smaller, local museums where it was common to have "a Chinese lady's boot encircled by a necklace made of shark's teeth, or a helmet of one of Cromwell's soldiers grouped with some Roman remains" and "an Egyptian mummy placed in a mediaeval chest." See Greenwood, *Museums and Art Galleries* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1888), 4.

[100] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 6.

[101] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 100.

itself."[102] In the museum, in other words, self-regulation would be the result of prospective surveillance. Following Foucault, Bennett argues that seeing others as the objects of one's observation ultimately leads to the recognition of oneself as subject to the look of another. The ability to see, in other words, made one irrevocably aware of one's own visibility. As Bennett points out, this "new rhetoric of power which enlisted the general public it addressed as its subject rather than its object," tapped into one of the central themes of Jeremy Bentham's theory of the panopticon, rendering the populace transparent to its own controlling look.[103]

On one hand, of course, references to vision in the early cemetery often dealt with the sights contained within the cemetery itself. As I have already noted, any number of advocates for these new garden cemeteries formulated their plans and predictions in terms of a series of images. Yet, it is not uncommon to find the views the cemeteries provided of the surrounding city described in a similar fashion. For example, as William Justyne explained in his popular guidebook, no visit to Highgate cemetery was complete until one had traversed the hilly grounds and stood under the enormous Cedar of Lebanon for a glimpse of the commanding view of London the summit offered. From this "splendid panoramic view" one could see "the great metropolis of the world … spread out below like a broad map."[104] Praise for the cemetery's elevated vantage points and the forms of surveillance they made possible, calls for plans featuring open, orderly spaces, irritation

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[102] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 101.

[103] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 94.

[104] William Justyne, *Guide to Highgate Cemetery* (London: Moore, 1865), 38.

over excessive numbers of bushes and shrubs…and all in the name of providing a "model of taste, and an important source of moral improvement": Far from the simple honoring of tradition that so many suggested, the garden cemetery was a thoroughly modern institution formulated with a real concern for both the aesthetic and political effects of vision and visibility. By offering a perch from which visitors could turn and observe nature and their fellow men, the cemetery was to offer not only itself as an image, but all of Britain as well.

– Chapter 3 –

## Monuments and Remembrance
## "Amid the Stranger's Land"

In March 1821, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* published "Lines Written in a British Burial Ground in India," an unsigned, blank verse elegy, reflecting on the death and commemoration of Britons in the distant, rootless space of the empire.[1] Touring an unidentified Anglo-Indian burial ground at dusk, the unnamed speaker describes the tombs encountered in the lonely space, imagining the lives and mourning the deaths of a cast of British characters unfortunate enough to perish so far from home – a missionary, army officer, various soldiers and their wives.[2] Set amongst "the glade of loneliest Indian wood," encircled by palm trees that "shut out the rays of morn," the speaker found the "British burial ground" to be a deeply sad, hollow, and lonesome space. Adjoining no "ancient church," the colonial burial ground could access neither the familial and communal ties that such ecclesiastical institutions maintained nor the historical events and ideals they archived. And if the past could be accessed only with great difficulty in the temporally and spatially isolated colonial burial grounds, so too, the speaker feared, would be the future. Challenges to collective memory inevitably affected the

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[1] [David Macbeth Moir], "Lines Written in a British Burial Ground in India," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 8, no. 48 (March 1821): 665-667.

[2] Moir's meditation was one of countless poems published in *Blackwood's* and its contemporaries during the period, and, like most, it passed largely unnoticed. Sudipta Sen offers one the few critical treatments, pointing to Moir's meditation as an example of the "run-of-the-mill poetry" that "urged a sense of belonging" by "conveying a sense of longing rather than vaunted assertions of race and civilization." Sudipta Sen, *Distant Sovereignty: National Imperialism and the Origins of British India* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 154-155.

understanding of collective aspirations, for the necessary foundation of a British sense of self was an awareness and investment in the greatness of the nation's history. For the presumptive author of these lines, the problem with the colonial burial ground was that it stood, in effect, outside history.

Nevertheless, the author of these "Lines," subsequently identified as Scottish physician and poet David Macbeth Moir (1798-1851), was in some sense unusual. In the literature of early British India, descriptions of British burial sites were far less common than depictions of the funerary landscapes of native Indians.[3] For Britons like Emma Roberts, James Forbes, H. L. Colebrooke, Henry Bevan, William Hodges, and Thomas and William Daniell, to name only a few, native sepulcher seems to have been far more fascinating. Through travel narratives, sentimental novels, Company surveys, learned Orientalist scholarship, and landscape paintings, each found his/her own way to pay tribute to the forms of native obsequies. They admired the sites' impressive, yet tasteful monuments, beautiful and well-tended landscaping, the care and devotion to the memory of the dead – presented both in terms of their diligent up-keep and regular visitation by the bereaved – and, above all, their extramural location. Some even suggested, in a gesture that should by now come as no surprise, that Britons both at home and in the colonies could learn a lesson from native funerary customs.

Of course, this fascination with native burial rites and spaces did not last. For this

[3] Alan Lang Strout identifies David Macbeth Moir as the likely author of the unassuming verse. A prolific contributor to literary annuals, gift-books as well *Blackwood's,* Moir submitted, anonymously and under his pen-name "Delta," some 395 poems between 1817 and 1851. But while the better part of his oeuvre deals in death and burial, only a handful Moir's pieces concern themselves with the mortality of his compatriots abroad. Strout, "A Bibliography of Articles in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' 1817-1825," *Library Bulletin*, no. 5 (Lubbock, TX: Texas Technological College Press, 1959), 14-16, 77, 170-173.

reason, discussions of burial in India offer more than just a fascinating parallel with debates surrounding burial reform in metropolitan Britain. The descriptions and images these writers and artists present also allow one to observe the larger shifts in the ideological apparatus of empire. Looking closely at several discussions of British colonial cemeteries in the context of the debates that would emerge surrounding the notion of burial reform in the next fifty years, in this chapter and the next I would like to begin to raise the question of how even the reconceptualization of British burial in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries might have been inseparable from experiences in the colonies.

One of the innumerable contemporary imitations of Thomas Gray's 1751 "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," the anonymously published "Lines Written in a British Burial Ground in India," appropriates many of the famed meditation's themes – mortality, mutability, and memory – and incorporates much of its imagery – a deserted graveyard, solitary speaker, twilight setting, etc.[4] But where Gray's unnamed protagonist is concerned with rural life and death at home, the speaker of the *Blackwood's* poem contemplates the

[4] "Lines Written in a British Burial Ground in India," was far from alone in its imitation of Gray's enormously popular "Elegy." There were, according to David Hill Radcliffe, "over a hundred and fifty imitations and parodies published prior to 1830, and hundreds more poems in which Gray's imagery is variously incorporated into odes, sonnets, narratives, and descriptive poems." As James Garrison and others have noted, the "Elegy" had a similarly popular life in translation. See David Hill Radcliffe, "The Poetry Professors: Eighteenth-Century Spenserianism and Romantic Concepts of Culture," *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 5 (2000): 121-150 and James D. Garrison, *A Dangerous Liberty: Translating Gray's Elegy* (University of Delaware Press, 2009). The "Elegy" has proved no less popular a subject for contemporary scholars. Amongst the many studies, the most germane to the present work include Joshua Scodel's authoritative study of the literary epitaph, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), esp. ch. 10 & 11; Suvir Kaul, *Thomas Gray and Literary Authority: A Study in Ideology and Poetics* (Stanford University Press, 1992); John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting, and Gardening during the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), esp. ch. 4 and Michele Turner Sharp, "Elegy unto Epitaph: Print Culture and Commemorative Practice in Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,'" *Papers on Language and Literature* (Winter 2002): 3-28.

colonial experience, shifting the scene from an unidentified churchyard in the English countryside to a nameless, churchless burial ground in India. Yet, whether at home or abroad, on sacred ground or secular, the central issue in both works remains the problem of commemoration and memorialization. Where the solitary figure in Gray's "Elegy" concerned himself with matters of time and social status, in the fluid space of empire the forms of the preservation of memory were determined largely by other considerations. No father here, beside the ancient church,

> May shew his sons their honour'd grandsire's tomb,
> Or point the spot where near that sacred dust
> Would he recline, his worldly labours done…
> Behind yon shrubs, in corner verdant spread,
> Lies crowd of nameless graves:—The soldier there,
> Whose vigour pined before the Indian sun,
> Now uncomplaining sleeps…[5]

The longing to be remembered was no less present in company India than it had been in rural England, but the exigencies of empire made the fulfillment of this wish far more difficult. While side-stepping the democratizing sentiments of Gray's speaker, for whom expensive monuments could neither forestall death nor answer the longing to be remembered, Moir's speaker implicitly endorses the Elegy's assertion that only the living can preserve the memory of the dead: "On some fond breast the parting soul relies / Some pious drops the closing eye requires."[6] For Moir, as for Gray, postmortem fame is contingent upon the intervention of the community. The dead could live on – however briefly – after death, within the shared memories of the community. And while distance

[5] [Moir], "British Burial Ground in India," 665-666.

[6] Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country-Churchyard," in *The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse*, ed. Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

may have prevented a parent from weeping at the grave of a son who perished "'mid his race of fame," Britons dying "in the stranger's land" were not simply consigned to sepulchral oblivion. They were mourned, and the "sacred rites" performed, by kith rather than kin.  Consanguinity had given way to a way to a community of a different sort: strangers in "the stranger's land."

In spite of the consolation that the Indian obsequies of ordinary Britons did not ensure the eclipse of their memory "at home," the poet's repetition of the term "strangers" indicates nevertheless a determining (or over-determining) sense of impermanence and foreignness. Though British burial grounds were, for all intents and purposes, creating a permanent home in India, Britons felt themselves outsiders and visitors all the same. And although they had long dismissed such liabilities of empire and exploration by asserting that these inconveniences were merely temporary, as the nature of Britain's role in India appeared to change in the early nineteenth century, the disposal of the dead – and the sense of conclusiveness and finality with which it was imbued – began to receive much greater attention.  As the century progressed, expressions of lament and longing not only multiplied, but came to form a central plank in subsequent commentary on Anglo-Indian and metropolitan mortality and burial provision.

It is interesting to note, however, that prior to the 1820s, as much as British travelers in India were concerned with the commemoration of their countrymen, they were no less fascinated by the burial rites of the native populations. Throughout his travelogue, *Oriental Memoirs: Selected and Abridged from a Series of Familiar Letters written during Seventeen Years Residence in India*, East India Company writer and

draughtsman James Forbes (1749-1819), wrote repeatedly of Hindu and Muslim burial practices. In at least one case, he even felt compelled to illustrate his observations, presenting what can only be described as a picturesque rendering of mourning Muslim women.[7] Set amongst a thick grove of "cocoa-nut" trees and lush greenery, next to a tranquil river, the still waters of which appear to glimmer at daybreak, "The Mausoleum of Bawa Rahan, near Baroche" portrays a small group of women stoically focused on a collection of gravestones (figure 2). It was, for Forbes, a "moving scene soon after sun rise," one in which the peculiar foliage and dense shade only magnified the touching devotion of mourners tending to the graves of the deceased. According to the caption of the plate,

> The fore-ground represents the Mahomedan women, on the anniversary of the death of a husband, child, or relative, strewing the grave with mogrees [jasmine] and other fragrant flowers; at the approach of the night they place a few lamps round the tomb, and pass the hours in the melancholy pleasure of tender recollection.[8]

In this regard, Baroche was far from unique. Forbes found "the amiable propensities of the female character," displayed in Muslim cemeteries throughout the country, as the bereaved retired "to these consecrated spots… 'with fairest flowers to sweeten the sad grave.'"[9]

> The remains of Mahomedan mosques and splendid tombs, embosomed in the Brodera groves, add a sombre beauty to the scenery near the capital.

[7] James Forbes*, Oriental Memoirs: Selected and Abridged from a Series of Familiar Letters written during Seventeen Years Residence in India: including Observations on Parts of Africa and South America, and a Narrative of Occurrences in four India Voyages* 4 vol. (London: White, Cochrane, Horace's Head, 1813).

[8] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 2, Plate 53 and vol. 4, 367.

[9] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 3, 125. Forbes is paraphrasing Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, where to the presumably dead body of Imogen, Arviragus pledges his intention to remember: "With fairest flowers / Whilst summer lasts… / I'll sweeten thy sad grave." Act IV, ii, *Cymbeline*.

They contain many superb mausoleums to the memory of wealthy Moguls, and humbler tombs, or graves of turf, for the inferior classes… The grand tombs are often splendidly illuminated; but the meanest heap of turf has its visitors to chant a requiem, light a little lamp, suspend a garland, or strew a rose, as an affectionate tribute to departed love, or separated friendship.[10]

Figure 2

Forbes was not the only artist to see the picturesque potential of India's sepulchral landscape, nor was he unique in choosing to highlight the grief of Muslim women.[11]

[10] Forbes, *Oriental* Memoirs, vol. 3, 125.

[11] While Hodges remains one of the better-known Romantic artists of India, Forbes can rightly claim, as he did, to be one of the first. Thus, without access to his unpublished manuscript, it is difficult to say whether Forbes's drawing and/or oil painting pre- or post-dated Hodges rendering (loosely, of course, the purported locations are on opposite sides of the country). Forbes had few artistic counterparts in Bombay, who gravitated in the eighteenth century, as Douglas Fordham has recently noted, to the wealthier and more established east coast communities of Madras and Calcutta. Indeed, Forbes' lay renderings had no rival until professional portrait painter James Wales reached Bombay in 1791. See Douglas Fordham, "Costume

Twenty years before Forbes's *Oriental Memoirs* appeared in print – though not necessarily before Forbes's drawing was produced – the well-known landscape painter William Hodges (1744-1797) published a similar rendering of devoted mourners in his *Travels in India*. Hodges took a keen interest in native Indian funerary landscapes and monuments, which were plentiful along the Ganges in northeastern India, where he traveled under the patronage of Warren Hastings between 1780 and 1783.[12] Ten years later, when *Travels in India* appeared in print, readers were treated to illustrated tales of adventure and exploration in a strange land filled with forts and palaces, temples and tombs. As Hodges was fond of peppering his contemporary landscapes with allusions to antiquity, he must have been thrilled by the ease with which the Muslim funeral rites and burial grounds seemed to invoke certain classical precedents.[13] For example, Muslims, like the ancient Greeks, traditionally buried their dead outside the city. The tombstones along the road from Bauglepoor to Mongheir in Bihar thus called to mind for Hodges the ancient practice of separating the living from the dead. For Hodges, these similarities with Western traditions only made it more curious and captivating to see Muslim women visiting the tombs at night, "proceeding in groups, carrying lamps in their hands, which they place at

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Dramas: British Art at the Court of the Marathas," *Representations* 101 (Winter 2008): 81 and Pauline Rohatgi, "Early Impressions of the Islands: James Forbes and James Wales in Bombay, 1766-95," in *Bombay to Mumbai: Changing Perspectives*, ed. Pauline Rohatagi, Pheroza Godrej and Rahul Mehrotta (Mumbai, 1997), 58-76.

[12] When Hodges returned to London in 1783, he exhibited a series of these travel images, consisting of twenty-five paintings and eight acquaints at the Royal Academy, subsequently published between 1785 and 1788 as *Select Views in India*.

[13] Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill, ed., *William Hodges, 1744-1797: The Art of Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), esp. Natasha Eaton, "William Hodges' Visual Genealogy for Colonial India," in Geoff Quilley, "William Hodges, Art and Empire," *History Today* 54, no. 7 (July 2004): 46-53 and Isabel Combes Steube, *The Life and Works of William Hodges* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979), "Biographical and Critical Essay," 2-78.

the head of the tomb: the effect, considered in a picturesque light, is highly beautiful; with that of sentiment, it is delightful."[14]

Hodges's use of the language of the picturesque here is particularly instructive. As John Marriott has recently noted, "In an act that became of singular importance to the appropriation of the remote in the late eighteenth century, landscapes and people were also seen primarily in visual terms." Following Marriott's logic, it should come as no surprise to find that Forbes, Hodges, Thomas (1749-1840) and William Daniell (1769-1837) among others spoke of native funerary sites and rituals first and foremost as images.[15] Whether framed in relation to the sublime, the beautiful, or the picturesque, it seems that late-eighteenth century Britons appreciated, or at the very least comprehended, Muslim burial grounds, Hindoo burning grounds, and the exposure towers of the Parsees in terms of their visual qualities. Rather than reminding them of the inherent sorrow of death, as did the gravesites of their countrymen and women, witnessing the burial practices of native populations gave rise, in contrast, to an odd sort of aesthetic appreciation.

In some cases, however, this visual appropriation of the remote served to remind Britons of the failings of their own culture. Published anonymously in London in the spring of 1789, by prolific novelist, widow, and mother of three, Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House,*

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[14] Hodges, *Travels in India*, 28.

[15] John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India, and Progress in the Colonial Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 78. For more on Hodges's sepulchral iconography see Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* and Harriet Guest, *Empire, Barbarism, and Civilisation: James Cook, William Hodges, and the Return to the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

*Calcutta* offered one of the earliest treatments of British sepulchral landscapes in India.[16] The novel takes the form of a series letters written by Sophia Goldborne, a young, unmarried Englishwoman accompanying her father, a captain in the East India Company, to Calcutta between 1784 and 1786, to her friend Arabella back home. Most likely based on the actual correspondence Gibbes held with her son stationed in Calcutta, the work was frequently cited by reviewers at the time as "an accurate, even firsthand, account" of the burgeoning British outpost.[17] Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, found it "an entertaining account of Calcutta… probably sketched by a person who had been forcibly impressed by the scenes described;" the letters, she wrote, read as if the "ground-work of the correspondence was actually written on the spot… but afterwards touched up."[18] Wollstonecraft's response was far from unique. The veracity of Sophia's "eyewitness account" of Calcutta in "the days of Warren Hastings," was rarely challenged.[19] Perhaps

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[16] In 1804, what is thought to be year or two before she died in poverty, Gibbes appealed to the Royal Literary Fund for assistance, where as Michael Franklin notes, she claims to have "published no fewer than 'twenty-two sets' of novels, some books for children, translations from the French and articles for the *London Magazine*." See Michael J. Franklin, ed., introduction to *Hartly House, Calcutta*, by Phebe Gibbes (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), British Library MSS: Royal Literary Fund 2: p. 74, letter of 14 October 1804. For more on Gibbes' application to the Royal Literary fund see Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy ed., *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 420.

[17] Franklin, introduction to *Hartly* House, 6.

[18] [Mary Wollstonecraft], *Analytical Review* 4 (June 1789): 145-147. The *Critical Review* found *Hartly House* a pleasurable and "accurate description of Bengal and its capital, Calcutta." "*Hartley* [sic] *House, Calcutta*," *Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* 68 (August 1789): 164 and *Critical Review* 1 no. 2, (February 1812): 200-205.

[19] The work was not subtitled "A Novel of the Days of Warren Hastings" until John Macfarlane's edited reprint of the original 1789 edition appeared on bookshelves in 1908. Following the long-standing oversight regarding the novel's name, was a more pernicious failure to properly classify its genre. Indeed, even today one occasionally finds *Hartly House* cited as non-fiction tout court, though in the wake of Isobel Grundy's 1992 attribution of its authorship to Gibbes, such oversights have greatly diminished. For more details on the life and writings of Gibbes, see Grundy, "'The Barbarous Character we Give Them': White Women Travellers Report on Other Races," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 22 (1992): 73-86; Michael J. Franklin, ed. "Introduction." Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press,

this was because *Hartly House* was filled with lively, detailed descriptions of the sights and sounds of the colonial city. Sophia Goldborne, the book's protagonist, seemed to take great pleasure in constructing images of the people, places and things she encountered in her daily travels. Weddings, for instance, were "very joyous things to all parties," particularly, she wryly noted, for the clergyman, who regularly "receive[d] twenty gold mohrs for his trouble of performing the ceremony."[20] Likewise, funerals, Sophia informed her friend, were "solemn and affecting things at Calcutta." The dead – regardless of their social standing – were conveyed to their graves, not in hired hearses, but upon the shoulders of their countrymen, and were laid to rest not in the presence of hired mourners induced by emoluments, but those compelled by affection, or at least convention.[21] Of course, funeral obsequies within the British enclave were less commercial than their metropolitan counterparts not for lack of want, but for the unusual suddenness with which death struck Britons in late eighteenth century Calcutta, Bengal, or elsewhere in India, "a friend is dined with one day, and the next in eternity."[22]

For my own purposes, though, it is Sophia's fascination with the burial grounds of Calcutta that is of particular interest. In an early letter she approvingly notes that the

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2007), xi-lvii.

[20] Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta*, ed. Michael J. Franklin (1789; repr., New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 117.

[21] Gibbes, *Hartly House*, 142. Though unconventional by metropolitan standards, Gibbes found no fault with women's routine presence at the funerals and graveside committals of their compatriots in India. Fifty years later, Emma Roberts was far more concerned to see the "perils to be encountered by delicate women, exposed to mental and bodily suffering in a manner considered so unnecessary on the land of their birth." Emma Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society*, vol. 2 (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co., 1835), 54.

[22] Gibbes, *Hartly House*, 143.

“house of prayer, at Calcutta, is not the house of sepulchre.” Unlike London, where complaints about the proximity of the living and the dead were becoming increasingly common, in Calcutta the dead were completely separated from the living, sequestered “some miles” away in their own accommodations. The reason for this distance may have been practical, she suggested, a pragmatic response to the rapid onset of putrefaction in the “fervid heat” of the tropical climate, where death was, as she put it, “busy.” Whatever the practical reason for this separation, Sophia wondered if it might also have been a boon to the spiritual lives of the town’s people. The sensibilities of many persons are so much affected by the sight of funeral processions which almost every evening wend their way to the burial-ground of Calcutta, as to render them unwilling to live on Park Street.

Even if it was ultimately attended by no ill-effects, might Britons not have been “disgracing the temple of the Divinity,” she asked, by making it “a charnel-house?” Unlike the later British missionaries who condemned the Protestant burial grounds for their apparent lack of religious sentiment, Gibbes suggests that the removal of burial from the churchyard in the end augmented the solemnity of both spaces.[23]

It is worth noting this quick transition from public health to questions of religious propriety, for the dead in Calcutta had not always been “some miles” from the living. Prior to the opening of the “Great Burying Ground,” on the outskirts of Calcutta at Chowringhee in August 1767, most Protestant Britons were interred with little question much closer to the center of town in the graveyard adjacent Calcutta’s hospital. A year before the new sepulcher welcomed its first tenant, Council House writer John Wood, the

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[23] Objections to interment within British church vaults were certainly not unheard of by the 1780s, and are discussed at length in Chapter 5.

Board of Fort William wrote to Leadenhall Street proclaiming the old graveyard near St. John's, "very detrimental to the Health of the Inhabitants," with "health" being defined quite broadly.[24] "Situate[d] in the middle of the Town," the existing burial provision threatened the living as a centrally located source of corrupted air. As much as popular fears of miasmatic emanations made proximity a concern, however, the burial ground's limited extent – it was said to be "too much confined" – was seen as perhaps an even greater threat to the memory of the dead. The Company's civil architect, Bengal army officer John Fortnom, of the famed Piccadilly tea shop extraction, was therefore "directed to point out a more convenient Situation for one to be made of proper Dimensions."[25]

Thus established on grounds of both hygiene and propriety, the new cemetery proved particularly compelling to Sophia, who took great pleasure in relating its details to Arabella once she had paid it a visit. The "air of neatness, that proof of unabating attention," which saturated the "Great Burying Ground," as it was known in the 1780s and 90s, was said to remind Sophia of Gray's country churchyard where "many a holy text around is strewed."[26] Within the colonial cemetery's walls, memory was explicitly celebrated and reverently tended. Set amongst the "fields" (or "swamps" for subsequent

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[24] The space presently known as "South Park Street Cemetery," opened its gates in late summer, just in time in to accommodate the annual havoc wrought during the monsoon season. See P. Thankappan Nair, introduction to *The Bengal Obituary, or A Record to Perpetuate the Memory of Departed Worth, Being a Compilation of Tablets and Monumental Inscriptions from Various Parts of Bengal and Agra Presidencies*, by Holmes and Co. (1848; repr., Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1991), vii.

[25] (Governor and Council to Court of Directors, 28 Nov 1766, para. 64) *Fort William: India House Correspondence*, vol. 4, C. S. Srinivasachari, ed. (Delhi, National Archives of India, 1962), 451.

[26] Gibbes adapted a line of Gray's *Elegy*: "And many a holy text around she strews," l. 83. 1751. On Gray and funerary writing see Armando Petrucci, *Writing the Dead: Death and Writing Strategies in the Western Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Elizabeth Barry, "From Epitaph to Obituary: Death and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century British Culture," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (2008): 259-275; and Max Cavitch, "Death's Histories," *Early American Literature* 39, no. 1 (2004): 137-145.

Britons), the site offered a nearly indescribable beauty:

> Obelisks, pagodas, &. are erected at great expence; and the whole spot is surrounded by as well-turned a walk as those you traverse in Kensington Gardens, ornamented with a double row of aromatic trees, which afford a solemn and beautiful shade: in a word, not old Windsor church-yard, with all its cypress and yews, is in the smallest degree comparable to them: and I quitted them with unspeakable reluctance.[27]

How sharp was the contrast between these lovingly tended graves in Calcutta and the inattention and disregard displayed in London and Paris. In England, Sophia had been appalled by the "crusts of dust which disgrace the labours of the sculptor in that first of royal sepulchres, Westminster Abbey," and "the astonishing insensibility of the French," for whom, with the exception of their kings, "not a stone tells where they lie." That "the fairest, the bravest, and the best, are unlike unnoticed and unremembered," was a "Strange and unaccountable circumstance!" For this reason she could not help but be struck by "the affectionate fancy displayed in commemorating a departed friend" in the colony; it appeared to her almost as a kind of "melancholy entertainment."

At the same time, Sophia assured Arabella that the delight of visiting the burying ground had not overwritten the memory of her "dear mother's sacred remains." If anything, the new cemetery had evoked even stronger feelings of loss and remembrance; Sophia beheld her mother's "hallowed tomb," and paid "the best tribute" in her "poor power to her beloved memory!" She reminded Arabella of their visit to St. Pancras churchyard and the "sensations" evoked as they saw "deposited the sacred and beloved

[27] The cemeteries and their surroundings, which Gibbes/Sophia generously dubbed "fields" in the 1780s, would subsequently be recast – especially in the wake of the outbreak of "Asiatic" cholera in the 1820s – in a more sinister light as pestilential sources of disease and debility. Nevertheless, this swamp-land occupied prime real-estate and as the population of Calcutta grew, would be drained and again refitted as the desirable Anglo-Indian neighborhood of Chowringhee, with its tree-lined streets and spacious homes enclosed by lush gardens (as depicted by Mary Sherwood in the 1820s).

remains of infancy, of youth, of maturity, and of age."[28] But while the metropolitan churchyard resembled the imperial burial ground "in monumental erections," the Calcutta grounds bore "melancholy testimony to… the short date of existence in this climate. 'Born just to bloom and fade,' is the chief intelligence you receive from the abundant memorials of dissolved attachments and lamented relatives."[29] Nevertheless, though the "eastern world" was, as Arabella and countless Britons had pronounced, "the grave of thousands," Sophia was ultimately optimistic[30]: "[Was] it not also a mine of exhaustless wealth! the centre of unimaginable magnificence! an ever blooming, an ever brilliant scene?"[31]

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[28] Gibbes, *Hartly House*, 143. Sophia is most likely referring to the churchyard of St. Pancras Old Church (known simply as St. Pancras Church until St. Pancras New Church was opened on Euston Road adjacent Bloomsbury in 1822). During the eighteenth century, the church's primary function was burial (the parish's population having long since migrated northward to Kentish Town), and its churchyard was enlarged numerous times over the course of the century. And while Dickens drew not to the churchyard as fertile ground for body-snatchers in *A Tale of Two Cities*, as it was disturbed in the construction of the railways, it was home to some monuments of well-heeled Londoners like Sir John Soane. See "St. Pancras Old Church," *Survey of London, vol. 19: The Parish of St Pancras, pt. 2: Old St Pancras and Kentish Town* (1938), 72-95 and W. E. Brown, "St. Pancras Open Spaces and Disused Burial Grounds," *Illustrated London News* (10 June 1848), 20.

[29] Gibbes embellished her assertion of limited imperial life spans with an aria from a popular theatrical piece performed in London between 1761 and 1769, Isaac Bickerstaff's [also Bickerstaffe] oratorio *Judith*. See Bickerstaff, *Judith, a Sacred Drama. As it is performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane. The music composed by Dr. Arne.* (London: J. Coote and T. Davies, 1761), 11; Peter A. Tasch, *The Dramatic Cobbler: The Life and Works of Isaac Bickerstaff* (Bucknell University Press, 1972), 40-42 and René Guiet, "An English Imitator of Favart: Isaac Bickerstaffe," *Modern Language Notes* 38, no. 1 (January 1923): 54-56.

[30] Gibbes, *Hartly House*, 1. A number of recent demographic studies point to the distinct improvement in mortality in metropolitan Britain during the later eighteenth century. While differing in their assessments of causality or import, most scholars agree that there was a general decline in adult, child and infant mortality between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. See especially John Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London, 1670-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); E. A. Wrigley, "British Population during the 'Long' Eighteenth Century," *Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, vol. 1, *Industrialisation, 1700-1860*, Roderick Floud and Paul A. Johnson, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 57-95; Wrigley, R. S. Davies, J. E. Oeppen and R. S. Schofield (1997), *English Population History from Family Reconstitution, 1580-1837* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 322-343; E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1971* (London: Arnold, 1981). Likewise, mortality rates in India are agreed to have declined from the mid-century. See Sudipta Sen*, Distant* Sovereignty, 127; P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 218-219.

[31] Gibbes, *Hartly House*, 1-2.

In his recent discussion of British burial and commemorative practices in eighteenth century Calcutta, Robert Travers argues that, for Gibbes and others, spaces of burial served as projections of British power in the burgeoning outpost of empire. Sophia's "invocation…of metropolitan comparisons for the Calcutta cemetery suggests how funerary architecture was a means for cultivating a metropolitan style in the new capital city of British India."[32] Yet, it is important to note that when Gibbes/Sophia writes of the "Great Burying Ground," she does so not to praise it for maintaining the lofty standards of its metropolitan counterparts. After all, as she makes quite clear, many British (and European) graveyards were coming to be known as disheveled and insalubrious spaces unfit for remembrance and meditation, let alone emulation. Instead her description evokes, on one hand, a tidy urban ground peopled with well-heeled tenants, and on the other, an idyllic country burial ground, storied for its proximity to and affinity with the famed churchyard of Gray's *Elegy*. In other words, for Gibbes, the "Great Burying Ground" was not so much a "means for cultivating a metropolitan style in…British India," but further proof that metropolitan burial practices had far too often fallen short of their own ideals.

By the time Sophia qualified Arabella's morbid appraisal, India in general and Bengal particular had ceased to be quite the death trap they had been during the time of Clive. Nevertheless, by comparison with the metropole, Arabella's contemporaries held Anglo-Indian communities in India to suffer from shocking rates of mortality. Death in

[32] Robert Travers, "Death and the Nabob: Imperialism and Commemoration in Eighteenth Century India," *Past and Present* no. 196 (August 2007): 114.

India to them seemed exceptionally violent, swift, and wasteful of human life, and dying abroad (often far from family and friends) was even more distressing than "at home." This notion of India as inherently dangerous was only partially shaken by the mid-nineteenth century, even as rates of death had fallen to a fraction of what they were a century earlier at the time of the Battle of Plassey.[33] In spite (or perhaps because) of gains in British morbidity from the first decades of the nineteenth century, it was in the figure of the graveyard, the visceral space of death, that reflections on the sacrifices attending life in India increasingly found form and voice.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise, then, to find that during this period, descriptions of British burial provisions increasingly found their way into travel narratives, with the observations of well-traveled Scot Maria Graham (1785-1842) among the earliest.[34] Written "for the amusement of an intimate friend," but published in Edinburgh as *Journal of a Residence in India* in 1812, Graham's account related the details of scenes and characters she encountered travelling between Bombay, Calcutta and Madras from

[33] For more on intersection between climate and death see Mark Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India, 1600-1850* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999); Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[34] While women's observations of India would proliferate throughout the course of Britain's involvement in the subcontinent, Graham's *Journal* was the first to be published in the nineteenth century and the third – behind Jane Smart's 1743 *Letter from a Lady in Madras to her Friends in London* and Jemima Kindersley's 1777 *Letters from Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East* – such publication by a British woman in general. For more on the writings of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British women in India, see Rosemary Raza's meticulous *In Their Own Worlds: British Women Writers and India, 1740-1857* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Jane Rendall, "The Condition of Women, Women's Writing and the Empire in nineteenth-century Britain," in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, ed. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101-121.

1809 to 1811.[35] Hoping to complement the existing body of writing on India – predominantly technical and scholarly tracts on the country's natural resources, commerce, political and military history – Graham offered what she called a "popular and comprehensive" account of "scenery and monuments…manners and habits of…natives and resident colonialists." And, quite interestingly, at least in the context of the present discussion, she devoted a considerable amount of attention to the colony's melancholic landscapes of death.

Writing of Calcutta in the autumn of 1810, Graham echoed the earlier sentiments of *Hartly House* when she exclaimed that its burial grounds, which she felt filled to capacity, bore "a melancholy testimony to… the short date of existence in this climate."[36] In the cemetery at the end of Burying Ground Road, contemporary South Park Street cemetery, she noted that there were, "many acres covered so thick with columns, urns, and obelisks, that there scarcely seems to be room for another."[37] The cemetery, crowded with "young men cut off in the first two or three years residence in this climate," had quickly become a city unto itself. Graham could not but feel an acute sadness for these young men, "accustomed in every triffiling illness to the tender solicitude of parents, of

[35] Such a disclaimer was common with women writers of the period. For, as Denise Comer puts it, "By casting [their] work as a private epistle rather than a public endeavor," accepted as possessing a greater attention to the minutiae of daily and life and a greater level of intimacy than social convention permitted in other genres. For more on the protections afforded by the epistolary form, see Amy Elizabeth Smith, "Travel Narratives and the Familiar Letter Form in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Studies in Philology* 95, no. 1 (1998): 77-96. On the spread of letter-writing and the 'epistolary literacy' of the eighteenth century see Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers, 1660-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[36] A French translation of *Journal of a Residence in India* was published in 1841 as the tenth volume of A. Duponchel's *Nouvelle Bibliothèque des Voyages.*

[37] See also Eric Gidal, "Civic Melancholy: English Gloom and French Enlightenment," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 23-45.

brothers, and of sisters," who died alone in such a distant outpost mourned only "by strangers!" Echoing, among others, the protagonist in "British Burial Grounds in India," as many soon would, Graham felt it "more sad to die in a foreign land than at home; and it is a superstition common to all, to wish their ashes to mingle with their native soil."[38]

Graham was struck by this combination of awe, consternation, and concern not only in response to the grand edifices of Calcutta's eighteenth century cemetery, but also before numerous British cemeteries throughout the subcontinent. Indeed, the subject of her fellow Britons' remote sepulture was well represented in the pages of her *Journal*.[39] The summer before she visited Calcutta she noted her perceptions of the "English" cemetery at Bombay, where she was more or less based during her tenure in India. It was walled in, well kempt and full of unread inscriptions "sacred to the memory of those who, to use the oriental style, 'had scarcely entered the garden of life, much less had they

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[38] The particular melancholy of dying abroad was a very popular topic in the 1820s and 1830s. Graham's emotional response to the thought of British kith separated by burial from their kin was far from unique. More than a hundred years after they were first published, Pope's lines in "Elegy to an Unfortunate Lady," on the tragedy of death amongst strangers, were routinely quoted in discussions of Britons dying abroad. And though protocols of mourning changed as Britain's empire grew progressively "sunnier" throughout the nineteenth century, Pope was increasingly seen as articulating one of the prime anxieties of empire. See Patricia Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 68-69.

[39] Although Graham's interest in sepulchral arrangements was clearly piqued by the sights she encountered in the subcontinent, her engagement with such matters was limited neither by geography nor by cultural conventions. The discussions in her 1812 *Journal* contain some of the earliest, if not *the* earliest, examples of what would become a standard element in her subsequent, South American writings, based on her travels in Brazil and Chile. In her 1824 travelogue on Brazil, Graham included a visual rendering of the English burial ground at Rio de Janeiro, which engraved by Edward Finden from a pen and ink drawing she made in October 1823. Graham, *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil and Residence there, during part of the years 1821, 1822, 1823* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green and J. Murray, 1824), 307. The image is included in Laurence Binyon's *Catalogue of Drawings by British Artists and Artists of Foreign Origin Working in Great Britain, preserved in Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (London: Longmans and Co., 1898), 185.

gathered its flowers.'"[40] The "pretty monuments" that filled the Christian cemetery at the nascent British settlement, much like their elder Bengali counterparts, offered for Graham a poignant testimony to the dangers of life in India. Further evidence of such unsettling transience was offered in the neighboring Portuguese, Armenian, Jewish and Muslim burial grounds, in addition to a small site for the infrequent interments of Hindus as well as a much larger funeral ghat, or "burning ground," for the more customary practice of inhumation. The great majority of Britons who died in Bombay, when Graham was writing in the early 1810s, were interred in what was the city's burial district, a veritable land of the dead. With scarcely fifty years to accumulate, the memorials and monuments within Sonapur cemetery could be appreciated on a carriage ride, as the "thick coco-nut wood," that "overshadowed" the cemeteries obscured the unpleasant sight of "the skulls and bones of the Hindoos who are burnt on the beach at low water" continually washing ashore.[41] All the same, Graham's aversion to the sight of human bones did not mean she was prejudiced against the religious practices that ensured their visibility. Identifying at turns with both colonizer and colonized, Graham was open-minded enough about Hinduism to admit that the area where *satis* were performed on the Mula river near Poonah, was "rendered picturesque by a number of tombs of a very pretty style of

[40] Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India,* 11 (August 15th, 1809) The monuments, much like Calcutta, were "mostly of chunam." In the absence of much stone, brick structures – from tombstones to bungaloos – were typically stuccoed with "chunam," a white lime of burnt shells. The surfaces of which, P. J. Marshall notes, "if "kept in good repair, the effect of glistening white buildings was very striking." P. J. Marshall, "The White Town of Calcutta under the Rule of the East India Company," *Modern Asian Studies* 34, no. 2 (May 2000): 317.

[41] Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 11 (Bombay, August 15, 1809). Anne Elwood corroborates Graham's mention of the Bombay burial grounds and the extensive cemetery: "The church at Bombay, which is situated in the fort, is by no means striking in its exterior, but its interior is rather handsome, and there are some good monuments ornamenting the walls." Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland to England*, vol. 2, 1830, 108 (Letter from Anne Katherine Curteis Elwood, 1825, 14).

architecture, and a few trees; and the whole country round is highly cultivated."[42] With the appropriate architecture and a few trees, it seems that even *sati's* funeral ghats became "picturesque."

Though she may have appreciated the visual pleasures of "suttee," Graham was not entirely at ease with the sepulchral sights of India. However charming she found Barrackpore, for instance, she nevertheless wrote in December 1810 that "notwithstanding its beauties… I look forward to returning to my friends at Madras." While mildly discomfited by the tableau of skeletal remains washing ashore at Bombay, the sights and sounds of "wild dogs" dismembering a body on the banks of the Hoogly river as a second bloated, ashen-faced corpse floated nearby was apparently too much for her to bear:

> Now, though I am not very anxious as to the manner of disposing of my body, and have very little choice as to whether it is to be eaten by worms or by fishes, I cannot see, without disgust and horror, the dead indecently exposed, and torn and dragged about through streets and villages, by dogs and jackals. Yet such are the daily sights on the banks of the Hoogly. I wish I could say they were the worst; but when a man becomes infirm, or has any dangerous illness, if his relations have the slightest interest in his death, they take him to the banks of the river, set his feet in the water, and, stuffing his ears and mouth with mud, leave him to perish, which he seldom does without a hard struggle; and should the strength of his constitution enable him to survive, he becomes a pariah; he is no longer considered as belonging to his family or children, and can have no interest in his own fortune or goods…[43]

However much it may have shifted, in other words, for Graham there was nonetheless still

[42] (Sungum Poonah, Dec. 20, 1809) Maria Graham, *Letters on India: with Etchings and a Map* (London: Longman, 1814), 73-74. India was only the first of Graham's many journey's abroad and indeed her notoriety and "high rank as a literary tourist" would only grow with the publication of South American travel narratives. See Jennifer Hayward, "No Unity of Design: Competing Discourse in Graham's *Journal of a Residence in Chile*," Graham's *Journal of a Residence in Chile during the Year 1822, and a Voyage from Chile to Brazil in 1823* (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 291-314.

[43] Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 148-149.

a line between ritual and reverence, neglect and desecration.

Following the renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1813, which "opened" the subcontinent to missionaries and free traders, few authors would share Graham's generous aesthetic appreciation of Hindu landscapes of death. The Company's orientalist attitude of the eighteenth century, when they took a laissez-faire approach to indigenous peoples, cultures and institutions in hopes of preserving peace, was quickly replaced by an active policy of anglicanization. A reforming fervor that sought to remake India in the image of the West supported the construction of English courts and schools, English language instruction, and English religious instruction. In this context, evangelicals cited Hindu death rituals as evidence that it was "a religion of gross superstition and extreme physical suffering."[44] This was not, of course, just a matter of making Indians more English, creating Macaulay's intermediary class of mimic men, for there was also quite often a distaste for the way Britons in India conducted themselves. One can see this quite clearly in Graham's 1814 *Letters on India*, where she delved deeper into the question of British burial abroad, positioning Muslim fidelity to the dead in contrast to transgressions of her countrymen and women.

> Throughout the East, a tomb is not, as with us, left neglected amid a crowd of others, where the bat 'folds his dank wing' on the over-spreading yew, but placed in gardens of public resort, where the placid joy diffused by the charms of nature combine with the remembrance of the departed friend, and mellow our grief for his loss, into that softer feeling, which, as the twilight reminds us of the departed sun but to give us hope of his again

[44] David Arnold, *The Tropics and the Traveling Gaze: India, Landscape and Science, 1800-1856* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 69 and "Deathscapes: India in an Age of Romanticism and Empire, 1800-1856," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 26, no. 4 (December 2004): 350.

rising, persuades us that our separation is not eternal.[45]

In these well-kempt "gardens of public resort," remembrance of the dead was not only encouraged, it was also prevented from becoming overly melancholic. There one was reminded that, ultimately, the sorrow felt in the absence of a friend or loved one is merely temporary. As the night points inevitably toward the dawn, a properly formed burial ground could move one just as swiftly toward thoughts of paradise.

It is fascinating to consider that as Graham's generally positive assessments were beginning to appear in print in England, so too were Forbes's – though his would be heavily amended in accordance with his strident (Anglican) Evangelicalism. A year after the first volume of Graham's writings was published in England, Forbes published the first installment of his four-volume *Oriental Memoirs*. Though substantial enough to secure his election as Fellow of the Society in 1803, the original thirteen-volume manuscript, which Forbes described as "the principal recreations of my life," had languished on his shelves for almost a decade.[46] Nearly fifty years after he first sailed to Bombay with a writer's appointment in 1765 (and nigh two decades after he returned to Britain a wealthy man of thirty-five), Forbes paired his eighteenth century impressions of India with his nineteenth century reflections on the journey in a highly condensed and sanitized work.[47]

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[45] Graham, *Letters on India,* 151.

[46] R. W. Home, "The Royal Society and the Empire: the Colonial and Commonwealth Fellowship Part 1. 1731-1847," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 56 (2002): 323.

[47] Forbes accounted for this long interval simply by suggesting that a "variety of new and interesting matter, collected from valuable and accurate resources," induced him to alter the original form of his impressions "and present them to the world in the shape of a connected narrative." This, he felt, offered sufficient explanation for "the epistolary style, occasional repetitions, and want of connexion," pervading the text.

He had arrived in Bombay as Clive accepted the *Diwani*, or tax collection, for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and left in 1784 as Sir William Jones founded the Asiatick Society of Bengal and Pitt's India Act asserted Parliamentary control over the Company's activities. During this period of Orientalism and Warren Hastings, a period of immeasurable opportunities for the accumulation of immense wealth, Forbes had penned an eyewitness account to dramatic changes in the Company and the intellectual and cultural climate of India. This shift from "trading partner to ruling power," as Kate Teltscher puts it, was, like Forbes's text itself, not a linear, orderly and inevitable narrative of colonialism and British imperial policy, but rather a fragmentary record of the ever-changing anxieties on the nature and rectitude of empire.[48] And it is precisely the contradictions and inconsistencies marking Forbes's text, particularly the unstable representations of native and Anglo-Indian sites of mortality and memory that make *Oriental Memoirs* so valuable.

Though Forbes's time in India came to an end when he was thirty-five, he was far from writing his last word on the subcontinent. As he had "filled early in life several honourable and important stations in different parts of India," the *Gentleman's Magazine* lauded the opportunity that such youthful retirement afforded Forbes not only to "enjoy the sweets of domestic life," and pass "hours of leisure…in vast literary labours…and genuine hospitality, in the bosom of a family and numerous circle of friends," but also to propagate the habits and manners born out of a lengthy residence among people

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*Oriental Memoirs,* 1813, vol. 1, x.

[48] Kate Teltscher, "India/Calcutta: City of Palaces and Dreadful Night," in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 192.

worshipping strange gods."[49] By the time of his death in 1819, Forbes had come to be considered, in the words of that same "solid and serious" periodical, a fit specimen of Victorian man: "his piety was most distinguished—his virtue most active—his charity unbounded…the sensibility of his nature was uncommon to the latest period of his life, and only equalled [sic] by the strength of his intellectual faculties, and by every manly and Christian virtue."[50] The strength of Forbes's piety and devotion, numerous reviewers noted, was even more impressive given his limited access to formal religious services during much of his time in India. Throughout his residence in western India, there were seldom more than two chaplains attached to the entire Bombay presidency.[51] Worse still were the four years between 1780 and 1784 that Forbes spent as Company revenue collector in the Dhuboy district of *Guzerat*, during which he suffered near total "privation of all the sacred ordinances of Christianity, and from attendance on public worship." The situation brought him so much despair that Forbes even noted more than once his envy of the "peaceful Hindoos" who found such conviviality and contentment in the "performance of their religious duties, and the delights of social worship."[52] Though he had "no personal

[49] "James Forbes, ESQ. F. R. S.," *Gentleman's Magazine* 89, no. 2 (August 1819): 179. Of the strength of Forbes' ties to India, Douglas writes: "India was all to him and he was nothing without India." (Douglas, vol. 1, 414).

[50] "James Forbes," *Gentleman's Magazine*, 179-180. Though still trustworthy, by the early nineteenth century, "in the world of the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*," as Cornelius P. Darcy has noted, the *Gentleman's Magazine* was "no longer very consequential." See Darcy, "The Gentleman's Magazine," in Alvin Sullivan, *British Literary Magazines* vol. 1 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 136-140.

[51] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs* 1813, vol. 1, 152. In this regard, Bombay was perhaps, better equipped/ more advanced that the wealthier Presidency in Bengal. It was not until the arrival of Rev. David Brown (1763-1812) in 1786 that Calcutta got its first chaplain.

[52] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs,* 2nd ed., 1834, vol. 1, 523-524.

intercourse with one kindred mind," he insisted that his faith was never "seduced by the charms of religious indolence."

The strident evangelicalism underpinning Forbes' later condemnation of "Hindoo depravity" lends, as Ketaki Dyson has noted, a "curious editorial layer" to his "original youthful fascination with India." In fact, as Dyson notes, Forbes's text is marked by "an almost schizophrenic split between a romantic attraction towards India and an Evangelical revulsion from Hinduism."[53] Forbes had been back from India nearly thirty years when *Oriental Memoirs* finally appeared in print, and in that time he had undergone a complete ideological reversal. Thus, many of the inconsistencies contained in the final manuscript were the result of what John Marriott describes as the "profound shift in consciousness from an orientalist sympathy with Indian culture, to a hard-line evangelical condemnation of it." This turn in Forbes's thought should come as no surprise, as evangelical Christianity had come to play a central role in the culture that greeted him when he returned from India in 1784, offering the opportunistic nabob a nearly seamless entry into metropolitan polite society. He quickly joined the debates over the nature and necessity of missionary work in India, immersing himself in a study of all things India, particularly keen to develop the historic and liturgical reasoning behind the abhorrence for Hinduism he developed while there. In 1810 he published what would be the final volume of his magnum opus:

[53] Ketaki Kushari Dyson, *A Various Universe: A Study of the Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian Subcontinent, 1765-1856*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 31, 181. For Nigel Leask, Forbes's "conversion to the cause of Indian evangelization provided a lens through which the 'second empire' could contemplate the strengths and weaknesses of the first." Leask*, Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: From an Antique Land* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 178.

*Reflections on the Character of the Hindoos; and on the Importance of Converting them to Christianity*, in which he advocated conversion to reform all non-Christian peoples.[54]

The fascination with the Indian landscape and people that led him to produce drawings like the one of the Mausoleum of Bawa Rahan was, he assured his readers, short-lived. Any interest or fascination his early writings conveyed was only the result of having "related events as they occurred, without much reflection." So charmed by the novelty of the scene was he, that like so many travelers, he "might have viewed passing events superficially, and formed hasty conclusions." While initially taken with "the gentle, the pure, the benign, the devout," the "simple manners of the Brahmins… and the liberal sentiments of ruling Mahomedans," these first impressions ultimately failed to withstand further scrutiny. "There was a time," he recalled, when ignorant of Hindu depravity and degradation, he "loved and venerated the character of a Brahmin, leading a tranquil, innocent, and studious life, under the sacred groves which surrounded his temple."[55] Anticipating questions regarding the "seeming alteration" in his "opinion of the Hindoo character," Forbes explicitly noted that his "sentiments changed progressively" as he "became more acquainted with the higher castes of Hindoos." Unlike many of his contemporaries – Bishop Heber being one of the most notable – rather than developing a greater appreciation for Indian society over the course of his stay, the longer Forbes remained in India, the less goodwill he could muster for its peoples.

[54] James Forbes, *Reflections on the Character of the Hindoos; and on the Importance of Converting them to Christianity, Being a Preface to, and Conclusion of, a Series of Oriental Letters which will be shortly Published* (London: 1810).

[55] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 4, 304.

And nowhere was the distinction between orthodox and idolatrous more readily apparent for Forbes than in the disposition of the remains of the dead.[56] In other words, while Enlightenment philosophes and French revolutionaries had insisted that, as Margaret Fields Denton and others have noted, "respect for the dead was a universal principle that was present in even the most primitive societies," for Forbes and many of his contemporaries it was not that simple.[57] While in India, Forbes seemed to believe that, if anything, the way a particular people chose to deal with the disposal of their dead functioned as something of a précis of their priorities and prejudices. However, when he returned to England in 1794, the notion of funerary rites as cultural decoder would progressively overlay, but never fully overtake, the universalizing sentiments of the Enlightenment. As the discourse of national distinctiveness, promulgated by Macaulay and his ilk, gained momentum throughout the first half of the century, it became increasingly problematic to accept that civilized men shared any instincts or impulses with the savage. These assessments most frequently turned on empire, and, as was the case for Forbes, often served as evidence of the need for the consolidation of British influence in India. Hindu funerary rites evinced for Forbes and many of his contemporaries the depravity and superstition oppressing the people of India. To suggest that these rites were somehow

[56] "The peculiar customs and modes of thought of various nations are in no respect more strikingly exhibited than in their different methods of disposing of the bodies of the dead. All nations so something towards their speedy destruction or removal. The mode of effecting this is varied by the peculiar manners or prejudices of almost every nation." "Cemeteries," *Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* 3, no. 134 (May 1834): 173. Such knowledge, the *Penny Magazine* informed its readers in 1837, could also be garnered at home; "The modes in which funerals are conducted in different parts of the United Kingdom are, to a certain extent, indicative of provincial characteristics." "A Looking-Glass for London," *Penny Magazine* 6, no. 361 (Nov. 1837): 444.

[57] Margaret Fields Denton, "Death in French Arcady: Nicolas Poussin's *The Arcadian Shepherds* and Burial Reform in France c. 1800," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 205-206.

comparable to the customs and protocols for managing death, the dead, and the emotions of the bereaved in Christian Britain seemed preposterous.

Yet, in contrast with the ephemeral Hindu practices and customs, the Muslim community of western India appeared to place great emphasis on marking the spaces of its dead. Muslims recognized, Forbes felt, the burial ground's significance as a site of memory. The Mughal tombs and Mahomedan burial grounds dotting the countryside were often thoughtfully landscaped, well kempt, and regularly visited (and if not, they contained evidence that they once had been). Thus, Forbes stressed the elaborate designs and intricate details of the "splendid tombs" and "superb mausoleums" of wealthy Moguls, which he described as "elegant," and "noble." He was particularly impressed by the Mahomedan tombs and mausolea of the deserted village of Betwah, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. All of the sepulcher, whether constructed of marble or stucco-covered stone was "exquisitely polished," their domes supported by "elegant columns," and "richly ornamented," concaves.[58] In fact, such was the beauty and propriety of these tombs that they rivaled those of Europe, their

> tessellated marble pavements, beautifully arranged vied with those of ancient Rome in the museum at Portici; the tracery in the windows resembled the Gothic specimens in European cathedrals; and the small cupolas which cover each tomb are of fine marble, curiously inlaid with fruit and flowers, in festoons of ivory, mother-of-pearl, cornelians, onyxes, and precious stones, as neat as in European snuff-boxes.[59]

[58] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 3, 101.

[59] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 2, 189.

In spite of this effusive praise, Forbes did manage to find fault with Muslim funerary rites, and on something other than scriptural grounds. The intense devotion they evinced, much as it gave rise to the melancholic displays he admired, often seemed to go too far, becoming simply unacceptable. In India, interactions with the deceased were not governed by the codes of behavior with which Forbes was familiar. As Patricia Phillipy argues, in England, the prescribed behavior since the sixteenth century was one of "moderate mourning," with women frequently rebuked for their refusal to restrain their grief. If a man were to violate this code of conduct, she writes, he would be "censure[d]…as feminine."[60] In Muslim funerary rites, however, rather than the restrained grief advocated by authors like Jeremy Taylor and Radford Mavericke, the emotions of the bereaved seemed to lie much closer to the surface.[61] The funeral lamentations of Gujarati Muslims and their Mahomedan brethren throughout the country, Forbes noted, cribbing heavily from John Weever's *Ancient Funeral Monuments*, bore resemblance to those in "Turkey, Persia, and Arabia," where "Widows and matrons, like the ancient *Prœfiœc*," were commonly hired "to weep and wail, and beat upon their breast with loud lamentations."[62] Though, it is worth noting, this was actually a widespread custom, practiced by the Greeks, Jews and Irish amongst "many other nations," Forbes found it

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[60] Patricia Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 25.

[61] Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (London: R.R. for William Ballard, 1651); Radford Maverick, "The Mourning Weede" in *Three Treatises Religiously Handled, and named according to the severall subiect of each treatise: The Mourning Weede. The Mornings Joy. The Kings Reioycing.* (London: John Windet, 1603).

[62] See John Weever, *Antient Funeral Monuments of Great Britain, Ireland and the Islands Adjacent* (London: London: W. Tooke, 1767), xvi, originally published in 1631 as *Ancient Funerall Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Islands Adjacent* (London: Thomas Harper, 1631). Citations refer to the W. Tooke edition.

difficult to accept in India all the same. The howling of "vociferous females" was so loud during one procession through the Baroche suburbs that Forbes said it "disturbed the tranquillity of our retreat" in nearby Vezelpoor. However traditional such "noisy exclamations" might seem, he nevertheless stressed the restrained nature of grief in Antiquity. The Roman poet Lucan, after all, alluded not to such demonstrative paroxysms, but "the dignified and affecting effusions of silent sorrow": "with hair dishevelled, and smitten breast, 'twas thus she spoke her grief.'"[63]

Author and traveller Emma Roberts (1794-1840), resident in the northern cities of Agra, Cawnpore and Calcutta from 1828 to 1832, had a very different impression of the post-mortem rituals of India's Muslim community. In her 1831 poem "Indian Graves," published in the *Oriental Observer*, Roberts first articulated what would quickly become one of her standard refrains – one she literally repeated in countless subsequent works. There she praised the careful tending of the "quiet mansions of the dead / The scattered graves where moslems lie." However unknown its tenants may have been, they were never so neglected as to admit the growth of weeds or the collection of rubbish, for

> …where the true believer sleeps.
> Some brother's hand, with pious care,
> The cumbered earth around him sweeps,
> And plucks the dark grass gathering there.[64]

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[63] For more on the importance of Lucan in nineteenth century discussions of death and disposal, see Thomas Laqueur, "Form in Ashes," *Representations* 104 (Fall 2008): 50-72.

[64] "Indian Graves" was included in the second edition of Robert's volume of poetry, *Oriental Scenes*, and, like all of the collection's verse, was accompanied by a set of explanatory notes. The prose version presents a more explicit contrast between the "most pleasing spectacles which India produces," and the "most dismal *memento mori* imaginable." Roberts claimed, as appears to be true, that her *Oriental Scenes* was the first volume of poetry written by a British woman in India: "It is, I believe, the first production of the kind, emanating from a female pen, which has issued from the Calcutta Press." Roberts, *Oriental Scenes*, iii.

Four years later, Roberts wrote that the “tombs of Hindostan have proved the most lasting memorials of the wealth, taste, and piety of its Moghul conquerors.”[65] She praised the “fine taste displayed by the Mohammedans in the selection of the site of their mausoleums.” “Chaste, magnificent, and solemn,” the beautifully and solidly crafted tombs at Allahabad and throughout India, resolutely weathered the “destroying hand of time.”

Roberts acknowledged the possibility that many Britons’ enthusiasm for native scenery may wane the longer they remained in India. Long-term residents of India, she wrote, would scarcely consider such an “inferior landscape to possess a particle of merit.” Still others, “disgusted with the country,” would “deny its claim to admiration altogether.” Nevertheless, Roberts advised all who visited Patna to experience the “perfect solitude” of this “lonely burial-ground,” which was “awe-inspiring” under the “crimson grandeur of the setting sun.” Even the effusive grief that so irritated Forbes was, for Roberts, instructive. Rather than artificial melodrama, the rituals evinced a touching fidelity to the dead almost entirely absent in the graveyards of her fellow countrymen and women, who lay “unwept, unhonoured, and unknown.” For Roberts, in other words, the Muslim burial grounds ultimately highlighted the sad, neglected state of both British and Anglo-Indian graveyards. She repeatedly spoke of the demonstrations of fidelity to the dead in relation to their complete absence from the cemeteries of her fellow Britons – both in the colony and the metropole. Roberts, a keen churchyard rambler in the style of Gray, was one of the more prolific British observers of graveyards and obsequies, and like many in the

[65] Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics*, vol. 2, 31.

1830s, she had come to feel a deep dissatisfaction with the apparent lack of respect Britons showed their departed. Both at home and abroad she saw the dead packed tightly into shabby spaces where tombstones and weeds competed for desirable real estate; she noted evidence of animal and/or surgical disinterment, and bodily remains visible to the naked eye. British burial grounds suggested that the dead were not being remembered, but simply ignored.

And while Roberts's concern for the state of British burial grounds might have made her writings seem right at home in London, Glasgow, or any other major British metropolis at the time, it was in fact something of an oddity in relation to the writings of other Britons in India. Following the 1813 Charter Act, which, as I have already mentioned, allowed for the presence of Christian missionaries in British India, the tone of British writings on subcontinental burying grounds changed dramatically. By the early 1830s, Anglo-Indian burial appears no longer to have been such a serious concern. Instead, one finds far more frequently open expressions of scorn for native burial practices. In this context, forceful condemnations of Muslim sepulture became nearly as common as those of Hindu rites. Characteristic of this new hostility was the assessment of Baptist missionary John Statham, in his 1832 *Indian Recollections*.

Based on the time Statham spent at Howrah between 1823 and 1827, *Indian Recollections* was fairly typical both in its support for an expanded missionary presence in India, and in its criticisms of the religious doctrines and practices of its native peoples. What made Statham's writings unique was the style of his prose, the language of horror and gothic attention to the grotesque and macabre that permeated his pronouncements on

the inhumanity and ignominy of indigenous religious customs and doctrines. For Statham, one incident in particular emblematized the otherwise unthinkable attitudes of Muslims toward their dead. One evening, he wrote, he had even witnessed a group of Muslim men violently exhuming what they took to be the corpse of a Company officer who had been buried for many years. The “two Mussulman dhooms,” apprehended for the offense, however, had “defamed the wrong individual,” casting not the officer who disturbed the graves of their brethren, but the body of a young pupil of Stratham’s who had only recently succumbed to sudden illness. Stratham was particularly, and rather virulently, insistent that these grudges were centrally characteristic of the ugly nature of the Muslim character.

What does one make of this transition from the fascinated curiosity of Roberts to the outright scorn of Stratham (to say nothing of the obvious shift in tone of Forbes’s later writings)? Is this merely an outgrowth of the transition in Anglo-Indian relations from trading partnership to an open colonial antagonism? Beyond a mere hardening of sympathies toward native peoples and practices of India, was this shift perhaps not also part of the broader reconfiguration of national historiography under way at the time? Put differently, it seems more than likely that these variances were inseparable from the evolving construction and codification of a definitive British past. Long before Macauley would codify, in the late-1830s, the notion that an increasing “concern” for the dead accompanied a people’s progress from barbarism to savagery – and eventually to civilization – had firmly taken root in the British psyche. Thus, in light of the travel writings and imagery discussed in this chapter, might one say that the changing landscape

not only of the British burial ground, but also of national historiography is indebted to the shifting impressions of the natives' funeral rites? Might these discussions of Anglo-Indian burial grounds point to the ways in which history and memory were invested simultaneously in pasts, presents, and futures?

– Chapter 4 –

## "Graves of Departed Happiness" Anglo-Indian Burial-Grounds go to the Jackals[1]

In April 1825, an essay in the *Kaleidoscope* declared that reverence for the dead was "universally recognized… founded in our very nature and condition… traced to human instincts, inseparable from humanity, and affecting alike rude and polite society… No race of people, however savage in other respects, has yet to be found callous to the natural impulse which dictates the funeral obsequies."[2] Indeed, in the 1820s, commentators across a wide spectrum of British society repeatedly spoke of reverence for the dead as an inherent truth, a "natural" behavioral instinct amongst civilized and savage societies alike. Respect for the dead and their places of rest was said to be a "natural and universal" feeling, "inherent in the human breast in all ages savage and civilized."[3] Less than five years later the *Gentleman's Magazine* published a letter from a reader commenting on the "shameless and indecorous" treatment of burial sites in the metropolis. The author, who signed his letter only "E. I. C.," expressed disgust over the

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[1] [Robert Grenville Wallace], *Fifteen Years in India; or, Sketches of a Soldier's Life; being an Attempt to Describe Persons and Things in Various Parts of Hindostan* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1822), 42.

[2] "Sequestered Burial-Places," *Kaleidoscope; or, Literary and Scientific Mirror* 5, no. 249 (April 1825): 333. It is not surprising that the radical/reform-minded weekly *Kaleidoscope*, a weekly paper that detailed the activities of Liverpudlian body-snatchers in the 1820s, quickly supported the proposed new cemetery. And its readers would have been familiar with this notion of reverence for the dead as a universal behavioral instinct of civilized and savage societies alike, as it assumed a central importance in the arguments, also printed in the *Kaleidoscope*, for new spaces of burial in Liverpool.

[3] Or, as a contemporary journalist put it, to respect the dead and their resting places was "a natural feeling born with us, and matured with our being." [Cyrus Redding], "Church-Yard Wanderings," *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 5, no. 19 (January 1822): 88.

way in which many burial grounds in London had been disturbed to make room for the bridges, markets, and roads of the growing metropolis.  As a result, what passed for a proper burial in contemporary Britain failed to meet even the standards of "savage" peoples.[4] Britons should have been ashamed, s/he wrote, for a "feeling of respect for the resting places of the dead has been inherent in the human breast in all ages savage and civilized; it is a feeling so natural and universal, that I fear not to appeal to it."[5]

At the very same time, interestingly enough, similar cries rang out in India. With so many dying so far from home as Britons progressively consolidated their stake in the country, more and more commentators began to stress the hitherto neglected, stabilizing function of the cemetery. Perhaps even more so than historically rooted communities at home, the shifting time and space of empire underscored the need for the cemetery to function as a secure site of remembrance. Not only was the Anglo-Indian cemetery apparently not treated as the communal anchor it might have been, in the 1820s and '30s its state rendered it incapable of commemorating the memory of the dead. As I have already demonstrated, British accounts of Indian cemeteries shifted dramatically in the 1820s, turning from an orientalist fascination to an evangelical scorn. In this chapter, therefore, I will begin to consider the question of whether there may have been a

[4] James M. Kuist, *The Nichols File of 'The Gentleman's Magazine': Attributions of Authorship and Other Documentation in Editorial Papers at the Folger Library* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 44. Carlos's interest in sepulture extended beyond the Interested in more than the preservation of memory/decorum and existing sepulcher Carlos was reviewed Kendall's sketches for Kensal Green in 1832: see "H. E. Kendall's *Sketches of the approved Designs of a Chapel and Gateway entrances, intended to be erected at Kensal Green for the General Cemetery Company*," *Gentleman's Magazine* 102, no. 2 (September 1832): 245-247.

[5] E. I. C. [Edward John Carlos], "On the Removal of Burial-grounds," *Gentleman's Magazine* 100 no. 1 (January 1830): 14.

connection between the growing intolerance of Hindoo/Muslim landscapes of death and the growing intolerance of existing British/European burial grounds. One could obviously point to the growing missionary presence in the colony, and calls for reform "at home," but what about changing conceptions of the British as a people? How was it that Britons – virtually unchallenged as a global superpower after Waterloo – should bury their dead in such disheveled environments? Was it truly inconceivable that Britons might be running against some purportedly universal human nature by so neglecting their departed? Beginning where the last chapter left off, with the writings of Emma Roberts, I would like to explore further the shifting evaluations of Anglo-Indian burial grounds in the 1820s and '30s, in the process raising a series of questions about the ways in which British anxieties regarding burial and commemoration related to the changing shape of empire.

Emma Roberts's great respect for the Muslim graveyards she encountered in India was rooted in a great, personal concern for the state of British burial practices. Indeed, she was so concerned with the state of British cemeteries in India that she devoted an entire chapter of her 1835 three-volume text, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan*, to the subject.[6] Throughout that chapter, Roberts seems simultaneously repulsed and fascinated by the deterioration of British cemetery landscaping. These spaces, she believed, were appropriate neither for the exercise of memory nor for eternal rest: "It is not often that the

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[6] Emma Roberts, "Cemeteries and Funeral Obsequies," in *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society*, vol. 2 (London: William H. Allen and Co., 1835), 34-65. For more on Roberts' preoccupation with Anglo-Indian mortality see David Arnold, *The Tropics and the Travelling* Gaze*: India, Landscape, and Science, 1800-1856* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), Rebecca M. Brown, "The Cemeteries and the Suburbs: Patna's Challenge to the Colonial City in South Asia," *Journal of Urban* History 29, no. 2 (December 2003): 151-173 and Máire ní Fhlathúin, "India and Women's Poetry of the 1830s: Femininity and the Picturesque in the Poetry of Emma Roberts and Letitia Elizabeth Landon," *Women's Writing* 12, no. 2 (2005), 187-204.

admiration of the visitor is excited by monumental remains of the Christian community in India; they consist, for the most part, of clumsy obelisks, stunted pyramids, nondescript columns of a great confusion of orders, and ill-proportioned pedestals bearing all sorts of urns."[7] The hodgepodge of styles and lack of order rendered the cemeteries incapable of evoking genuine emotion. But the poor quality and choice of sepulture were really only part of the problem. Roberts also proclaimed it "strange that…the European residents" had failed to do more, for "at a very small cost, [they] might render the places of interment destined for their brethren far less revolting than their present aspect." What was needed, she wrote, was an active plan of landscaping, and all that was required were "a few labourers attached to each cemetery" to keep the place "in order."[8] As the cemeteries were already blessed with many perennial flowers, it would not require much effort to dig up the "coarse dank grass" that "offered a harbour for snakes and other venomous reptiles" and convert "the whole into a blooming garden." What the Europeans needed, in other words, was "to reclaim the…qualities evident to writers of the previous generation, thus transforming the neglected sepulchral spaces into landscapes of devotion."[9]

Roberts was hardly alone in bemoaning the dilapidated state of Anglo-Indian burial grounds. In 1836, T. J. Taylor, an officer in the Madras Calvary, expressed a similar sentiment in his lengthy discourse on South Park Street cemetery published in the *Bengal*

[7] Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan*, vol. 2, 35. These sentiments rang so true for least one contemporary that he felt it worthwhile to reproduce her chapter in its entirety, though without giving any indication of its source. See Henry Bevan, *Thirty Years in India: or, A Soldiers Reminiscences of Native and European Life in the Presidencies from 1808 to 1838* (London: Pelham Richardson, 1839).

[8] Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics*, vol. 2, 36-37.

[9] Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics*, vol. 2, 37.

*Annual*. Proclaiming his expertise in burial grounds, Taylor tells his audience that he had "never passed a day, seldom remained even an hour, in any strange town or village, but what my first, often my only ramble, was to the old church-yard."[10] He was particularly familiar with South Park Street, he told the reader, for he had visited the cemetery once at "the hour of eve, calm, clear and beautiful" and again "at the sun-burst of morn—again at noonday—anon when fog and mist hung heavenly around, thus rendering the gloomy only gloomier," and finally "by moon-light when that sweet planet shone brightly o'er the scene, making the very tombs look holy." In his visits to the cemetery Taylor was troubled time and again by the lack of any real indication that those buried at South Park Street were actually remembered. The desolate burial ground offered little proof that the graves were ever visited after interment of the body. What had happened, he wondered, to those "simple votive offerings of affection which we contemplate with such pleasure in our church-yards at home; the simple slab, the rude yet homely poesie, the short but touching quotation from scripture?"[11] If one were to stumble across such a sign of devotion, he

[10] T. J. Taylor, "The Burial Ground – Calcutta," in *The Bengal Annual: a Literary Keepsake for MDCCCXXXVI*, ed. David Lester Richardson (Calcutta: Samuel Smith, 1836), 387-396. It is worth noting that while South Park Street was far from the only Anglo-Indian cemetery Taylor surveyed, it was however exceptional insofar as it won his admiration. "How many a beautiful and holy feeling is engendered by wandering amid tombs—by reading the simple and touching testimonials to beauty, love or virtue, and by meditating o'er these records of the past. It is an exercise and an indulgence of which however in India we are usually deprived—for in our burial grounds the monuments are few, monumental inscriptions less. There is in them little to melt the heart or touch the feelings. In our burial grounds there are no cypresses, 'those constant mourners o'er the dead'—the only true substitute for the dark and mournful yew—and flowers bloom not around the tombs: the walks are unswept, the weeds luxuriant, the grave stones all bearing an aspect of neglect and decay; and then too, as though in mockery of all this, the grave yards are locked. We are but indifferent mourners in this land of sun—the corse is no sooner laid in the ground than it appears to be forgotten, and you look in vain for the virgin weeping o'er her lover's tomb, or the mother kneeling beside the grave of her child. Here all is dank and drear and desolate. India has been often termed, 'The grave of talent'—might it not also be termed the grave of feeling, the tomb of the affections!" "Junius" [T. J. Taylor], *Recollections of the Deccan, with Miscellaneous Sketches and Letters* (Calcutta: G. H. Huttmann, 1838), 44.

[11] Taylor, "Burial Ground – Calcutta," 387-388.

explained, it would surely be the exception rather than the rule. "[A]fter wandering through the ground some time," he

> remarked a hurdled railing of rough sticks; [and] approached to ascertain its purport, and found it raised to protect from any incautious footfall the ashes of some humble dead. It was evidently no new grave, but the grass was but close, the weeds rooted out, the earth sloped gently o'er the mound, the rude hurdle neatly and carefully entwined; and there was about that simple tomb an air of piety and love, I sought in vain amid the piles around.[12]

Such a sign of devotion, Taylor believed, would not be uncommon in England; in the newly built Parisian cemetery at *Père la Chaise* it was "perhaps an every day occurrence." In "this country," however, it was "certainly…unusual: for in India the corpse is no sooner laid in the grave than it appears to be forgotten, and neither the tear of feeling nor the hand of affection bedew or decorate the sward, neath which the parent, the child, or the relative reposes." Anglo-Indian cemeteries were "the very essence of desolation. All appears as forlorn as the grave o'er which you pass—the tombs untended, the enclosures not weeded, the walks unswept."[13] For Roberts and Taylor, of course, the troublesome state of these burial grounds grew out of the general predicament facing virtually all Britons in India. Simply put, it was unrealistic to expect these men and women to observe the most basic customs of burial and memorialization in a land so far from home. Without a direct connection to family and friends – those who were, ultimately, responsible for the labor of mourning – proper remembrance was virtually impossible. For others, however, the problem lay not so much in the colonies' distance from "home," but in the particular

[12] Taylor, "Burial Ground – Calcutta," 391.

[13] Taylor, "Burial Ground – Calcutta," 391.

challenge that resulted from that distance – namely, encounters with racial and cultural difference.

John Howison (1797-1859), for example, detested India. The celebrated author of Gothic tales and foreign travels, found the country disappointing, dangerous and disagreeable. Any "delusive anticipations of a life of splendor and voluptuousness," entertained by the young adventurer were crushed within a week of his arrival in the country.[14] Physical and mental wellbeing suffered in the face of an unforgiving climate that endangered British bodies and enervated British minds. For Europeans, life in India was little more than "a succession of struggles against personal inconveniences and bodily uneasiness."[15] Particularly interesting for my own purposes, however, is the way that Howison seems to suggest that the discomfort of sub-continental existence was so profound that it persisted even in death.

In the second volume of his *Foreign Scenes and Travelling Recreations* (1825), Howison, twenty years Company surgeon in Bombay, pointed to the cantonment of Seroor's burial ground as representative of Britain's disheartening repositories of the dead in India. While "rather pleasingly situated," the graveyard suffered by virtue of its deviation from metropolitan norms. Unlike the majority of its metropolitan and provincial

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[14] Howison would seem to have shared Adam Smith's estimation of how frequently the young male traveller "comes home more conceited, more unprincipled, more dissipated, and more incapable of any serious application… than he could well have become in so short a time had he lived at home." While Johnson's quip that a "man who has not been in Italy, is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see," would doubtlessly have fallen on deaf ears. See *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. 2 (University of Chicago Press, 1970), 295, James Boswell, *Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson* (1773), William Hazlitt, "On Going on a Journey" (1822), "Notes of a Journey Through Italy and France" (1826).

[15] Howison, "Life in India," 74.

counterparts, the burial ground at Seroor lacked the "hallowing influence of a church… and the solemn shade of lofty trees," accouterments, Howison noted, that cast a "melancholy somberness" over the space and affected a sentiment widely held to be at harmony "with the purposes to which they are applied."[16]

Concern with this dearth of recognizable forms was more than a matter of peevish preference. If anything, Howison and his contemporaries – already threatened by the assaults of the Indian climate in combination with its flora and fauna – imbued the issue of security in the grave with an urgency matching the sense of their own vulnerability in what David Arnold has called "a land already half-choked with its own mortality."[17] In spite of significant improvements in morbidity rates, early-nineteenth century Anglo-Indians continued to see themselves as "subject to an almost unremitting tide of mortality" — thus vulnerable when living, the prospect of postmortem profanation was difficult for many to bear.[18] "An unsheltered burying-ground in India," Howison noted, "bleaching beneath the glare of the fervid sun, and exposed to the invasions of wolves and jackalls [sic], is not the least striking part of an Asiatic landscape, and is one that has in it

[16] John Howison, "Cantonment of Seroor," in *Foreign Scenes and Travelling Recreations*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1825), 175.

[17] David Arnold, "Deathscapes: India in an Age of Romanticism and Empire, 1800-1856," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 26, no. 4 (December 2004): 348. For more on the threat to mind and body posed by the Indian landscape and its "dark" nature, see Gerhard Stilz "Heroic Travellers, Romantic Landscapes: The Colonial Sublime in Indian, Australian, and American Art and Literature," in *The Making of Modern Tourism*, ed. Hartmut Berghoff and Barbara Korte (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 85-107.

[18] David Arnold, *the Tropics and the Traveling Gaze: India, Landscape and Science, 1800-1856* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 43.

something repulsive to British feelings."[19] The absence of lofty trees casting a "solemn shade," and the "hallowing influence of a church," rendered the space of death more susceptible to the corrosive effects of the climate and indigenous wildlife. The canopy provided by even a small grove of trees would have helped hold back the intense scrutiny of the sun, and a sturdy stone or brick wall would have offered something of an arboreal enclosure. This would have helped the grounds resemble more closely the familiar, historical understanding of the churchyard as a haven. More than a mere visual defect of character, however, the absence of these defining sepulchral markers also signified the different function of the British cemetery in India. Indeed, although this conception of the cemetery as a sanctuary or space of refuge had a lengthy history, it was nothing to which Britons had paid much notice, let alone demanding these traits in their sub-continental graveyards.[20] But by the 1820s this notion had come to the fore, both in the colony and the metropole, as a growing chorus effectively challenged the sepulchral status quo, calling into question the inadequately outfitted spaces of burial that implicitly sanctioned the violation of its graves. Much more so than at home, however, British burial grounds in India needed to be "sheltered" from the peculiar threats of a foreign and inhospitable clime. Burial grounds, when laid bare, were, for Howison and an increasing number of his contemporaries, "repulsive to British feelings." [21]

[19] "Howison's Foreign Scenes and Travelling Recollections," *Literary Chronicle* 6, no. 315 (May 1825): 345-346.

[20] See Doris Francis, Leonie Kellaher and Georgina Neophytu, *The Secret Cemetery* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2005), 34-37.

[21] It is interesting to note, therefore, that on the relatively rare occasion when earlier commentators would acknowledged the dangers of India's wild beasts, their aversion was usually tempered by an Orientalist

Yet, while foreign wildlife threatened the grave with physical desecration, for Howison, the very globe-trotting that made such post-mortem violation possible in the first place itself posed a less palpable but perhaps more profound threat to the British nation. Although by the time *Foreign Scenes* appeared in print, Howison had won wide acclaim for his 1821 account of pioneer life in North America, *Sketches of Upper Canada*, he objected to overseas travel by virtue of its fundamental engagement with difference.[22] That which his Enlightenment predecessors Locke and Rousseau celebrated – encounters with unfamiliar sights and experiences, the potential for broadened horizons – Howison feared. Much as he did with the subjects of all his musings, Howison read the subcontinent against the metropolis, for it was the distinction between the two in which he was most interested. Yet, while his guiding principal may have been the staking out of difference, it was not undertaken with the tolerant, inquisitive mindset of his Orientalist predecessors, but a partisanship in accordance with the mounting forces of Anglicanism, evangelicalism and utilitarianism.  Thus he remarked upon the conspicuous absences — the lack of any familiar spiritual emblem or protective and atmospheric vegetation — and the potential

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curiosity to understand the inner-workings of the country and the Company's hands-off approach regarding the land and its peoples. For example, while Bombay, as one popular account of the East Indies noted in 1757, had "long borne an infamous character for unhealthfulness" and "was commonly called the burying-ground of the English," but this was only until an experience, bought at the expense of a number of lives, had rendered the causes of such a mortality undeniable, and consequently more guarded against. See [John Henry] Grose, *A Voyage to the East-Indies, with Observations on Various Parts There*, vol. 1 (1757; London: S. Hooper, 1772), 30. Groses's discussions on the funeral customs of Gentoos, Hindoos, and Muslims, and these discussions were widely copied: Daniel Fenning and Joseph Collyer, *A New System of Geography; or, A General Description of the World*, vol. 1 (London: Crowder, 1764), 191-193. (Gardner Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs*, vol. 2, c. xiii., p. 400).

[22] John Howison, *Sketches of Upper Canada, Domestic, Local, and Characteristic: to which are added, Practical Details for the Information of Emigrants of every Class; and some Recollections of the United States of America* is the text with which Howison is still most closely linked, it secured his entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* in the 1850s and remains in print to this day. See John Howison, *Sketches of Upper Canada* (1821; repr., Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 2007).

dangers — sacrilege, disregard, the scavenging of wild animals, etc. — underscoring the foreignness of the space. And, for many of Howison's readers, *Foreign Scenes* seemed a faithful portrayal of Indian scenery, manners, and customs with its brief, yet forceful, summation of the once great cantonment's burying ground forming something like a template for the objections subsequent commentators would raise ever more frequently against Anglo-Indian burial grounds.[23]

And while, for many, they may have functioned as cautionary tales, it is important to note that this was not their only purpose. Certainly, for the bulk of his countrymen and women foreign experiences could easily spoil their impression of the homeland, but there were nevertheless exceptions. The *Literary Chronicle*, which deemed Howison "somewhat narrow in his views," suggested that he felt foreign travel "injurious," for "it increases the number of wants and gives a distaste for home." But that was obviously not the case for the extraordinarily well-traveled Howison; nor was it true for those contemporaries of similar standing, who, by way of contrast with the comforts and conveniences of home, appreciated the way traveling abroad helped them "enjoy their native country with a better zest." Those for whom the discomforts of foreign travel were far greater than those tolerated at home — those who suffered most acutely from differing standards of luxury, temperature, cleanliness, etc., — could, Howison believed, responsibly travel abroad. They could, that is, be trusted never to forsake British exceptionalism for the merely unusual or exotic. While the same could not be said for the petty officers and the like steadily disembarking at Bombay, Howison was confident that

[23] As one reviewer put it, the text bore "every very mark of vraisemblance." See "Howison's Foreign Scenes and Travelling Recollections," *Literary* Gazette, no. 436 (May 1825): 342.

given the uninviting state of their burying grounds in the country, no soldier, if lucky enough to return home, could claim preference for the desolate, desecrated graves of their unlucky cohorts.

Though now largely forgotten outside of Canada — he did not appear in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* until 2004 — Howison was more than a minor figure in early nineteenth century literary circles.[24] His observations of Upper Canada quickly achieved an almost legendary status — the *Edinburgh Review* judged it "by far the best book which has ever been written by any British traveller on the subject of North America" — ensuring a wider circulation for his subsequent Travels. When his writings on India appeared in print, commentators like Josiah Conder were drawn to his descriptions of the burying grounds in particular, praising Howison for the unflinching realism of his imagery. It is important to note, however, that this respect for Howison's writings, this faith in their veracity, was at least partially a result of the way they seemed to match the direction in which the burial debate was quickly turning. His critique, focusing as it did on the cemetery's form, achieved something of a rare feat amongst his early-nineteenth century Anglo-Indian contemporaries: It spoke of the burial ground without mentioning the dead. The cemetery, in Howison's estimation, was less for the dead than the living. Though he was concerned with the security of the grave, this was not out of a commitment to the sanctity of the corpse, but to the processes of grief, mourning, and remembrance.

[24] Gretchen Woertendyke, "John Howison's New Gothic Nationalism and Transatlantic Exchange," *Early American Literature* 43, no. 2 (2008): 309-534 and "Specters of Haiti: Race, Fear, and the American Gothic, 1789-1855," PhD. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 2007 and Robert S. Morrison, "John Howison of 'Blackwood's Magazine,'" *Notes and Queries* 42, no. 2 (June 1995): 191-193.

As the century wore on, more and more commentators joined Howison's formal critique of the cemetery with their own concerns regarding these spaces' failure to address the tremendous loss they literally embodied. Deficiencies in formal composition rendered the Anglo-Indian cemetery, ca. 1820-1840, unable adequately to perform the consolatory and commemorative functions called for by the burgeoning imperial power. For many, this was perhaps the central distinction between Anglo-Indian burial grounds and established funereal practice in the metropole. While many Britons met their demise in the absence of friends and relatives at home, the reclamation of memory never felt so far out of reach in the British Isles as it did in British India. As more and more Britons were doomed to die abroad, the ease with which one could lie forsaken in an Anglo-Indian grave (particularly before electricity and steam diminished the distance from Britain) proved to be a growing concern. Attention to this most unenviable fate had been mounting since the early years of the century. Even the most casual of quantitative approaches suggests not only a proliferation of collective interest and the diversity of opinion across socio-political, and geographic lines, but also the depth of anxiety experienced by an increasing number of individuals with all manner of emotional and practical concerns attending the death of Britons on foreign soil.

This anxiety is palpable in the writings of Henry Harpur Spry, for example, a surgeon in the Bengal Medical Service who believed the layout of the British cantonment at Sagour (central India, contemporary Madhya Pradesh), and the central location afforded its Christian cemetery, to be most objectionable.[25] Spry's objections were not, as one

[25] Henry Harpur Spry, *Modern India; with Illustrations of the Resources and Capabilities of Hindústan* vol. 2, (London: Whittaker and Co., 1837), 47-48. As R. W. Home has noted, Spry was elected to the Royal Society

might expect, on public health grounds. Rather, the cemetery intersecting the garrison's parade-ground threatened a sort of mental or emotional infection. Tremendous damage was done to the psyche when one was more or less forced to reflect upon mortality, especially when such doleful coercion took place amidst the "deadly nature of the atmosphere," against which residents knew well they were "doomed to contend." Anglo-Indians were strained enough under the intractable threats to health and well-being posed by the tropical climate, he believed, "without the aid of so melancholy a scene as that afforded by a cemetery thrust conspicuously before our eyes."

While there were certainly a number of factors driving Britons to India, and thus a number of different responses to death in the colony, Elizabeth Fenton, the wife of a little-known army officer, offered a tidy illustration of Spry's concerns in the form of her account of day-to-day life in Bengal in the mid-1820s.[26] While lauded as an "unaffected description of the hardships, the home-sickness, the gossip, and the amusements of Anglo-India long ago" when published posthumously in 1901, Fenton's "simple account" displays a surprising familiarity with the specific demands of death and burial abroad. She had accompanied her beloved husband to what was then the largest British cantonment in India, only to watch him succumb to cholera within a year of their arrival at Dinapor. While widowhood was undoubtedly, as Ketaki Kushari Dyson has argued, "the emotional vortex of [Fenton's] autobiography," the sudden loss of her loving husband seems to have

in 1841. R. W. Home, "The Royal Society and the Empire: the Colonial and Commonwealth Fellowship, pt 1. 1731-1847," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 56, no. 3 (2002): 326.

[26] Sir Henry Lawrence, ed., *The Journal of Mrs. Fenton: a Narrative of Her Life in India, the Isle of France (Mauritius) and Tasmania during the Years 1826-1830* (London: Edward Arnold, 1901).

intensified, rather than triggered, the preoccupation with mortality, exile and bereavement structuring many of her letters.[27] Almost as soon she docked at Calcutta in July 1826, Fenton seemed to see death and mourning all around her: in the coconuts and palms lining the Ganges; in sunsets and social gatherings; and, of course, in the cemeteries, which evoked a particularly passionate response.

Like many Anglo-Indians of her day, Bessie Fenton, then Bessie Campbell, first encountered Calcutta's "extensive burying-ground" from her carriage window while on the way home from her evening promenade on the Maiden. Unlike her contemporaries, however, Fenton's "rendezvous" was anything but uplifting. Drawn by habit to the "conflux of idleness and vanity," she found herself dispirited, turning her thoughts inward, focusing only on the distance from her "native home" and "beloved family" as they gathered round the hearth on a winter's evening. While doubtless that some would long regard her "vacant place with sorrow," and a few "sweet voices of infancy" would "ask wherefore it remained vacant," Fenton questioned whether her memory could thus be maintained forever, and despaired at the prospect of never seeing her family again. Nevertheless, she was more comfortable to drift within these plaintive meditations on longing and loss than to engage her immediate surroundings. She described herself "sickened at the pageantry of the scene," and the tiresome conversation of her "female acquaintances [that] seldom went beyond the scandal or the fashion of the day, which to listen to in this frame of mind was dreadful." The incongruity troubled her. Amidst the

[27] Ketaki Kushari Dyson, *A Various Universe: A Study of the Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian Subcontinent, 1765*-1856, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 237. See also Rosemary Raza, *In Their Own Words: British Women Writers and India, 1740-1857* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

carefree scene, she could not help but think that those socializing before her were "the sole hope of some heartbroken mother, wife, or sister" who were soon to be bereft of their beloved kith and kin. Though Fenton bore herself decorously, feigning interest in the sights and gossip, it was an exhausting performance. Given to a melancholic temperament and introverted eye, gatherings of this sort only pushed her thoughts forebodingly inward, toward isolation, loneliness, and abandonment. Life (and death) in India meant effectively forsaking family in Britain. Thus absented, Fenton was at pains to note, the details of one's memory one would grow progressively blurred until they ceased to be considered at all. And the "shadowy portals of the grave" only served to remind her, time and again, of the possibility of a thwarted reunion. It was with great anxiety, then, that she happened upon an imposing burial ground and a profusion of "lofty tombs" while journeying home at sundown.

The extensive ground was densely packed with the crumbling graves of Fenton's countrymen and women, its once-whitened sepulchers swiftly defaced under the assaults of the tropical climate, but shaded, she approvingly noted, by the mournful, amaranthine foliage of the cypress. The coniferous evergreen had, of course, been associated with mortality for at least as long as the cedar, and for many of Fenton's countrymen and women, the cypress was analogous to the venerable English yew as an emblem of death gracing its burial grounds.[28] More recently, the cypress had been celebrated as a tree of

[28] John Chetwode Eustace, *A Tour Through Italy, Exhibiting a View of its Scenery, its Antiquities, and its Monuments; particularly as they are Objects of Classical Interest and Elucidation: with an Account of the Present State of its Cities and Towns; and Occasional Observations on the Recent Spoilations of the French*, vol. 2, (London: J. Mawman), 503. *A Tour of Italy* went through eight editions between 1813 and 1841 and became a standard *vade-mecum* for the Italian tourists. It also brought him fame. According to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1820, Eustace's "acquaintance was sought by almost all persons in this country

mourning by Grand Tourists who made it as far as Greece, and Byron's description of the majestic, melancholic groves of Constantinople's famed cemetery of Scutari made such an impression on Fenton that she included a well-known verse from "The Bride of Abydos" (1813) in her own writings. "Within the place of thousand tombs…" as she could testify,

> The sad, but living cypress glooms
> And withers not, though branch and leaf
> Are stamped with an eternal grief,
> Like early, unrequited Love!

By her own account a sad and brooding individual from her youth, Fenton seems to have drawn a perverse delight from Byron's apparent sanction of her melancholic obsession with mortality, though she could not agree unequivocally with Byron's notion of "eternal grief." While she longed to trust in the dark, unfading foliage as a true emblem of everlasting remembrance, she was all too aware (as Byron was himself in correspondence with friends) of the tenuous nature of memory. This fear — that she would be forgotten by family and friends in Britain, and that they, in turn, would believe she had forgotten them — would haunt her throughout her residence in India, only intensifying in the wake of her husband's death.

While not the norm amongst contemporaries, the intense and persistent grief Fenton felt after her husband's passing spoke to changing attitudes towards marriage and mourning. After all, various sectors of the middle class had rejected elaborate rituals and emotional displays – a gesture rooted, at least in part, in the incredible popularity of Jeremy Taylor's *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651). Few books on death and

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distinguished by rank or talents." George Hurst, "Churchyards," *The Odd Fellows Magazine* n.s. 8, no. 5 (January 1845): 253.

dying could match the enduring fame of "the first entire Body of Directions for sick and dying People" to be published by the Church of England. Something like an early self-help book aimed at parishioners bereft of clergy during the Interregnum, the work remained an authority on the subject throughout the nineteenth century – George Elliott's 1859 Adam Bede declared it an indispensable authority in Anglican households across the country – and into the twentieth.[29] It is perhaps for this reason that Fenton's intense bereavement drove her further within herself, intensifying the private ruminations on exile and loss that she had never been able to shake.

In contrast, children's author Mary Martha Sherwood grieved much more publicly after the deaths of her own young children in India. Sherwood, like Fenton, hailed from a professional Anglican family and traveled to India as the wife of an Army officer. Each one also found herself residing in various northern cantonments, where her life was deeply marked by death and deprivation. But each bore the painful absence of her beloved in a different fashion. Where for Fenton the Anglo-Indian cemetery essentially bespoke heartbreak and loss, to Sherwood it offered the consoling image of a future state. Like any number of others, she professed the "highest hopes of the Christian [to be] advanced by death," declaring that every "sincere believer" understood corporeal decomposition as the

[29] Writing in 1979, Thomas Laqueur noted that Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's *On Death and Dying* (1969) "has reached a mass market and the best seller list, perhaps the first book on the subject to do so since Jeremy Taylor's late seventeenth century classic." Laqueur, review of *The Puritan Way of Death*, by David Stannard *Journal of Social History* 13, no. 2 (Winter 1979): 342.

precursor to their resurrection.[30] For this reason, she likely would have characterized Fenton's unusual and prolonged grief as impious, if not as the "total absence of a truly Christian hope which leads the mourner to cling to the dust of a departed friend."

Again, while the harsh tone of Sherwood's strictures on "true piety" and "false reasonings and visionary views of death" might lead one to believe that she was unfamiliar with the unique sadness and suffering which contemporaries believed attended dying abroad, nothing could be farther from the truth. After arriving in India, Sherwood's days quickly became crowded – literally and metaphorically – with the "heavy losses which will ever render our life on earth a life of mourning."[31] Death, burial, mourning and the macabre formed a recurring theme and didactic tool throughout her writings. "Moral depravity," for example, was "punished by death through the effects of the Indian climate," and wayward behavior – avarice, indolence and malice – was reproached with the "grisly details" of bodily decomposition. The gruesome sights and nauseous smells of lifeless, oozing corpses, skin slackening from bones as they rotted under the intense Indian sun, served as a powerful means of "inducing seriousness," in her young readers. But the visceral and physical facets of death also became something of a personal preoccupation, and a source of untold torment, to the one for whom they were so intimately familiar.[32]

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[30] Mrs. Sherwood, *Père la Chaise* (Wellington, Salop: Houlston, 1823). Her visit to *Père la Chaise* inspired a more general meditation on the theme: *The Infant's Grave: a Story of the Northern Part of France* (Wellington, Salop: Houlston, 1823).

[31] Sophia Kelly, ed., *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood, (Chiefly Autobiographical), with extracts from Mr. Sherwood's Journal during his Imprisonment in France and Residence in India* (London: Darton, 1857), 348.

[32] As Janis Dawson has suggested, Sherwood "relived [the deaths of her children] every time she described the death of a beautiful, fair-haired child in a book or story." See Dawson, "Mary Martha Sherwood," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 163: British Children's Writers, 1800-1880, ed. Meena Khorana (1996), 267-281. See also Nupur Chaudhuri, "Memsahib and Motherhood in Nineteenth-Century Colonial

Sherwood had endured the passing of her first two children born in India with particular difficulty, suffering, by her own account, intense and almost unremitting grief over her eldest son Henry's protracted death from whooping cough as a toddler in 1807, and the loss of her one year old daughter Lucy to dysentery not long after. Years later, Sherwood acknowledged that she not only "yield[ed] to [her] grief," but that she "nourished and cherished it in many instances in which [she] should have fled from it." Such reflection points up a central ambivalence marking Sherwood's response to death. After all, if true piety required an outright embrace of mortality, the knowledge that her beloved children had passed on to eternal life should have been, according to her own rhetoric, consolation enough to assuage lingering heartache over their absence. Yet it was not: She professed herself overwhelmed with "inordinate grief" at the death of Henry (the first of two sons with that name), and grieved the death of Lucy (the first of three) with an intensity and insistence very much at odds with what she deemed the pious Christian's "noble unconcern" and equanimity. In theory, Sherwood believed that death in this life heralded the beginning of another. There was no need to be sad, stubbornly to hang onto mortal remains, for what was important was not the absence wrought by death, but the possibilities for eternal glory that it offered. Under such a schema "to cling to the dust of a departed friend," was both irreligious and self-serving; it evinced the "total absence of a truly Christian hope." The "useless ceremonies and vain observances," in which one

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India," *Victorian Studies* 31, no. 4 (Summer 1988): 517-535. See also Margaret Nancy Cutt, *Ministering Angels: A Study of Evangelical Writing for Children* (Herts: Five Owls Press, 1979); and Gillian Avery and Kimberley Reynolds, eds. *Representations of Childhood Death* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

sought solace, were, she maintained, regarded by "every Christian," as "nearly allied to impiety; since the highest hopes of the Christian are advanced by death." In practice, however, her ability to accept and appreciate the death of a loved one fell short of this stoic ideal. As one biographer put it, much as Sherwood "said she had not much feeling, after the death of her little daughter, the grief of her loss affected her mind so deeply that she persisted in washing and dressing the body daily; refusing to let it be buried, and keeping it with her day and night, until the scandal of this behaviour roused the mob to threaten to burn down the house where she resided."[33] Surprisingly, when looking back on what would seem an embarrassing episode, she made no attempt to deny that by "many persons it will be thought that my grief…was inordinate." Her aim in writing her memoirs was not to prove herself "a faultless person," but to "state the truth." As she put it, a respect for the truth led her to "introduce many little things which selflove would persuade me to keep in the back-ground."

There was, for example, her reaction to the death of her father (though, admittedly, not such a "little thing"), who had died suddenly in England when she was nearly twenty. His passing caused exceptional and long-lasting distress for the entire family, and spurred some of Sherwood's earliest explorations of religion. To "offset some of the depression that enveloped the family after her father's death," Janis Dawson notes, Sherwood and her sister, became involved in the nascent Sunday school movement, meeting Hannah More in 1799, at the height of her fame.[34] Sherwood's mother, however, found no such outlet

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[33] Isabella Gilchrist, ed., *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood: the Author of 'The Fairchild Family*,' (London: Robert Sutton, 1907), 28.

[34] Dawson, "Mary Martha Sherwood," 272.

for her grief, and indulged her sorrow with an exacting fervor. Her sadness was so great that it purportedly affected her health, and she withdrew almost entirely from society, living a life of virtual isolation from the time of her husband's passing. In her seclusion, Sherwood's mother would grieve the loss of her husband, indulging her sorrow with true passion.[35] Years later Sherwood would acknowledge a similarly excessive – and damaging – grief of her own. While never seeking such isolation, she could scarcely be said to have maintained a greater composure when faced with the emotional distress of burying child after child.

Emblematic of Sherwood's bereavement was an attempt to reframe the premature loss of her children in relation to Christian precepts and missionary activity. As scholars have long noted, a great many of her fictional protagonists closely resembled the offspring she buried in India. There is little doubt, for instance, that the memory of her son Henry stood at the center of one of her most popular works, *The History of Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814).[36] Both Henrys were born in the then bustling cantonment of Dinapor and met their end in Berhampore, "a region of miasma—a place of graves."[37] So harsh a locale was Berhampore that even the monument raised to little Henry's memory quickly fell victim to the climate. At first "fair and white," his tombstone plainly bore his name, age at

[35] Remembering the period after her family moved to the nearby town of Kidderminster, Sherwood noted that her mother possessed a melancholic proclivity well before she was widowed in 1795, referring to how she "used to walk in the woods weeping most bitterly, and indulging her grief, till her health gave way."

[36] So popular was Sherwood's tale of death-bed conversion that it saw eighteen printings in its first ten years, and would remain continuously in print for seventy years. See Dara Rossman Regaignon, "Intimacy's Empire: Children, Servants, and Missionaries in Mary Martha Sherwood's 'Little Henry and his Bearer,'" *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2001): 84.

[37] Kelly, *Life of Mrs. Sherwood* (1857), 308.

death and his favorite verse of scripture, 1 Thessalonians 5:24 (slightly altered to read, "'Faithful is he that calleth *me*'"). Soon, however, "the damp of the climate" had "so defaced the inscription, and blackened the whole monument," that it was indistinguishable from surrounding tombs.[38] Of course, no matter how ordinary it was said to have become, Sherwood never allowed Henry's grave to deteriorate beyond recall, for fear that his memory might be consigned to oblivion.

Nearly thirty years after the grieving Sherwood penned *Little Henry* she published a sequel in which death and burial remained a principal concern, though not in precisely the same fashion. The second book, entitled *The Last Days of Boosy*, opens in the cemetery with the title character kneeling pensively beside the grave of Little Henry, his former master. The frontispiece to the original 1842 edition depicts this scene with a monument and surroundings quite closely resembling the Berhampore grave of Henry Sherwood. Here again Sherwood laments the cemetery's poor state of repair, pointing out that, although it was enclosed by high walls, a few palm trees, and a stout main gate that was locked "so securely, that it could not be moved," the cemetery was far from protected.[39] At one point the narrator, finding the cemetery's central gate secured, chides himself for not having "remembered that these places are always kept locked." Just a few paces further, however, he discovers a large opening in the wall, the flimsy construction of which he suspects fell victim to the previous night's ferocious storm. Through this "breech" he glimpses "the figure of a black man, with his back rather towards me,

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[38] Sherwood, *Little Henry and His Bearer*, 135-136.

[39] Sherwood, *The Last Days of Boosy: the Bearer of Little Henry* 2nd ed. (1842; repr., London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1848), 11.

creeping towards the rubbish in a stealthy, yet quiet manner."[40] Assuming this figure to be the chockedaur, or cemetery watchman, the narrator climbs over the rubble into the "city of the dead," and weaves his way "through streets of tombs," only to happen upon the same man, Boosy, prostrating himself "at the tomb of Henry…with joined hands, and eyes uplifted towards the upper part of the monument, calling upon the dead, as if the dead could hear."[41] In his melodramatic wailings, Boosy calls out to "Brahma," (helpfully footnoted for contemporary readers as "the chief god of the Hindoos"), questioning why he was not a Christian, noting how frustrating that his parents "bathe[d] [him] in the waters of Gunga (a Hindoo goddess –The river Ganges)," when "he for whom [his] soul mourns worshipped another God—a God of love, a God of mercy. Oh, why, why, was he not my God also?"[42] Startled by the narrator, however, Boosy springs to "his feet like a person found out in some bad action." For as Sherwood explains, "kneeling and praying at the grave of a Christian…was so entirely contrary to all the prejudices of the Hindoos, that his character would be utterly gone with his own people if the fact should ever be known" – an offense, the narrator assures us, that could only ever be "imaginary," as the "God of the Christians" is "the only true God."[43]

Though *Little Henry* and *the Last Days of Boosy* both took Christian conversion as their ultimate goal, and both revolved around the graves of their protagonists, the tone and

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[40] Sherwood, *Last Days of Boosy*, 12-13.

[41] Sherwood, *Last Days of Boosy*, 14-15.

[42] "Would that your God was my God; but am I not of other blood than thou? The white man's hopes cannot extend to one of swarthy hue. There cannot be one heaven for white and black—for slave and master." Sherwood, *Last Days of Boosy*, 17.

[43] Sherwood, *Last Days of Boosy*, 49-50.

emphasis of the second book was quite distinct from the original.[44] Sherwood had written *Little Henry* during the headiest days of the evangelical movement and the vociferous campaign to open India to missionary activity. This was also, of course, as questions regarding burial conditions in British towns and cities were beginning to gain real traction. By contrast, the year before *Boosy* was published, in 1842, the City of London and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Company had opened its gates in the East End, becoming the sixth and final private enterprise cemetery to do so in the capital. A year later, of course, Edwin Chadwick published his "Special Report on Interments in Towns." The cemetery scenes in *Boosy*, in other words, emerged virtually alongside Chadwick and Co.'s arguments for the creation of state-run cemeteries, and the nationalization (or at least municipalization) of burial that William Godwin and other minority voices had advocated during the first decades of the century.[45]

Though she continued to write of India for the rest of her life – composing stories based on her sub-continental experiences and impressions, including her obsession with deathbeds and graveyards, until her death in 1851 – Sherwood had in fact returned to England in 1816. While sustained, however, Sherwood's interest in sub-continental sepulture was far from static. Thus in one of her longest works, *The Lady of the Manor*,

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[44] Margaret Nancy Cutt, *Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Nandini Bhattacharya, "Maternal Plots, Colonialist Fictions: Colonial Pedagogy in Mary Martha Sherwood's Children's Stories," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 23 (2001): 381-415; and Regaignon, "Intimacy's Empire," 84-95.

[45] While Malthus may have believed it to be a waste of time to intervene in the *lives* of the poor, the Radical reforms proposed in "Paine's *Rights of Man* and Godwin's *Essay on Sepulchres*, recommended state-paid funeral expenses for unclaimed paupers' bodies." For more on the class/death wish running through Mathusian population discourse, see Clara Tuite, "Frankenstein's Monster and Malthus' 'Jaundiced Eye': Population, Body Politics, and the Monstrous Sublime," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 22, no. 1 (February 1998): 141-155.

published in seven volumes between 1823 and 1829, she returned to the familiar theme of death as a punishment for moral depravity, describing the imposing cemetery at Calcutta and illustrating the worldly dangers that threatened her readers (affluent young women), but chose not to frame the site as either a simple depository of the dead or the inevitable terminus of a downward spiral toward degradation and death.[46] Instead she emphasized the cemetery's sadness and mystery, its mesmerizing power when beheld one foggy November evening. Indeed, the "mournful avenue" on which the burial ground was located, was said to be a very popular evening outing.[47] While at the burial ground, Sherwood's narrator noted, there was nothing

> to be seen but tombs and monuments, of various descriptions, presenting their tall and mournful heads above the walls, and, as the carriage moves along, seeming to pass away before the eye in a long and sad procession, producing in a fanciful mind something like the perception that one sometimes has in dreams, when dark and indistinct visions of sorrow seem to flit before the eye, and that so swiftly, that, apparently, the visual ray can scarcely rest on the form of one before another presents itself.[48]

Rather than merely noting the densely packed, mournful appearance of the burial ground, which, as I have already noted, was a common objection by this time, the narrator and the other protagonists seem willing to overlook the overcrowding in favor of Romantic reverie and rumination for the benefit of the living.[49]

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[46] Sherwood, *The Lady of the Manor: Being a Series of Conversations on the Subject of Confirmation; Intended for the Use of the Middle and Higher Ranks of Young Females*, 4 vol. (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlston and Son, 1823-1829).

[47] Sherwood, chapter 21, "Ninth Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbour," in *The Lady of the Manor*, vol. 4 (1826), 242.

[48] Sherwood, *Lady of the Manor*, 243.

[49] Britons would continue to be mindful of the congested and ill-kempt state of their burial grounds in India well after their relationship/claim to them changed in 1947. For an insightful analysis of BACSA's

By the time she published her 1823 account of Père la Chaise – which she had visited two years earlier while touring the Continent – Sherwood had buried five of her eight sons and daughters, many in infancy after protracted illness.[50] Nevertheless, she still warned her readers against indulging in the "pomp of external woe," as "where true piety prevails…the emplumed horse, the sable train of mourners, the ostentatious epitaph, the magnificent tomb, and the marble mausoleum, become matters of trifling importance."[51] She was thus "astonished" to find in "one of the most celebrated burying-places in the neighborhood of Paris" an "elaborate and minute attention paid to the tombs and little gardens surrounding them," and an "entire omission of all reference to religion and a future state" in the epitaphs. The French, much to Sherwood's horror, had treated the cemetery as Howison would have – as a formal composition constructed more for the pleasure of the living than for the commemoration of the dead.

> I advanced to the more remote part of the cemetery, where, deep in the shade of a weeping willow, I observed a monument erected to the memory of an officer's daughter, who had died in her thirteenth year. Her figure was sculpted in bass-relief [sic], upon a marble slab; and her virtues, real or imaginary, were recorded beneath. It seemed, by the fresh garlands placed upon the stone, that some persons still loved and remembered her… But

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engagements with colonial cemeteries in independent India, the evaluations of former colonizers and the formerly colonized to spaces of empire in a post-colonial world, see Elizabeth Buettner's "Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia in Postcolonial Britain and India," *History & Memory* 18, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2006): 5-42. See also cultural anthropologist Ashish Chadha on the temporal and ideological interstitiality/interstices – colonial/post-colonial, individual loss/imperial might – of contemporary South Park Street cemetery, in "Ambivalent Heritage: Between Affect and Ideology in a Colonial Cemetery," *Journal of Material Culture* 11, no. 3 (November 2006): 339-363; and Theon Wilkinson, *Two Monsoons: The Life and Death of Europeans in India* (London, 1976).

[50] Cutt, *Mrs. Sherwood*, 33. An expanded version of the "long, gloomy narrative tract" first appeared a year earlier in *The Select Magazine: for the Instruction and Amusement of Young Persons*, a short-lived serial whose self-professed mission was "to promote the welfare of the rising generation," through "improvement in knowledge and virtue."

[51] Sherwood, *Pére la Chaise,* 14.

> that which would have been more acceptable to me than the odour of the most fragrant flowers, namely, some slight assurance of the piety of the departed, was wanting here as everywhere else: and as I turned away disappointed, my eye caught the following words, written with a pencil on the corner of the slab—Death is an eternal sleep. This gloomy sentence fully accounted for all the unavailing honours I have just described…for, whoever believes that the grave will for ever retain the precious remains committed to it, may find a reasonable excuse for lingering among the dust and ashes of past days.[52]

Of course, as the reader will note, Sherwood has in no way avoided presenting the cemetery as an image for the living. The key, for her, was not denying that questions of aesthetic form were central to any consideration of the cemetery; indeed, they were. Rather, the real issue was *what kind* of image it would present to visitors. Her critique, in other words, though phrased in the language of religious belief, was ultimately about taste.

For this reason, it should come as no surprise to find that Sherwood demonstrated an appreciation of the formal qualities of cemetery design in many of her works. In addition to her assessment of Père la Chaise, in her later short tales, "The Rose and the Nightingale" and "The Cantonment Burying Ground," first published in 1845, Sherwood effectively compared the sylvan beauties of an unnamed English churchyard and the solitary burial of an Anglo-Indian in a fragrant Meerut garden, beneath the shade of a tamarind tree.[53] The English country churchyard, as the story's youthful protagonist proclaimed, was thoroughly "unlike the burial-places in India!" Filled with "tufts of garden flowers, left to flourish awhile and then decay—fit emblems of the beings who had planted them, and who, too, had returned to the earth whence they had sprung," the

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[52] Sherwood, *Pére la Chaise*, 22.

[53] "The Rose and Nightingale," was one of Sherwood's later stories, first published by Darton in 1845 and again in 1852 as part of a posthumous collection of Sherwood's short fiction, *Home Stories for the Young*.

churchyard was in every way conducive to the mourning of the living, and the eternal rest of the dead.[54] In India, on the other hand, as the narrator of "The Cantonment Burying-Ground" explained, spaces of burial were merely utilitarian. They led one not to thoughts of the afterlife, but of the tragedy of death in a foreign land. When, in the course of an evening stroll, his companion asked, "'What is this?'…as we passed an enclosure formed by a stone wall, above which miniature obelisks, pyramids, and cenotaphs glittered like Parian marble in the moonlight," the narrator felt compelled to tell him that it was not the "'church-yard… as I should call it at home; but here, is no church, so we must not veil its purpose by that disguising appellation; we must call it by its own melancholy title, the Cantonment Burying-ground."[55]

Of course, by the time she wrote these words, Sherwood would have seen any number of "burying-grounds" divorced from the church in the British Isles. For this reason her descriptions of these "Cantonment Burying-grounds," much like the discussions of Anglo-Indian cemeteries in the writings of Howison, Spry, and others, lead one to suspect that the intense distaste they felt for these spaces was rooted not simply in a disgust with the situation in the colonies, but in a much more common anxiety over the reformation of burial taking place in the metropole. Yet, as tempting as it may be to engage in speculation regarding questions of priority or causal efficacy, I am not convinced that a search for the origins of the burial reform debate is what is ultimately needed. Thus, what I have attempted to do in this chapter is not to argue that anxieties over changes in burial

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[54] Sherwood, "The Rose and the Nightingale," in *Mrs. Sherwood's Juvenile Library* rev. ed., (London: W. Swan Sonnenschein & Allen, 1880), 136.

[55] A Lady [Elizabeth Bruce Elton Smith], "The Cantonment Burying-Ground," in *The East India Sketch-Book* 2nd ser., vol. 2, (London: Richard Bentley, 1833): 210-211.

practices started in the colonies, but to point toward certain resonances and resemblances that lay the groundwork for inquiry into the economies of colonial exchange as figured in the debate over burial. Not long after the writings of Howison, Spry, Sherwood, and others started to appear in print, discussions of British cemeteries began to frame the reformation of burial not as a luxury with the potential to improve the lives of many, but as absolutely necessary to the physical, moral, and historical wellbeing of all.

– Chapter 5 –

## Hidden Agendas
## the 'Secret' to Early Nineteenth-Century Burial Reform

> And is it not most indecent, not to speak of frightful infection, that custom and cupidity should be permitted, without arousing public indignation, or being felt to violate the sanctity of some of the deepest and dearest principles of our nature, that the secrecy and silence of the grave should be disregarded.[1]

By the time this censure was published in 1839, burial grounds that had been in use for generations had grown so saturated with the dead that they were unable, literally, to conceal what to many should have been the central secret of the graveyard – the dead body. Space for subsequent interments was being secured by the removal of previous tenants whose dismembered bodies and bones were strewn wantonly about graveyards. With the physical and moral health of the nation at risk, physicians, theologians, landscape gardeners, urban planners, public health officials, and barristers of every political persuasion across Britain became increasingly convinced that the reformation of burial practices was a matter of grave significance. Many believed, as George Alfred Walker wrote, that "burial places in the neighborhood of the living" were a "national evil––the harbingers, if not the originators of pestilence; the cause, direct or indirect, of inhumanity, immorality, and irreligion."[2] Walker, and many like him, felt that the creation

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[1] "London Grave-Yards," *Monthly Review* 1, no. 2 (February 1840): 162.

[2] George Alfred Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards: Particularly those of London; with a Concise History of the Modes of Interment Among Different Nations from the Earliest Periods; and a Detail of the Dangerous and Fatal Results Produced by the Unwise & Revolting Custom of Inhuming the Dead in the Midst of the Living* (London: Longman, 1839).

of new institutions of burial was an obligation "no less to the sacred ashes of the dead than to the health of the living."[3] They cited a litany of lurid details – the urban graveyards' stench, rumors of partially decomposed bodies exhumed and burned by church sextons, coffins burned as firewood, human bones unearthed and ground into fertilizer – in an attempt to rally support for the cause of burial reform.[4] While these authors worried over the effects of intramural burial on public health, others argued that the urban churchyards were simply unfit for the proper memorialization of their loved ones. In 1831, for example, John Strang wrote that the churchyard, "instead of proving…either the solemn and affecting shrine of devotion, or the resort and consolation of the weeping individuals, is little better than a disgusting charnel house avoided by general consent, as if infected with a pestilence, and calculated even when entered to call forth rather the feelings of aversion and disgust, than of sympathy and sorrow."[5] For both of these groups, British burial grounds had become a site of national crisis, the cause of "inhumanity, immorality, and irreligion."[6] They saw the various social ills that plagued the nation as the result of a failure to conceal the dead, to keep the corpse properly hidden. If only the dead body could be secreted away, concealed within the verdant acres of the

[3] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 4.

[4] See, for example, [Robert Southey], "Cemeteries and Catacombs of Paris," *Quarterly Review* 21, no. 42 (April 1819): 380; A Friend to Decency, "Bad Effects of Contracted Burying Grounds," *Imperial Magazine* 1, no. 5 (May 1819): 451-453; "New Place of Public Sepulture," *Newcastle Magazine* 8, no. 3 (May 1829): 109-111; H., "On Crowded Churchyards, and a Metropolitan Cemetery," *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* 16, no. 446 (August 1830): 141; J. A. Picton, "On Cemeteries," *Architectural Magazine* 4, no. 43 (September 1837): 429; Basil Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1896), 214.

[5] John Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis: with Observations on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture* (Glasgow: Atkinson, 1831), 24.

[6] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, iii.

new Victorian garden cemeteries or the proposed municipal cemeteries, these authors claimed, any number of problems could be rectified. While they spoke of the need to keep the process of physical decay secret, however, the desire that appears to have motivated these treatises lay elsewhere. In this chapter, I look closely at the work of Walker to demonstrate that beneath his discussion of the implications of overcrowded inner city burial for matters of public health and social equilibrium lay another secret, namely a desire to reconfigure the relationship between nineteenth-century Britons and the history of Western culture.

A number of recent authors have addressed the question of burial reform in nineteenth century Britain. Most of these accounts have focused on the writings of bureaucrat Edwin Chadwick, particularly his parliamentary enquiry into urban poverty, and his spin-off investigations into the problems of urban interment. Though Chadwick remains a key figure in the historiography of public health, it is important that we not overlook the contributions his predecessor, George Alfred Walker (1807-1884) to whom Chadwick's influential *Supplementary Report on Interment in Towns* (1843) owes a great deal. Indeed, Chadwick drew much of the evidence in his *Supplementary Report* straight from Walker, either in the form of direct testimony, or quotes lifted verbatim from Walker's published works. This is not, of course, to downplay the importance of Chadwick's *Supplementary Report*, which was in many ways more comprehensive than Walker's investigations. Chadwick widened the scope of inquiry to include the problem of urban sanitation more generally, and was interested in larger questions of morbidity and

mortality.[7] Nevertheless, a gap remains in the history of death and disposal during the first half of the nineteenth century, one which I hope to go some way toward filling. While not the "full narration" of Walker's burial reform campaign, called for by Peter Jupp in 1997, this chapter seeks to reorient discussions of Walker by portraying him not solely in relation to the later burial reform movement, but as an important intellectual voice in his own right.

Walker's *Gatherings from Grave Yards* attracted a great deal of attention soon after it was published in November 1839 and was favorably reviewed in publications ranging from medical and scientific journals, to cheap weeklies, popular monthlies and established quarterlies. But arguments against unsavory urban burial grounds had been raised long before his salacious exposé became something of a best seller. In a 1552 sermon, Bishop Hugh Latimer wondered why "London, being so rich a city, hath not a burying ground without"? After all, "many a man taketh his death in Paul's church-yard," and Latimer himself had "felt such an ill-favored unwholesome savour" when giving sermons. For Latimer, Londoners should follow the "good and laudable custom" of the citizens of Nain, whom Christ witnessed carrying a dead body on a funeral procession

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[7] See for example Chris Brooks, *Mortal Remains: the History and Present State of the Victorian and Edwardian Cemetery* (Exeter: Wheaton, 1989); Julie Rugg, "A New Burial Form and Its Meanings: Cemetery Establishment in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century" in *Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in England 1700 to 1850*, ed. Margaret Cox (York: Council for British Archaeology, 1998); Karen Sanchez-Eppler, "Decomposing: Wordsworth's Poetry of Epitaph and English Burial Reform," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 42, no. 4 (March 1998): 415-431; Mary Elizabeth Hotz, *Literary Remains: Representations of Death and Burial in Victorian England* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), and "Down Among the Dead: Edwin Chadwick's Burial Reform Discourse in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 29, no. 1 (March 2001): 21-38; Tara White Kee, "No Place for the Dead: The Struggle for Burial Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century London," (Ph.D. diss. University of Delaware, 2006). See Peter Jupp, "Enon Chapel: No Way for the Dead," in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 96.

toward their extramural burial ground.[8] John Evelyn took a similar stance in his 1664 essay on tree cultivation, *Silva*, when he suggested that burial should be moved north of the walls of the City of London. There, "a grated inclosure [sic], of competent breadth for a mile in length, might have served as a universal cemetery to all parishes…distinguished by like separations, and with ample walks of trees, the walks adorned with monuments, inscriptions, and titles, apt for the contemplation and memory of the defunct."[9] Not much had changed by 1672, when Evelyn described churchyards in Norwich with layers of bodies stacked so high around the perimeter that "the churches seemed to be built in pitts."[10] Just a few short years later, John Vanbrugh and Christopher Wren recommended the construction of extramural cemeteries following the Great Fire of 1666. When Vanbrugh, with Wren, submitted his plan for fifty new churches in London in 1712, he pressed that the new churches

> may be free'd from that Inhumane custome of being made Burial Places for the dead. a Custome in which there is something so very barbarous in itself besides the many ill consequences that attend it; that one cannot enough wonder how it ever has prevail'd amongst the civiliz'd part of mankind.[11]

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[8] Hugh Latimer, *Select Sermons* (Boston: Hilliard and Gray, 1832), 276.

[9] See John Evelyn, *Silva; or a Discourse on Forest Trees*, 5th ed. (London: J. Walthoe, J. Knapton, D. Midwinter, A. Bettesworth, J. Tonson, 1729), 147. In the first half of the nineteenth century, this passage from Evelyn was repeatedly quoted in support of arguments for new burial space. This diverse array of publications included: *the Quarterly Review* (1819), *London Medical Gazette* (1830), *The Court Journal* (1833), *the Penny Magazine* (1834) and *Household Words* (1850).

[10] William Bray, ed., *Memoirs of John Evelyn: Comprising His Diary, from 1641-1705-6, and a Selection of His Familiar Letters* (London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1871), 360.

[11] John Vanbrugh, "Mr. Van-Brugg's Proposals about Building ye New Churches (1712)," *British Architectural Theory 1540-1750: An Anthology of Texts*, ed. Caroline van Eck, with contributions by Christy Anderson (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003), 138.

Like Evelyn, of course, Vanbrugh believed Londoners could rectify the situation by establishing a series of cemeteries on the "outskirts of Town."[12]

In 1721, London curate Thomas Lewis wrote of the need to end urban interment in *Seasonable Considerations on the Indecent and Dangerous Custom of Burying in Churches and Churchyards*. The custom of burying in churches and churchyards was both indecent to God, as "the Church is his House, and it is not to be prophaned, nor polluted," as well as dangerous to man.[13] Contemporary practice allowed "great Numbers [to be] buried promiscuously of all Sorts of Distempers; and many in Coffins as hardly hold together."[14] Compounding this threat to Londoners health and wellbeing, vaults and graves in congested crypts and churchyards were commonly left unsealed for days. As a result, visitors to the churchyards had on more than one occasion been exposed to the sight of decaying corpses. The conditions that Lewis decried as "an Act of Profanity, Indecency, and of most Pernicious Consequences to the Living," had hardly improved by 1838 when a letter sent to the *Morning Chronicle* and *Weekly Dispatch* shamefully noted

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[12] Vanbrugh referred to the spacious cemetery established by the East India Company outside of Surat, which he had seen while a junior merchant in the company. In 1711, he produced a plan for a six-acre cemetery on the periphery of London, which he based largely on his experiences at Surat. See Kerry Downes, "Vanbrugh's India and his Mausolea for England," in *Sir John Vanbrugh and Landscape Architecture in Baroque England 1690-1730*, ed. Christopher Ridgway and Robert Williams (Stroud, UK: Sutton Publishing, 2000), 122; and Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

[13] Thomas Lewis, *Seasonable Considerations on the Indecent and Dangerous Custom of Burying in Churches and Churchyards: with Remarkable Observations, Historical and Philosophical, Proving that the Custom is not only Contrary to the Practice of the Antients, but Fatal, in case of Infection* (London: A. Bettesworth, 1721), 54. See also Mark Jenner, "Death, Decomposition and Dechristianisation? Public Health and Church Burial in Eighteenth-Century England," *English Historical Review* 120, no. 487 (June 2005): 615-632.

[14] Lewis, *Seasonable* Considerations, 57-58.

that "in this place of 'Christian burial,' you may see human heads, covered with hair, and here, in this 'consecrated ground,' are human bones with flesh still adhering to them."[15]

Walker's condemnation of urban burial was not, therefore, particularly novel by the time he published his text in 1839. Indeed, he appears to have been familiar with many of these earlier arguments, citing both Latimer and Thomas Pennant's eighteenth century observations of St. Giles's in the Fields churchyard, in which, for example, coffins were said to have been "piled one upon the other, all exposed to sight and smell."[16] Yet, given the number of authors who had addressed this issue in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, why, one must ask, did these practices become such an important matter in the first half of the nineteenth century? Why did this debate gain such urgency more than 150 years after it had first been raised? In addition, by the time Walker's *Gatherings from Graveyards* appeared in 1839, extramural burial was not uncommon. With the opening of Kensal Green cemetery in 1832, Norwood cemetery in 1837 and Highgate cemetery in 1839, great numbers of Londoners had begun to be interred in what was then the countryside. Walker's treatise thus articulated an underlying sense of shame that Britain, one of the most successful and prosperous nations of the world, had failed the

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[15] T. James, "Disgusting State of Churchyards," *Morning Chronicle*, 27 September 1838. Ensuring a wider audience, James also sent his observations to the *Weekly Dispatch*, where it was published on 30 September 1838. Ruth Richardson has noted that St. Giles's churchyard was a popular source of the cadavers "bodysnatchers" or "ressurectionsts" unearthed to satiate the demands of London's numerous anatomical schools. See Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 60. However, by the time this scandalous re-appearance of St. Giles's corpses was published in the metropolitan papers, the practice had been rendered virtually obsolete by the Anatomy Act of 1832, which awarded researchers the unclaimed bodies of paupers.

[16] See Thomas Pennant, *Of London* (London: Robert Faulder, 1790), 162.

least of its citizens by neglecting to enact a thoroughgoing official reform of burial practices. Opening his text with a nationalistic cry for reform, he asked why London

> the seat of science, the arena of inventions, the vast amphitheatre where all that is great, good and noble; all that is conducive to the comforts and pleasures of life—all that the mind can conceive for good or evil—that London, with its thousands of busy minds and observant eyes, anxiously exploring the dimly shadowed outline of the future, yet neglecting the awful monitors of the past; – should bear upon its breast those awful plague spots, the BURIAL GROUNDS, must appear to every reflecting mind, an anomaly not easily explained.[17]

Surveying forty-two public and private burial grounds in London, all situated in close proximity to private residences, Walker found them "overcrowded," "disorderly" and "disgusting" places of interment. Even more alarming, there was no corner of the capital immune to the problem. Westminster, Southwark, Spitalfields: all, according to Walker, were home to burial spaces that were simply unsuitable to basic human decency. The intermingling of the living and the dead was, as noted, a "national evil" responsible for any number of physical and social ills. And these problems would only intensify as the population of Britain continued to grow and gather in metropolitan areas. The population of London alone had more than doubled between 1801 and 1841, from 958,000 to 1,948,000, but adequate accommodations had not been made for the burial of the city's dead.[18]

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[17] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 1.

[18] S. E. Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick* (London: Methuen, 1952), 213. In 1841, a reader estimated in the *Times*, based on a recent Parliamentary return, that in 1832 alone, London's 134 parish churches and burial-grounds had been forced to accommodate an average of 217 bodies per acre. See, Anti-Pestilence, "The Dead versus The Living," *Times* (London) 9 October 1841.

For *Blackwood's*, these "dead-pits," were "admirable specimen[s] of the art of packing—of compressing the greatest possible quantity into the smallest possible space."[19] But for Walker, such carefully contrived configurations were the exception rather than the rule. The bulk of his 258-page opus cataloged in gory detail the many and varied abuses associated with burial in London. At a graveyard in Southwark, he tells his audience, "a body partly decomposed was dug up and placed on the surface, at the side slightly covered with earth." Worse still, "a mourner stepped upon it, and the loosened skin peeled off, he slipped forward and had nearly fallen into the grave."[20] At Enon Chapel Walker was struck by "the total disregard of decency exhibited—numbers of coffins were piled in confusion—large quantities of bones were mixed with the earth, and lying upon the floor of this cellar (for vault it ought not to be called), lids of *coffins* might be trodden upon at almost every step."[21] As sensational as these stories may sound, according to Walker experiences of this sort were all too common. Living and working in the Strand, he explained, had brought him into daily contact with the disrespectful practices of any number of unsanitary churchyards.

Walker's understanding of the dangers posed by these unsanitary churchyards was undoubtedly influenced by continental European discussions of contagion. Of particular influence was the work of French physician and anatomist Félix Vicq d'Azyr. d'Azyr's pioneering research in public health and epidemiology led him in the late-eighteenth

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[19] [Henry King], "Post-Mortem Musings," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 48 (December 1840): 829.

[20] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 201-202.

[21] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 157.

century to challenge existing funerary practices and to advocate the construction of new burial grounds outside of French cities.[22] He published influential tracts based on his investigations that detailed the dangers of burial in church vaults.[23] Perhaps the most detailed of these examples, one which would be repeated by later Burial Reformers, concerned University of Montpellier professor, Dr. Henri Haguenot's account of the churchyard and crypt at the parish church of Notre Dame in Montpellier. On the evening of 17 August 1744, the *portefaix,* in the process of partially exhuming a common grave, was overcome by mephitic exhalations and fell into a state of apoplexy. A horrified onlooker was lowered by rope to extract the motionless grave-digger, but scarcely reached the bottom of the pit before his body went limp and was quickly retrieved in a state close to death. Miraculously, the samaritan soon regained consciousness but languished in a debilitated state for some time thereafter. Less fortunate were the three subsequent men who attempted to withdraw the body - even most robust constitution could not withstand the dangers of the grave, and all were said to have perished from the noxious effluvia.[24]

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[22] See André Parent, "Félix Vicq d'Azyr: Anatomy, Medicine and Revolution," *The Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences* 34, no. 1 (February 2007): 32-33.

[23] Of d'Azyr's many publications, most influential to the cause of burial reform was his *Essai sur les lieux et les dangers des sepultures* (Paris: Didot, 1778), in which he translated and expanded an earlier work on sepulchral emanations in Modena by the Italian cleric Scipione Piattoli.

[24] d'Azyr, *dangers des sepultures* xii-xiv. d'Azyr was not alone. Many physicians and surgeons presented strong opposition to popular burial practices in late-eighteenth century France. As a result, in 1765, the Parlement of Paris restricted burials in urban churchyards and churches, and eleven years later burials in church vaults were restricted. Further state intervention in burial matters occurred in the 1780s, when the famed Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris was closed and the human remains cleared. Then, in 1804, a Napoleonic decree that places of interment be moved to the outskirts of urban areas led to the creation of the celebrated Père la Chaise cemetery in northwest Paris. These acts all drew on Enlightenment discussions that portrayed the dead body as both a source of contagion and an object subject to oppressive ecclesiastical control. See Richard A. Etlin, *The Architecture of Death: the Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 3-39; Thomas A. Kselman, *Death and the Afterlife in Modern France* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 169-74.

Also important in the development of Walker's thinking was the work of Felix Pascalis. In 1823, Pascalis, a respected Italian-American physician, translated into English d'Azyr's and Scipione Piattoli's writings on the dangers of urban interment. In his *Exposition of the Dangers of Interment in Cities*, described by one reviewer as "partly translation, partly a compilation, and partly original," Pascalis linked the outbreak of the 1822 yellow fever epidemic in New York to the surfeit of decaying corpses in the burial ground of Trinity Church.[25] As Pascalis's text had played an important role in the 1823 prohibition of burials in lower Manhattan, Walker lamented that it "had not fallen into [his] hands at an earlier period." Time and again Walker deferred to Pascalis, d'Azyr and Piattoli and cited the French and American debates on urban burial as examples of sepulchral progress.

The ideas of these public health specialists were crucial for Walker. Written before the germ theory of disease was understood, his text brims with the language of poisoned air, miasmas and humors. He discussed the "nature and effects of the various deleterious products of human putrefaction," claiming that "miasmata from animal putrescencey not only may cause the loss of life, but it exacerbates the intensity of pestilential diseases."[26] To readers, his accounts of the smell of rotting bodies would have sounded quite familiar, but Walker's goal was to emphasize a very direct connection between the corpse's stench

[25] See Felix Pascalis, *An Exposition of the Dangers of Interment in Cities: Illustrated by an Account of the Funeral Rites and Customs of the Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and Primitive Christians; by Ancient and Modern Ecclesiastical Canons, Civil Statutes, and Municipal Regulations; and by Chemical and Physical Principles. Chiefly from the Works of Vicq d'Azyr and Prof. Scipione Piattoli with additions by Felix Pascalis* (New York: W. B. Gilley, 1823); "Pascalis on the Danger of Interment in Cities," *The New York Medical and Physical Journal* 4, no. 13 (January-March 1825): 113-121.

[26] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, vi, iv.

and the spread of disease.[27] Deferring to the writings of experts like d'Azyr, Pascalis and others, Walker repeated his basic assertion that the exhalations from dead bodies were "very afflicting and dangerous" to the living. Burying the dead body was an inherently risky proposition, he wrote, but never more so than when undertaken in close, public quarters, as the "atmosphere of churches is ordinarily moist and heavy," and the "putridity of the air" within churches was directly connected to the practice of frequently opening tombs to inter new bodies.[28] In nearly every burial ground he surveyed, Walker commented upon the "noxious odors" that permeated the air, frequently mentioning the various fevers with which those odors were associated.[29] Those who lived near graveyards, he suggested, suffered an almost incalculable acceleration of disease and degradation. Upon entering these quarters, the "disgusting," "offensive," "loathsome" air "produce[d] a feeling of nausea." How, he asked, could the proprietors of these grounds maintain a clear conscience while crowding bodies into such small spaces? The living and the dead, he averred, would have to be separated.[30]

However, it is important to note that for Walker, the encroachment of the dead endangered more than the health of local residents; it threatened to corrupt their sense of decency. In Clerkenwell, for example, all four of the parish churchyards were not only

[27] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 101.

[28] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 105, 109.

[29] For a discussion of how late eighteenth-century medical and scientific theory came to be led by the nose, see Alain Corbain's seminal *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[30] Much of the medical community stood behind Walker's assertions, with the *Lancet*, *British and Foreign Medical Review*, *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*, *Medical Times* and the *Medico-Chirurgical Review* reproducing large tracts of his writings.

overcrowded and fetid, with the sheer number of bodies causing the ground "saturated with human putrescence" to rise to the level of the first floor windows, they were also a moral danger. As he put it, in "this filthy neighborhood fever prevails, and poverty and wretchedness go hand in hand."[31] How could the poor be expected to better themselves, he asked, when they were surrounded by such "degradation" and "noxious disorder"?[32] Intramural burials of this sort "disgrace and degrade…civilized beings. They teach us the sad, the humiliating truth, that the holiest of feelings are openly trampled on in this land which boasts so loudly of its Christianity, and that abuses of the most revolting kind are winked at and tolerated for the sake of gain."[33] Worse still, it was the crowded neighbourhoods of the poor, where bodies were scarcely lain in the grave before they were unearthed to create room for more, that were most harmed by the physical and moral "evils" of intramural burial. The middle classes had already fled both the city centers and the urban churchyards, making their homes in the garden suburbs, and burying their dead in the newly constructed garden cemeteries. It was here that Walker called quite explicitly for the state to become involved in the reformation of burial practices. As he put it, "the attention of the Government cannot too anxiously be directed" to these matters. For "who will not venture to affirm that the health of a community is not of first importance to the stability and prosperity of society?"[34]

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[31] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 176.

[32] Quite famously, Edwin Chadwick took up this point in some detail in his 1843 *Supplementary Report on the Results of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns* (London: W. Clowes, 1843).

[33] George Alfred Walker, *On the Past and Present State of Intramural Burying Places: with Practical Suggestions for the Establishment of National Cemeteries* (London: Longman, 1851), 8.

[34] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 6.

For Walker, as well as many of his contemporaries, it was shameful that in a country as "advanced" and commercially successful as Britain such "sad mementoes of ignorance, cupidity, and degraded morality still exist."[35] Because he believed in the "inseparable connection existing between physical agencies producing disease, and their demoralizing results," the exhalations of the dead that "increased, if not generated" disease had to be addressed. Though Walker was unwilling to accept that individuals could "never can be quite bereft of the means of making ourselves better or worse," it could not be denied

> that upon circumstances depends the moral and social elevation or depression of all sorts and conditions of mankind in the mass. Let circumstances be favourable, virtue and happiness will prevail,—let them be adverse,—vice and misery will abound.[36]

While "the power of mere circumstances," Walker felt, could "never be absolute over a *rational* and *responsible* being," the poor were far less able to overcome environmental challenges to their character.[37] Thus, the commercial garden cemeteries were not a solution to the problem as Walker saw it, for not only were those concerned only with profit more likely to abuse the dead body than to respect its sanctity, but they also failed to extend the benefits gained by hiding the dead body to those at the greatest risk.

In spite of Walker's apparent disdain for these new for-profit garden cemeteries, it is important to note the power they exerted on his argument. In these new burial grounds, which, for Walker, spoke of opportunity rather than responsibility, the middle classes

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[35] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 157.

[36] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 253-254.

[37] Emphasis mine. As Hotz notes, this notion that "environmental conditions determine the subjectivity of those who inhabit them," was a common conviction amongst burial reformers. See Hotz, 2001, 25.

could purchase a secluded plot that would ensure them a peaceful eternal slumber.[38] Because of their cost, plots at places like Kensal Green cemetery in London could never have offered a viable alternative for most of those who buried their dead in city churchyards. Instead, they offered the middle classes a grave secure not only from the activities of potential "bodysnatchers" but also from the corruption and disarray of the city and its inhabitants. Cemetery companies erected high perimeter walls and gated entryways, and repeatedly emphasized the new burial grounds' separateness from the city through the calculated use of landscape architecture. In cemeteries like Highgate, Kensal Green, and Abney Park, mourners were to be greeted with scenes that suggested the restorative power of "nature." The cemetery landscape was designed to convey a sense of controlled organicism. The arboretum at Abney Park in northeastern London contained 2,500 varieties of trees and shrubs while its "rosarium" boasted 1,029 varieties of rose – all of which were individually labeled for the "enlightenment of all who walked there."[39] As commentator William Justyne wrote in 1865, "No Cemetery near London [could] boast so many natural beauties" as Highgate. Describing the scenic landscape, he wrote that the

> irregularity of the ground, rising in terraces, the winding paths leading through long avenues of cool shrubbery and marble monuments, and the groups of majestic trees casting broad shadows below, contribute many natural charms to this solemn region.[40]

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[38] For the most detailed discussion of the establishment of one of the London cemeteries, see James Stevens Curl, ed. *Kensal Green Cemetery: the Origins and Development of the General Cemetery of All Souls Kensal Green, London, 1824-2001* (Chichester, UK: Phillimore, 2001).

[39] James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Stroud, UK: Sutton, 2000), 106.

[40] William Justyne, *Guide to Highgate Cemetery* (London: Moore, 1865).

While it seems obvious that these cemeteries' appearance of order and salubriousness would have appealed to Walker, I believe that the burial grounds themselves held another, more subtle appeal.

It was, of course, not the model of ownership that appealed to authors like Walker, but the particular model of Britishness and the narrative of cultural progress presented in these spaces. Walking through a suburban cemetery one would see Egyptian pyramids, hieroglyphics, and obelisks, Roman cinerary urns and sarcophagi, the pointed arches, rose windows, and flying buttresses of the Gothic cathedral, coats of arms: the middle classes had appropriated these historical forms and others to make a series of claims about the relationship between the present and the past, the living and the dead. More than just memorializing the dead, in other words, these structures and figures situated them within an idealized historical narrative, one that lent a new significance to the individual, while recasting the whole of British culture. These monuments are essential to any attempt to understand the Burial Reform movement. For as much as the practice of intramural burial was said to threaten public health and safety, Walker's ultimate justification for the reformation of burial practices was to be found in his discussion of "traditional" Western burial practices. Burial reform was not just a matter of medical urgency; it was a historical necessity.

Although burial of the dead in the heart of the living may have been "so familiar from its frequent or daily occurrence… that the most perfect indifference appears to prevail upon the subject," Walker reminded his readers that it was in fact a fairly recent introduction, while the seclusion that accompanied the separation of the dead and the

living had long been sanctioned by history. Indeed, he told his readers, concealing the dead from the living was "the universal custom of all times, and of the most polished nations."[41] Thus he felt it important to open his volume with a "comprehensive sketch of the modes of interment among different nations, and in different periods."[42] Choosing very specific examples, Walker attempted to convince Britons that intramural burial was, simply put, historically inappropriate. Focusing only on the most "reverent" practices – or, as he put it, those in which "we shall find…the elements of our own customs" – he pointed out that in ancient Egypt, for example, there was a "flattering idea of honor" attached to the tomb, and to "break open the tombs—to scatter here and there" was a "horrible sacrilege."[43] Moreover, the Egyptians, "from whom other nations have learned whatever polishes and softens the manners," also invented the art of embalming, making the dead body "innoxious to the living."[44] In the case of the ancient Jews, Walker informs his readers, burial spaces were generally amongst the caves and fields far removed from the cities. In both their inhumation and cremation, the ancient Greeks too adhered to the "very salutary custom of conveying the dead to a distance from the cities."[45] However the best model, at least in Walker's opinion, was to be found in the practices of the ancient Romans, insofar as they "preserved the custom indicated by nature, that of *inhuming* the dead." The Romans had even decreed, in the Law of the Twelve Tables, that no body

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[41] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 115.

[42] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 14.

[43] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 15, 17-18, 23.

[44] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 19.

[45] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 224.

should be burnt or buried within the walls of the city. By the time of the early Christians, he noted, burial outside city walls was an "obligation upon all."[46] It was only after the death of Constantine, with, as he called it, a "perversion of Christian doctrine," that the dead were allowed to return to the realm of the living. And once an exception was made, Walker tells his readers, individuals increasingly sought burial near the altar, "till at length…from veneration, ambition, or superstition, the abuse was carried so far, that interment, in the vicinity of churches, was granted to Pagans and Christians,—to the impious and the holy."[47]

Walker's narrative of historical death-ways, elides and modifies both existing and nascent nineteenth century historiographic traditions, articulating an uncomfortable ambivalence toward the function of history. Where authors like Pascalis made reference to historical practices in an effort to establish their medical credibility and authority, there is in Walker's text, I believe, something else at stake.[48] As a number of scholars have suggested, the wider British relationship with the past underwent a series of shifts as British hegemony became more entrenched in the years after Waterloo.[49] As Britons increasingly began to see themselves as an unchallenged world power they accordingly began to construct new histories. *National* histories began to rival the more classically-oriented

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[46] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 30, 34.

[47] Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 225.

[48] See Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Sense of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Medicine* (Reading: University of Reading, 1997).

[49] History, as Catherine Hall points out, "was immensely popular in the mid-nineteenth century, a time of self-conscious nation formation and of nationalist enthusiasm, and historians played a vital part in defining this nation." See Hall, "At Home with History: Macaulay and the *History of England*," in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, ed. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 32.

texts that conceived of "history" as the record of Antiquity. Where it had long been common to conceive of Britain's or England's history through a series of analogies with the ancient Greeks and Romans, drawing parallels between, say, the democracy of Athens and the constitutionalism/democracy of England, or between the Roman and the British Empires, during the early-nineteenth century, a specifically British narrative replaced classical antiquity as the dominant historical frame. A. Dwight Culler remarks upon this move toward national histories in his analysis of history and Victorian literary figures. He notes that for Sir Walter Scott and Macaulay, "the analogy of history was not with some other civilization at a comparable stage of its development but with their own civilization in an earlier stage. The circumstances were different but the issues and processes were the same." Nevertheless, the shift was not definitive, and the universalizing histories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, more focused on ancient Greece and Rome, would overlap with the nineteenth century interest in a national past.[50] Stressing the continuity between the past and the present, these histories displayed a growing tendency to see historical events in England, Scotland and/or Britain as foretelling the present greatness of the nation. History, as Thomas Babington Macaulay put it, was important "not because it furnished a contrast to the present, but because it had lead to the present."[51] But as much as Walker moved through a succession of historic death rituals and customs, rather than offering his readers the increasingly common Whiggish "march of progress," i.e.,

[50] A. Dwight Culler, *The Victorian Mirror of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 20. See also Rosemary Mitchell, *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image, 1830-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 5.

[51] Thomas Babington Macaulay, "History," in *The Works of Lord Macaulay*, ed. Lady Trevelyan (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1871), 5:141.

marshaling the past to praise the greatness of contemporary Britain, he presents contemporary Britain as a disastrous *break* with historical precedent. Churchyard burial did not respect tradition; it did not even respect humanity. British sepulchral practices had failed to maintain the secrecy of the dead, and as a result they served only to cast doubt upon British cultural, economic and political superiority.

Walker was not alone. John Strang, George Collison, Edwin Chadwick, William Justyne: any number of authors looked to cast the issue of burial reform in terms of a necessary respect for Western cultural heritage. The texts that engaged burial and the new cemeteries were almost formulaic, beginning nearly every time with an extended historical narrative before moving into a more detailed discussion of the churchyards' filth and pestilence.[52] Collison's 1840 text *Cemetery Interment*, for example, opened with an extensive history of burial in the West. After outlining the "various modes practised by the ancients in the disposition of their dead" he states, "in almost all cases, it was customary and frequently obligatory, to erect their cemeteries, or burying-places, at a proper distance from cities and towns, or other populous districts."[53] Collison's treatise echoed Walker's populism, emphasizing a particular concern that those living in the City of London and the East End had little or no access to extramural burial grounds, and that roughly a quarter of

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[52] See for example James Peggs' 1840 text, *A Cry from the Tombs; or, Facts and Observation on the Impropriety of Burying the Dead among the Living, in Various Ages and Nations* (London: John Snow, 1840). Also following the same formula was John Richards, *Essay on Cemetery Interments* (London: Pelham Richardson, 1843); George Milner, *Cemetery Burial; or, Sepulture, Ancient and Modern* (London: Longman and Co., 1846); Elizabeth Stone, *God's Acre; or, Historical Notices Relating to Churchyards* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1858).

[53] George Collison, *Cemetery Interment: Containing a Concise History of the Modes of Interment Practised by the Ancients; Descriptions of Père la Chaise, the Eastern Cemeteries, and those of America; the English Metropolitan and Provincial Cemeteries, and more Particularly of the Abney Park Cemetery, at Stoke Newington, with a Descriptive Catalogue of its Plants and Arboretum* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1840), 67.

the population was still forced to bury loved ones in the grossly overcrowded city churchyards.

While less concerned with the lives of the poor than either Collison or Walker, John Strang made a similar argument regarding the state of the current burial provision in his native Glasgow. In 1831, Strang argued that "every square yard" of Scottish sepulchres held "piles of mouldering bodies," and, situated in the center of densely populated cities, were "little better than a generator of plague and pestilence." As they failed to conceal the dead body, these "sepulchral nuisances" prevented "heavenly communing" at the tombs of beloved friends and relatives.[54] According to Strang, the "Ancients" were "never polluted with the idea of a charnel house, nor their feelings roused by the revolting emblems of mortality," for they knew how important it was to maintain the secrecy of the corpse.[55] The Ancients "contemplated death without terror, and visited its gloomy shrine without fear." Death was calmness and serenity for them; it signified "tranquility, and the only images that were associated with it, were those of peaceful repose and tender sorrow."[56] For this reason, Strang called upon the people of Scotland to abandon their churchyards, and to erect a necropolis that would rival the most magnificent of the new garden cemeteries.  After all, "A garden cemetery and monumental decoration afford the most convincing tokens of a nation's progress in civilisation and in the arts, which are its

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[54] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 34-35.

[55] In Strang's account, the "garden" cemetery, of which the Parisian Père la Chaise was for him the finest example, owed its lineage, to the "Ancients," who were "never polluted with the idea of a charnel house, nor their feelings roused by the revolting emblems of mortality."

[56] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 59.

results."[57] Lest Scotland lose the prominence it had gained as an arbiter of knowledge during the Enlightenment, Strang reminded his readers that "the most celebrated nations of which history speaks, have adorned their places of sepulture, and it is from their funereal monuments that we gather much of what is known of their civil progress and advancement in taste."[58] Was not, he wrote, "the story of Egypt written on its pyramids, and is not the chronology of Arabia pictured on its tombs? Is it not on the funeral relics of Greece and Rome, that we behold those elegant images of repose and tender sorrow with which they so happily invested the idea of death?"[59]

In contemporary writings on cemeteries and burial practices, historical narratives of this sort were exceedingly common. Throughout the literature on burial reform the history of burial, and, by extension, the history of Britain, was as much of a concern as was public health, overcrowding, or any of the other explanations offered. What makes these narratives so interesting, and particularly in Walker's case, is that the historical and cultural precedents cited for the necessity of Burial Reform were the very same as those that had inspired the more ostentatious sepulchral monuments. In much the same way that Egyptian pyramids and Roman cinerary urns in the early garden cemeteries made a set of claims about the relationship between the British middle classes and the history of Western culture, Walker's narrative effectively applied that legacy and heritage to the whole of Britain. This was more than a matter of simply secreting dead bodies tastefully out of sight. In the discussion of burial reform, nothing less than the cultural identity of

[57] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 62.

[58] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 62.

[59] Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis*, 63.

Britain was at stake. Of course, the evolving public concern with hiding the dead in nineteenth century Britain was tied to a concern with public health and morality. But the issues of death and burial cannot be separated from the contemporary obsession with the writing of British history.

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