JL&S

JOURNAL OF LITERATURE & SCIENCE

Volume 3, Number 1 (2010)

Contents

About the JLS

The Journal of Literature and Science (JLS) is a peer-reviewed academic journal presently published annually. It is hosted by the Research Centre for Literature, Arts and Science at the University of Glamorgan. Each issue appears online only and is free to access. Each individual essay within an issue is made available in PDF format for download.

The journal is dedicated to the publication of academic essays on the subject of literature and science, broadly defined. Essays on the major forms of literary and artistic endeavour are welcome (the novel, short fiction, poetry, drama, periodical literature, visual art, sculpture, radio, film and television). The journal encourages submissions from all periods of literary and artistic history since the Scientific Revolution; from the Renaissance to the present day. The journal also encourages a broad definition of 'science': encapsulating both the history and philosophy of science and those sciences regarded as either mainstream or marginal within their own, or our, historical moment. However, the journal does not generally publish work on the social sciences. Within these confines, essays submitted to the journal may focus on the literary and scientific productions of any nation or group.

All essays should be interdisciplinary in focus, offering an original view of both the literary or artistic subject matter and the science or sciences under consideration. While essays on individual examples of literary and artistic production are welcomed, these should also seek to show the wider significance of their analyses and interpretations. The journal does not publish essays focused exclusively on literature or art, or exclusively on the history and philosophy of science.

Submission and Citation Information

The JLS invites essays in English of 6000-8000 words in length. Contributors are encouraged to contact the Editor prior to submission, including an abstract of the proposed essay. All manuscripts should be submitted electronically to the Editor-in-Chief, Martin Willis, at mwillis@glam.ac.uk. Manuscripts should be double spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font. Any illustrations should be submitted separately and their placement within the essay clearly indicated. All submissions should follow MLA guidelines (see this issue for an example article). The JLS sends out all manuscripts for peer review anonymously and all Readers' Reports are returned anonymously. The editors aim to return Readers' Reports to authors within 3 months of submission and, wherever possible, to publish all accepted essays within 12 months of first submission.

Citing the JLS: the journal's full title is the *Journal of Literature and Science*, and its first issue was Volume 1, Number 1 (2007). All page numbers to individual essays can be found when accessing the PDF file of that essay. The journal's ISSN is 1754-646X. Citations should give Author, 'Title', *Journal of Literature and Science* Vol, No. (Year): pp., organised according to the specific style guide being used.

Editorial Board

Introduction
Fearful States: The Emergence of Modern Phobias

Vike Martina Plock

In 1892 Max Nordau concluded his controversial study *Degeneration* with an apocalyptic vision of the new century. If, as he proposed, "fatigue, nervous exhaustion, and the diseases and degeneration conditioned by them, make much greater progress" (540), "then certain phenomena which are perceived as exceptions or in an embryo condition would henceforth increase to a formidable extent and develop consistently; others which at present are only observed among the inmates of lunatic asylums, would pass into the daily habitual condition of whole classes of the population" (537). "Life," he continues, "would then present somewhat of the following picture":

> Every city possesses its club of suicides. By the side of this exists clubs for mutual assassination by strangulation, hanging, or stabbing. In the place of the present taverns houses would be found devoted to the service of consumers of ether, chloral, naphtha, and hashish. . . . A number of new professions are being formed – that of injectors of morphia and cocaine; of commissioners who, posted at the corners of the streets, offer their arms to persons attacked by agoraphobia, in order to enable them to cross the roads and squares. (537-38)

For those who inhabit the future Nordau imagined, this bleak prediction can only be considered an amusing prophesy of doom. Relatively little evidence is summoned up to support this dismal picture of mankind's social decline. Nonetheless, such excessive preoccupations with humanity's impending course as Nordau's, illustrate that anxiety and nervousness about the future obtained pandemic quality at the fin de siècle. Chronic fear, it could be argued, emerges as prominent indicator of a late-nineteenth-century cultural malaise. In this sense, Nordau's text is as much a product as a diagnosis of a specific social mood and context.

If anxiety and apprehension reached seismic levels in the final decades of the nineteenth century – and provided the incentive for degeneration's social and pseudo-scientific theories – it is interesting to note that one particular type of fear or terror is explicitly referenced in Nordau's vision of mankind's evolutionary endgame: agoraphobia. In fact, the frequency with which this illness will manifest itself in future years requires, according to Nordau, the formation of an entirely new profession – escorts who assist sufferers in traversing the city's much-feared open spaces. While agoraphobia thus functions as a prominent marker of humanity's degenerate state in Nordau's futuristic panorama, it must be noted that this pathological condition was, in the year of *Degeneration*'s first publication, a relatively recent addition to modern medicine's growing catalogue of well-defined diseases. Identified for the first time in 1871 by the German psychologist Carl Otto Westphal as a spatial disorder marked by the fear of open or urban spaces, agoraphobia's notorious symptoms included "palpitations, sensations of heat, blushing, trembling, fear of dying and petrifying shyness, symptoms that occurred . .

1

. when . . . patients were walking across open spaces or through empty streets or anticipated such an experience with a dread of the ensuing anxiety" (Vidler 28). Medical experts insisted that agoraphobia incapacitated and paralyzed the patient, whose ability to negotiate modern cityscapes became severely restricted. No doubt, it was because of this paralyzing effect that the agoraphobic condition had such appeal for Nordau. The locomotive stasis of the agoraphobic – his or her inability for spatial progress – offered a welcome way of synecdochically representing humanity's apparent deficiency for further evolutionary development.

Its obvious figurative potential aside, agoraphobia's appearance in a prominent passage in *Degeneration* illustrates that the illness had been firmly established, only twenty years after its inception, as one of modernity's common medical configurations. What is more, Nordau includes, apart from the well-known spatial disorders agora- and claustrophobia, other recently identified phobias such as "rupophobia (fear of dirt), iophobia (fear of poison), nosophobia (fear of sickness), aichmophobia (fear of pointed objects), belenophobia (fear of needles), cremnophobia (fear of abysses), trichophobia (fear of hair)" in his extensive taxonomic report on humanity's current pathologies (Nordau 242). In the final decade of the nineteenth century, phobias were well represented on psychologists' therapeutic charts.

This *JLS* special issue on modern phobias investigates the genesis of a pathological configuration – nineteenth-century medical and cultural constructions of chronic or morbid fear and anxiety. This topic is a rich site for critical investigation. In fact, to the ongoing debate on phobias, theorists such as William James, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva and – more recently – Adam Phillips have already made significant contributions.[1] As a pathological description that critically examines the relationship between the subject and the object world, the phobic condition is, of course, a fertile subject for psychological and psychoanalytical studies. But while the theoretical interest in phobias has continued to thrive since the disorder's taxonomic emergence in the 1870s, medical historians and literary critics have given little attention to its cultural significance and shifting historical imports. Unlike other, well-studied nineteenth-century pathological entities such as hysteria (Showalter), neurosis, or paranoia (Trotter, *Paranoid Modernism*), the subject of phobias remains relatively unknown critical territory.[2] This special issue gives preference, in contrast to established psychoanalytical studies on the topic of phobias, to a historicized analysis of the disorder's development as a medical entity and a cultural signifier. Why did phobias emerge as fashionable illnesses at the end of the nineteenth century? How did psychologists and doctors describe the clinical picture commonly associated with the phobic condition? And what were the historical, cultural, and medical circumstances that produced, changed, and finally consolidated phobia's position as a modern disease? These and related questions are addressed in the three following articles. Collectively, their focus is – as we shall see – wide-ranging, covering such different topics as the description of fear and phobic situations in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novels or Ford Madox Ford's agoraphobic affliction. What all three writers propose, however, is that the onset of modernity assisted vitally in conditioning, in the long nineteenth century, the pathological configuration know as "phobia." But what, in broad terms, was this illness's conceptual prelude? Was fear or terror regarded as unnatural or unreasonable before doctors provided nosological labels? And if not, how did the commonplace understanding of fear as a natural and conventional human sensation change to acquire its pathological qualities in the second half of the nineteenth century?

If the professional study of fear was marked, from the 1870s onwards, by classificatory richness, a rather different picture presents itself at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Before its elevation into the rank of fashionable late-nineteenth-century diseases, phobia is mentioned in isolated examples only in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. While the term seems to emerge for the first time in 1786, Samuel Taylor Coleridge allegedly noted, in 1801, that he has "a perfect phobia of inns and coffee-houses" ("Phobia"). Evidently, in Coleridge's quaint statement the term 'phobia' is used solely as a high-brow variant of the word 'fear.' Connotations of fright and terror are unmistakably on hand – of Greek origin, the term "phobus" in classical Latin can variously mean "that has a fear of," "that has an aversion to" or "that has no affinity for" ("Phobia") – but what remains absent here are the condition's later, explicitly pathological indicators. Even though David Trotter locates an early discussion of phobia in an article by the medical practitioner Benjamin Rush that was published in 1786 in the *Columbian Magazine* (Trotter, *The Uses of Phobia* 1), it seems as if doctors had, at the time Coleridge was expressing his dread of crowded taverns, not yet singled out the study of fear and anxiety as a worthy or fruitful avenue of critical inquiry.

Here exception proves the rule. One 'phobia' was well-known to both medical men and the public at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The illness in question was hydrophobia – the human form of rabies. Indeed, "until the labeling of the new phobias, like claustrophobia and agoraphobia, in the 1870s" "hydrophobia was the only 'phobia'" (Pemberton and Worboys 69) that approximated a clinical picture. Naturally, though, rabies seems an unexpected historical and nosological antecedent of the spatial (and other fear-related) disorders, which fin-de-siècle doctors scrutinised and classified with such vehemence. At least in its canine variety, this disorder was a purely "physical disease" (Pemberton and Worboys 2). Furthermore, after Louis Pasteur introduced his preventive vaccine in 1885, the condition's contagious nature became an accepted fact in medical theory and practice. Neither of those issues factored in descriptions of the spatial phobias described for the first time in the 1870s. Although chronic fear might have assumed all but epidemic status at the fin de siècle and was regarded as a sign of humanity's cultural decline, contagion was never seriously suggested as its method of dissemination. However, in its human form, the clinical picture of rabies exhibited specific psychological components – a fact that made it easier for nineteenth-century medical practitioners to establish links between the first phobia and other, later discovered fear-related maladies. In fact, the expression hydrophobia itself "derived from the mental state" commonly fond in suffers, "which always included choking and the inability to swallow, and sometimes even anxiety at the sound of water being poured" (Pemberton and Worboys 12). Combined with other notorious symptoms such as delusions, paroxysms, aggressiveness and violence, the illness would – if it remained untreated – inevitably lead to the sufferer's death from exhaustion.[3]

This short review of hydrophobia reveals that the disorder is best described, in contrast to rabies, as psychosomatic illness. Apparent physiological signs such as the inability to swallow and the sporadic convulsions appear alongside other, psychological factors, namely delusions and the prominent behavioral changes. In its human form, the infectious disease, rabies, can thus be said to bear a certain resemblance to phobic conditions emerging in medical studies in the 1870s – psychosomatic conditions in which specific mental processes (fear and anxiety) produce apparent (and usually paralyzing) physiological symptoms. Moreover, in

their attempts to conclusively establish nosological patterns, nineteenth-century doctors such as William Youatt, James Bardsley, W. Lauder Lindsay, and Thomas Watson distinguished hydrophobia from another pathological configuration. This was an illness that had a much more pronounced psychological component: spurious hydrophobia.

According to medical observers, this discrete but related disorder was, as its name suggests, entirely the product of the sufferer's mind – a "hysterical condition brought on by the fear of the consequences of a dog bite" (Pemberton and Worboys 11-12). Needless to say, extensive and sensational media reports on rabies must have assisted considerably in producing nineteenth-century cases of spurious hydrophobia so that a *Caledonian Mercury* column, "Cyno-Phobia and Hydrophbia," condemned, on 6 July 1861, the widespread notion that every dog bite inevitably produces hydrophobia. To make his case, the columnist describes the medical condition of a "gentleman, named Shepherd," who was bitten by "a mastiff dog and fell into great alarm, believing that it must be mad." The report continues:

> There was not a particle of evidence to show that the dog was so; but he insisted on its being killed. The poor man became very violent soon after being bitten, and snapped at strangers, barking like a dog, and crowing like a cock. Now all these are not symptoms of hydrophobia, although they are those which a popular, but unfounded superstition ascribes to the disease. . . . This poor fellow fell a victim to his fears, and died in a high fever, accompanied by delirium. The scientific evidence was perfectly conclusive on these points. ("Cyno-Phobia and Hydrophobia" 4)

In spite of overwhelming medical evidence that pointed to the contrary, Shepherd was convinced that he was afflicted by the disease and died. Not hydrophobia, the columnist asserts, but Shepherd's imagination is responsible for causing disease and death.

Given its apparent psychological derivation, spurious hydrophobia is of immense interest when considering the genesis of modern phobias in the nineteenth century. No longer is the fear or terror of an object such as water merely a pathological symptom, but it is now the exclusive producer of the patient's complaints and ailments. In becoming the formative element in the illness, fear develops an entirely new representational system. Like a pathogenic germ, fear itself produces symptoms and can be considered the etiologic agent of disease. While it creates, in spurious hydrophobia, a constellation of symptoms commonly associated with human rabies – or an excess thereof – fear also produces the state of nervous anxiety that doctors associated with spatial and other phobias in the second half of the nineteenth century. Implausible as it may seem at first, the history of modern phobias can thus be traced back to early-nineteenth-century preoccupations with other forms of phobic afflictions.

If the genesis of the phobic condition as modern disease concept is complex and multilayered, the same can be said about its symptomatology. Evidently, to all other people than the afflicted, phobic terror contains elements of the irrational and the grotesque. While the activators of the phobic response – the objects or situations, which produce irrational fear and resulting somatic symptoms – varies significantly in modern phobias, they are often situations or paraphernalia of an ordinary kind that set

4

off the fearful reaction. Open spaces, dirt, pointed objects, needles, hair – to recall some of the phobic objects selected by Nordau – have nothing explicitly terrifying about them. What provokes the phobic response is thus the sufferer's reaction to a specific object, setting, or environment. A phobia is a subjective phenomenological experience in which the individual is unexpectedly, in the fearful encounter, startled and arrested by an aspect of the normal, everyday world. Thus the phobic encounter is, as Adam Phillips suggests, "a way of making ordinary places and things extremely charged, like an unconscious estrangement technique. To be petrified by a pigeon is a way of making it new" (Phillips 22). What materialises as a distinctive feature in medical theories on phobias, then, is a suspicion that the sufferer is making analytical mistakes – that the pathological condition manifests itself in a misreading of the normal order of things.

Moreover, because the modern metropolis is one of the most apparent arenas for such radical misreadings, in which the ordinary world appears as both alienating and transformed, spatial phobias have an obvious conceptual connection with cultural modernity. Unlike any other image, urbanity and the trope of the city represent the modern phenomenological experience. Consequently, phobia's association with the aesthetics of the modern can be particularly helpful in locating the disorder in literary and cultural history. While Nordau vividly depicts the agoraphobic's confrontation with the distorted and deformed cityscapes of the future, writers of the early twentieth century aimed to find new ways of representing the altered landscapes of modernity and the individual's psychological reaction to a modern, transient, ever-changing environment. If phobias have the ability to de-familiarise an ordinary encounter or even an object of quotidian use, as Phillips suggests, the modernist avant-garde explicitly demanded to 'make it new.' As a metaphor phobia can thus function as a useful critical tool for the analysis of modernist literary aesthetics – especially modernist literature that engages with the individual's disturbing urban experiences. Joseph Conrad's 1907 novel *The Secret Agent* offers such a memorable literary depiction of the hostile city with its contorted features. On his way to Verloc's shop, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, leaves "the scene of his daily labours quickly like an unobtrusive shadow" before his "descent into the street" is described like "the descent into a slimy aquarium from which the water had been run off." On route, a "murky, gloomy dampness enveloped him. The walls of the houses were wet, the mud of the roadway glistened with an effect of phosphorescence, and when he emerged into the Strand out of a narrow street by the side of Charing Cross Station the genius of the locality assimilated him. He might have been but one of the queer foreign fish that can be seen of an evening about there flitting round the dark corners" (150-51). Although the character's impression of the city is not necessarily a phobic one, Conrad's depiction locates the feeling of estrangement and dislocation produced in this encounter with the unfamiliar and uncanny streets of the urban centres often evoked in modernist literature.

However, as Andrew Mangham's essay on the gothic awakening of taphephobia in this issue illustrates, modernist authors were not the first writers to capitalise on this shared sensation of novelty and fear produced by the defamiliarised, uncanny locations and places of modernity. Distinctive in its attempt to communicate to the reader the fear and terror experienced by its protagonists, first-wave Gothic literature of the late eighteenth century emerged as a formation which makes anxiety its reference point and structural landmark. It is thus appropriate that the history of modern phobias, related by the essays in this journal, should start with the

representation of fearful experiences in the Gothic genre. By synchronizing the analysis of representative Gothic texts with a review of nineteenth-century medical debates on live burial, Mangham traces the development of a particular kind of phobic experience – that of being interred alive – in a selection of writers who contributed to the making of the Gothic canon: Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens, and Wilkie Collins. Many texts examined in the essay predate the formal acceptance of phobias into diagnostic medical terminology. Nonetheless, Mangham convincingly argues that the imaginative Gothic descriptions of terror and fear resembled the pathological condition subsequently described by practitioners. In fact, as Mangham speculates toward the end of his essay, the Gothic scenes of fright and fear might have assisted in producing the demand to scientifically investigate chronic fear and anxiety. When medical experts, from the 1870s onwards, finally defined phobia as a medical condition, many readers of the Gothic had long been familiar with its phenomenology.

That nineteenth-century medicine and Gothic literature shared common ground is further suggested by Minna Vuohelainen's article on Richard Marsh's Gothic novels *The Beetle* (1897) and *The Goddess* (1900). In analyzing the depictions of spatial phobias in his fin-de-siècle urban fiction, Vuohelainen first situates Marsh's texts firmly in a cultural milieu that anxiously scrutinised nervous and psychological disorders. Marsh's fiction resonates with pathological descriptions but, as Vuohelainen suggests, phobic topographies are evoked everywhere to create its eerie and oppressive atmosphere. When Marsh published his urban Gothic fiction in the 1890s, phobias had already been accepted into medicine's diagnostic vocabulary. But Vuohelainen – like Mangham – illustrates that literary depictions of phobias were not simply responsive but continued to be auxiliary to late-nineteenth-century medical debates on nervous disorders. Whether or not they explicitly employed the terminology produced by medical practitioners, late-nineteenth-century fictional representations of phobias such as Marsh's successfully reproduced the sensations of paralysis and fright commonly associated with the disorder's clinical picture. Due to their specific representational mode literary texts could – in a way that the medical treatise could not – transmit and make known phobic symptomatologies. The synchronised appearance of phobic conditions in medical and literary texts of the fin de siècle thus shows once more the extent to which two apparently irreconcilable discursive formations, literature and medicine, intersected and spoke to each other.

In Marsh's Gothic fiction London, the degenerate and corruptive imperial metropolis, emerges as a site that inflicts phobic experiences on its inhabitants. The paralytic apprehension of the modern city is also the focus of Matthew Beaumont's essay on Ford Madox Ford. In the early 1900s – while he suffered from other fear-related disorders – agoraphobia was certainly Ford's most inhibitive psychological ailment. A modernist novelist writing at a time when phobias had become widely accepted psychological disorders, Ford should have reveled, as Beaumont infers, in the experience of urban cosmopolitanism. After all, the representation of the flâneur is, like few other topics, central to modernist literary aesthetics. Due to his agoraphobia, however, Ford was excluded from a practice that defined the modernist project. In his detailed and sophisticated reading of Ford's biographical and fictional engagement with topographic fears, Beaumont productively reveals the associative connection between Ford's agoraphobic affliction and his commitment to literary impressionism. What is more, the essay's final analysis of *The Soul of London* (1905) uncovers the curative power of writing and literary representation. According to Beaumont, Ford's 1905 text is shaped by the attempt to negotiate the incompatible

6

desires to absorb and reject the metropolitan experience. Not an aestheticization but the triumph over pathological fear seemed to have been the motivating force in Ford's turn to agoraphobic writing. If nineteenth-century literary writers such as Dickens, Collins, or Marsh used phobia's fearful geographies as a new representational mode to communicate to the reader sensations of anxiety and fright, Ford's modernist aesthetics also obtained restorative function. Moreover, while modernist writers determinedly pledge to 'make it new' – to revolutionise literary modes – Ford's case illustrates that the desire to find alternative forms of representing the modern metropolis was directed not exclusively by aesthetic but also by personal concerns. Fear is no longer purely a prominent literary trope. Instead it has become the constitutive element for literary production. Literature might still evoke fear. But maybe it has also become instrumental in overcoming one of the most significant pathological symptoms developed in the individual's encounter with cultural modernity.

The aim of this introduction was to draw attention to some of the complexity inherent in phobia's medical and social constructions. Never a fixed or stable category, phobia remained – after its inception in the nineteenth century – a culturally charged concept. While medical practitioners aimed to establish precise nosological parameters to discuss pathological fear, literary depictions of phobias revealed the disorder's mutability and shifting meanings. The following three essays will continue the examination of some of phobia's variable imports emerging in the course of the long nineteenth century and it is to be hoped that this journal issue can assist in opening up the debate of this under-studied medical configuration. As a cultural concept phobia always intruded on two different academic subjects: medicine and literature. Literary writers and medical practitioners were similarly intrigued by the prospect of studying anxiety and fright. The historical analysis of phobias is thus a fruitful topic for collaborative interdisciplinary research between literary critics and scholars of the social history of medicine. Like the study of other medical disorders that had the ability to function as cultural tropes, the analysis of phobias illustrates the interconnectedness of those two academic disciplines. Both medicine and literature participated actively in the production and establishment of one of modernity's most complex medical disorders.

Notes

    1. Useful assessments of James's, Freud's, Lacan's, and Kristeva's phobia analyses can be found in Beardsworth, 84-90, Phillips, 12-26, and Vidler, 36-42.

    2. Notable exceptions are Trotter, *The Uses of Phobia* and Vidler.

    3. A graphic illustration of hydrophobia's devastating course is provided in Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), in which the protagonist's husband, Tea Cake, receives a bite from a "mad dowg" (207), succumbs to the illness and is shot when attempting to assaults his wife Janie. Before Janie fires a deadly shot at him, Tea Cake exhibits notorious symptoms commonly found in hydrophobia. Water, Tea Cake reports "done turn't aginst me" (206) and he gives Janie, who observes him "coming from the outhouse with a queer loping gait, swinging his head from side to side and his jaws clenched in a funny way" (214), "a look full of blank ferocity" (213).

Works Cited

Beardsworth, Sara. *Julia Kristeva: Psychoanalysis and Modernity*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004.

Conrad, Joseph. *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale*. London: Penguin, 1990.

"Cyno-Phobia and Hydrophobia," *The Caledonian Mercury*. 6 July 1861: 4.

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: HarperCollins, 2000.

Nordau, Max. *Degeneration*. London: William Heinemann, 1898.

Pemberton, Neil, and Michael Worboys. *Mad Dogs and Englishmen: Rabies in Britain, 1830-2000*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Phillips, Adam. *On Kissing, Tickling and Being Bored: Psychoanalytic Essays on the Unexamined Life*. London: Faber and Faber, 1994.

"Phobia". *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford English Dictionary. 9 March 2009. Web. 6 Oct. 2010.

Showalter, Elaine. *Hystories: Hysteria, Gender, and Culture*. London: Picador, 1997.

Trotter, David. *Paranoid Modernism: Literary Experiment, Psychosis, and the Professionalization of English Society*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.

----. *The Uses of Phobia: Essays on Literature and Film*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2010.

Vidler, Anthony. *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000.

Buried Alive: The Gothic Awakening of Taphephobia

Andrew Mangham

In 1919 Sigmund Freud wrote about the fear of being buried alive in his essay on the uncanny. Expanding on ideas he had developed in *Totem and Taboo* (1912-13), he suggested that this fear, "taphephobia", was linked to wider terrors relating to the un/dead and that it manifested a return of latent, psychic energies:

> Many people experience the [uncanny] feeling in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts. . . . There is scarcely any other matter . . . upon which our thoughts and feelings have changed so little since the very earliest times. . . . To some people the idea of being buried alive by mistake is the most uncanny thing of all. And yet psycho-analysis has taught us that this terrifying phantasy is only a transformation of another phantasy which had originally nothing terrifying about it at all, but was qualified by a certain lasciviousness – the phantasy, I mean, of intra-uterine existence (Freud 241).[1]

Thus live burial is uncanny, unsettling, and terrifying because it manifests both a hideous form of awakening and a dialogue between worlds that should remain disengaged. Like the dead, memories of intra-uterine existence are subterraneous forces that ought to remain buried yet, in thoughts of live burial, they rise up and occupy a troubled space in the conscious mind. More importantly, Freud characterised notions of premature burial as an embodiment of forbidden movement between the living and the dead. Images of the un/dead hark back to times in our development, he says, when the boundaries between life and death were less rigid. Before the Enlightenment standardised methods of thinking about mortality in ways based on principles of scientific rationality rather than benighted superstition, it was a common belief that death was not necessarily the end of one's worldly affairs. For instance, "the concept of the vengeful ghost was so engrained in popular belief", notes Owen Davies, "that it was thought that the living could determine to haunt someone after death as an act of malice or retribution" (6). In 1609, one woman reported how a man had threatened to "kill himself and . . . when he was dead his ghost should tear her in pieces" (Davies 6). From the early nineteenth century onwards, however, it was more commonly understood that there was no such coming back from the dead; if one could be sure of anything in life, it was that *death* was absolutely final. Yet in images of live burial, the deceased figuratively and literally rise up; their graves stand tenantless and the sheeted dead creep uncannily across the boundaries between this world and the next. The concept of live burial is thus paradigmatic of a connection between worlds that *should* remain separate. It is a symbol of trespass – signifying that what "ought to have remained secret and hidden . . . has come to light" (Freud 225).

This essay's aims to suggest that, throughout the nineteenth century, live burial was paradigmatic of unexpected movements and unwelcome forms of understanding. The idea of being buried alive emerged as a ghastly emblem of knowing – *truly* knowing – what it was to be beleaguered, victimised, and terrified.

10

What is more, the notion of premature interment, symbolic of movement between disconnected forms, flitted between Gothic and medical literature throughout this period. The resulting exchange of ideas and imagery allowed taphephobia, the fear of premature burial, to emerge as a diagnostic label in the 1890s.

This is a story that begins with the first-wave Gothic literature of the late eighteenth century. Literary scholarship has noted how this literary formation, like no genre predating it, developed methods of outlining, in full and spine-tingling detail, how characters *feel* when faced with something terrible – particularly imprisonment and/or finding themselves face-to-face with the un/dead. Angela Wright notes:

> In appalled and helpless fascination, when we read a Gothic novel which is replete with violent emotion and action, we can only continue to watch or read passively as the violence continues. In a sense, as readers, we also become victims as well as complicit literary voyeurs. (110)

Ann Radcliffe, that most famous exponent of the Gothic style, believed Edmund Burke's famous theory that terror produced "the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (Burke 36)[2] and therefore chose to privilege, in *her* novels, the feelings and experiences of characters undergoing frightening encounters or moments of unpleasant realisation. In the following scene from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), for instance, Emily D'Aubert notices that she has been locked in a room featuring a sanguinary cadaver and numerous instruments of torture. Because the concern here is with the techniques that Gothic novelists use to frame the fear of spatial privation and death, it is necessary to quote at length:

> When her spirits had overcome the first shock of her situation, she held up the lamp to examine, if the chamber afforded a possibility of an escape. . . . she perceived no furniture, except, indeed, an iron chair, fastened in the centre of the chamber, immediately over which, depending on a chain from the ceiling, hung an iron ring. Having gazed upon these, for some time, with wonder and horror, she next observed iron bars below, made for the purpose of confining the feet, and on the arms of the chair were rings of the same metal. As she continued to survey them, she concluded, that they were instruments of torture, and it struck her, that some poor wretch had once been fastened in this chair, and had there been starved to death. She was chilled by the thought; but, what was her agony, when, in the next moment, it occurred to her, that her aunt might have been one of these victims, and that she herself might be the next! An acute pain seized her head, she was scarcely able to hold the lamp, and, looking round for support, was seating herself, unconsciously, in the iron chair itself; but suddenly perceiving where she was, she started from it in horror, and sprung towards a remote end of the room. Here again she looked round for a seat to sustain her, and perceived only a dark curtain, which, descending from the ceiling to the floor, was drawn along the whole side of the chamber. Ill as she was, the appearance of this curtain struck her, and she paused to gaze upon it, in wonder and apprehension.
>   . . . she wished, yet dreaded, to lift it, and to discover what it veiled: suddenly conjecturing, that it concealed the body of her murdered aunt, she seized it, in a fit of desperation, and drew it aside. Beyond, appeared a corpse, stretched on a kind of low couch, which was crimsoned with human blood, as was the floor beneath. The features, deformed by death, were ghastly and

11

> horrible, and more than one livid wound appeared in the face. Emily, bending over the body, gazed, for a moment, with an eager, frenzied eye; but, in the next, the lamp dropped from her hand, and she fell senseless at the foot of the couch. (Radcliffe, *Udolpho* 347-48)

What is important about this passage, and Radcliffe's style in general, is how the character's realisation of horror and consequent fear is portrayed exactly as it is experienced. The events are narrated sequentially and focalised through Emily's own observations, via which the reader views the objects of terror as they come into focus. Radcliffe chooses to lead the reader towards the crimson curtain *with* Emily, supplying no indication of what to expect. The aim is for the reader to feel the same curiosity that the heroine feels, and to share her "apprehension" and "horror" when the corpse, languishing in its blood, is unveiled. The effect Radcliffe's style produces, then, is a phenomenological portrait of fear: presented in no abstract fashion, horror is understood entirely through the lens of human experience. In her posthumous essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (1826), Radcliffe observed and admired a similar pattern in Shakespeare's Danish tragedy:

> Every minute circumstance of the scene between those watching on the platform, and of that between them and Horatio preceding the entrance of the apparition, contributes to excite some feeling of dreariness, or melancholy, or solemnity, or expectation, in unison with and leading on toward that high curiosity and thrilling awe with which we witness the conclusion of the scene. (Radcliffe, "Supernatural" 314)

What is spectacular about the opening of the play, Radcliffe suggests, is its ability to synchronise its audience's feelings with those of the characters experiencing the supernatural.

Such conjunctions of *understanding* fear and *experiencing* the same are crucial to many narratives of live burial written in Radcliffe's wake. For example, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Premature Burial" (1844), which will be considered in more detail later, notes that "*no* event is so terribly well adapted to inspire the supremeness of bodily and mental distress, as is burial before death" (262-63). Whether by accident or by design, Poe's conceptualisation of the "supremeness" of terror corresponded with Burke's notion of the sublime potential of the same. In the *Philosophical Enquiry* (1757), Burke noted that modes of "obscurity" and "privation", including spatial (confinement) and visual (darkness) like those experienced during live burial, unlocked sublime levels of fear: "All *general* privations are great", he says, "because they are all terrible; *Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude* and *Silence*" (65). These four abstract nouns strike the keynote of how it must feel to experience premature burial, as Poe's story exemplifies:

> I writhed, and made spasmodic exertions to force open the lid: it would not move. I felt my wrists for the bell-rope: it was not to be found. And now the Comforter fled for ever, and a still sterner Despair reigned triumphant . . . and then, too, there came suddenly to my nostrils the strong peculiar odor of moist earth. The conclusion was irresistible. . . . I had fallen into a trance while absent from home – while among strangers – when, or how, I could not remember – and it was they who had buried me as a dog – nailed up in some

12

common coffin – and thrust deep, deep, and for ever, into some ordinary and nameless grave.

As this awful conviction forced itself, thus, into the innermost chambers of my soul, I once again struggled to cry aloud. And in this second endeavor I succeeded. A long, wild, and continuous shriek, or yell of agony, resounded through the realms of the subterranean Night (Poe, "Burial" 267)

Throughout the nineteenth century, the fear of premature burial seems to have been ubiquitous. Apprehensions on the subject had been felt for centuries but "hasty mass burials during nineteenth-century cholera epidemics gave rise to this fear. Medical tests for determining death were not always reliable, and for most of the Victorian era, it was widely believed that people might well be buried alive while in a death-like coma or trance" (Willis 159). Such worries were exploited in a short story written by John Galt in 1821. Printed in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and entitled "The Buried Alive", the text outlines the story of a man mistakenly pronounced dead by medical professionals. "I had been ill for quite some time", the narrator observes, then,

one day towards evening, the crisis took place. – . . . For a short time a terrible confusion overwhelmed me, – and when it passed off all my recollection returned with the most perfect distinctness, but the power of motion had departed. . . . I exerted by utmost power of volition to stir myself, but I could not move even an eyelid. (Galt 262)

Such events are what taphephobics fear the most: awareness of imminent burial combined with an inability to avoid it; the fear concerns a conflict between the wakefulness of the mind and the slumbers of the body.

In 1837 Charles Dickens wrote about one man who had become so afraid of the possibility that he could not exorcise the images of death and funerary from his thoughts. He was the father of the pantomime artist Joseph Grimaldi and

was in the habit of wandering about churchyards and burying places for hours together, and would speculate on the diseases of which the persons had died; figuring their death-beds, and wonder how many of them had been buried alive in a fit or a trance; a possibility which he shuddered to think of, and which haunted him both through life and at its close. Such an effort had this fear upon his mind, that he left express directions in his will that, before his coffin should be fastened down, his head should be severed from his body, and the operation was actually performed in the presence of several persons. (Dickens, *Grimaldi* 12)

Such preventative measures were not uncommon though these are particularly gruesome and extreme. Grimaldi's father, according to Dickens, was a successful writer of pantomimes and melodramas; because of his obsession with premature burial, "gloomy ideas haunted the unfortunate man's mind [and] even his merriment assumed a ghastly hue . . . His comicality sought for grotesque objects in the grave and the charnel-house" (Dickens, *Grimaldi* 13). John Carey, Andrew Sanders, and Harry Stone are just three of a number of critics who have documented, convincingly, how Dickens himself drew upon images of death, funerary, and the macabre when constructing some of his most grotesque characters. The theme of live burial appears

to have been a preoccupation of Dickens, especially in the later novels. For example, both Mrs Clennam and Miss Havisham moulder, sedentarily, in their decaying houses and may be said to have been buried alive. Miss Havisham is compared to "a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement", which now has "dark eyes that move" and look at a petrified Pip (Dickens, *Expectations* 49). Mrs Clennam narrowly escapes being buried alive when her charnel-like house collapses; she spends the rest of her life in a zombified state, which suggests, also, that the many senile, demented, and vegetative characters that Dickens developed throughout his *oeuvre* may experience, at least figuratively, this unhappy fate.

　　Yet, it is the fiction of Poe that appropriated, most effectively, the period's prevalent fears of live burial. The most famous of these fictionalisations appears in the "accidental" entombing of Madeline in "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839). In lurid and dramatic style, Madeline's brother Roderick listens for indications that his sister has been inhumed alive:

> Now hear it? – yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long – long – long – many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it – yet I dared not – oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am! – I dared not – I *dared* not speak! *We have put her living in the tomb!* Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them – many, many days ago – yet I dared not – *I dared not speak! . . .* [There stood] the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. (Poe, "Usher" 245)

In keeping with the focalisation techniques of Ann Radcliffe, the horror of Madeline's hasty burial is amplified by the fact that it is filtered through the acute senses of an astonished witness ("I hear it, and *have* heard it"). Like Pip's first sighting of Miss Havisham in the ashes of a rich dress, the hearing, then seeing, of the un-dead in "The House of Usher" causes a paralysing fear ("I *dared* not speak!"). In both texts, onlookers are met with a seeming confirmation of one of the worst horrors known to mankind: once the subject of speculative folklore, the spectre of live burial rises up now, hideously, to be heard, seen, and experienced.

　　In his later, more detailed analysis of the theme in "The Premature Burial", Poe makes the horror even more abundant by suggesting that it was a common occurrence. Written deceptively in essay format, the narrative combines feeling with apparent fact:

> To be buried while alive is, beyond question, the most terrific of . . . extremes which has ever fallen to the lot of mere mortality. That it has frequently, very frequently, so fallen will scarcely be denied by those who think. The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins? . . . We have the direct testimony of medical and ordinary experience to prove that a vast number of such interments have actually taken place. I might refer at once, if necessary, to a hundred well-authenticated instances. (258-59)

This passage shrewdly pinpoints a paradox inherent to medical knowledge of the time. As Poe correctly indicates, the possibility of live burial was authenticated by medical

14

scientists, and such verifications highlighted systemic failings in an area that was the site of some scientific confidence: the ability to tell the difference between the living and the dead. Writing on live burial in 1865, Alfred Swaine Taylor asserted with ill-assumed confidence that "mistakes of this kind are not likely to be made by medical men" (1: 78). Notwithstanding, the belief that medical mistakes were both possible and common energised many tales of premature burial. Such is illustrated by Poe's outline of the 1831 case of Edward Stapleton. Dying (apparently) of typhus fever, Stapleton's "cadaver" becomes the source of scientific interest because his illness displayed some "anomalous symptoms" (Poe, "Premature" 261). Medical men ask his family whether they may keep the body for *post-mortem* study. Their request is refused so they have the body exhumed by grave robbers anyway. As experiments commence on the disinterred remains, something ghastly occurs:

> It grew late. The day was about to dawn; and it was thought expedient, at length, to proceed at once to the dissection. A student, however, was especially desirous of testing a theory of his own, and insisted upon applying the [electric] battery to one of the pectoral muscles. A rough gash was made, and a wire hastily brought in contact; when the patient, with a hurried but quite unconvulsive movement, arose from the table, stepped into the middle of the floor, gazed about him uneasily for a few seconds, and then – spoke. What he said was unintelligible; but the words were uttered; the syllabification was distinct. Having spoken he fell heavily to the floor. [Witnesses of the scene] were paralysed with awe. (262)

This is a scene that resurrects the fantastically lurid scene, from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), where the galvanised creature opens its "dull yellow eye", breathes hard, and moves with a "convulsive motion" (38-39). After the curious and incestuous dream of his fiancé turning into his mother's cadaver, Frankenstein wakes – also with convulsive motions – to find the "miserable monster", "jaws opened", muttering "some inarticulate sounds" (39-40). As in "The House of Usher", the roles of the spectators are themselves the focus of the scene in "The Premature Burial": medical men invert the actions of the unfortunate Stapleton by standing "paralysed" and speechless "with awe". This may be the story of a man who has been buried alive, but it is the reactions of the witnesses that fascinate Poe; the spectacle of live burial provides him with the opportunity to highlight worrying levels of ignorance in the medical profession. Contrary to Dr Taylor's confident avowal that medical men can tell easily the difference between life and death, the specialists in this tale could not be more surprised when Stapleton awakes.

Despite Poe's clever attempts to indicate otherwise, Stapleton's story is actually a fictional one. There is no record of any man of that name being exhumed in the year of 1831. Indeed, it is more likely that Poe was inspired by the earlier short story of John Galt. Like Poe's tale, Galt's "Buried Alive" provides uncompromising descriptions of the horror of being inhumed, exhumed, and almost dissected:

> Soon after, a few handfuls of earth were thrown upon the coffin . . . the shovel was employed, and the sound of the rattling mould, as it covered me, was far more tremendous than thunder. But I could make no effort. The sound gradually became less and less, and . . . I knew that the grave was filled up, and that the sexton was treading in the earth. . . .

> I heard a low and under-sound in the earth above me . . . I felt the hands of some dreadful being working about my throat. They dragged me out of the coffin by the head, I felt again the living air, but it was piercingly cold. . . . I learnt that I was that night to be dissected. . . .
>
> Previous to beginning the dissection, [the demonstrator] proposed to try on me some galvanic experiment. . . . When they had satisfied themselves with the galvanic phenomena, the demonstrator took the knife, and pierced me on the bosom with the point. I felt a dreadful crackling, as it were, throughout my whole frame. . . . The ice of death was broken up – my trance ended (263-64).

The links with body snatchers and dissectors locate Galt's story, like Poe's "Premature Burial" within a tradition of Gothic texts that harvest their most disturbing aspects from real events in the history of medicine. As we shall see, the belief that live burial "frequently, very frequently" occurred was not unsupported by medical writers. Moreover, Galt's story draws on the phenomenological portraits of fear developed by the first-wave Gothic by telling the tale from the perspective of the individual *undergoing* the hideous experience. In Poe's work, descriptions of live burial stick initially to the perspective of third-party witnesses yet moves to first-person perspective when speculating about the *experience* of being buried alive:

> The unendurable oppression of the lungs – the stifling fumes of the damp earth – the clinging to the death garments – the rigid embrace of the narrow house – the blackness of the absolute Night – the silence like a sea that overwhelms – the unseen but palpable presence of the Conquerer Worm – these things . . . carry into the heart, which still palpitates, a degree of appalling and intolerable horror from which the most daring imagination must recoil. We know nothing so agonizing upon Earth – we can dream of nothing half so hideous in the realms of the nethermost Hell. (Poe, "Burial" 263)

Live burial is a fate worse than death and here, as in Galt, the fear is represented and induced most effectively through the filter of human experience. Galt and Poe accessed the full horrors of being interred alive by anticipating the feelings, both physical and psychological, of the un-dead. In the example above, the reader's imagination is successfully manipulated to evoke feelings of panic, suffocation, and terror. And, consequently, it is difficult not to feel one's chest tighten at "the unendurable oppression of the lungs – the stifling fumes of the damp earth – the clinging to the death garments – the rigid embrace of the narrow house".

Of course, one of the main factors that appears to have terrified Victorian taphephobics was the confirmation, writ large in medical books, that live burial could take place. Poe was right to observe that "we have direct testimony from medical and ordinary experience" to prove that live burials really did happen. In 1846, physiologist and anatomist Herbert Mayo wrote a series of articles for *Blackwood's* entitled "Letters on the Truths contained in Popular Superstitions". Among the numerous superstitions that he attempted to discredit he included vampires. Attempting to reassure his readers that such monsters do not exist, he provided the even more chilling notion that so-called vampires were ordinary people that had been buried alive:

> Let us content ourselves for the present with a notion less monstrous, but still

16

startling enough: That the bodies, which were found in the so-called vampyr state, instead of being in a new and mystical condition, were simply alive in the common way; that, in short, they were the bodies of persons who had been buried alive. . . . Now it is analogically by no means very improbable, that the functions of the nervous system admit of being brought to a complete stand-still, the wheels of the machinery locking, as it were, of a sudden, through some influence directly exerted upon *it*, and that this state of interrupted function should continue for a very considerable period, without loss of power or recovery. . . . So [we may] presume, that in the singular cases [of vampirism] we are considering, the body is but in . . . [a] fit, which suspends the vital phenomena, and reduces its vitality to that of the unincubated egg, to simple life, without change, without waste or renewal. The body does not putrefy, because it is alive; it does not waste or require nourishment, because every action is stilled within it. (Mayo 436-37)

Alfred Taylor, an expert in exhuming corpses for medico-legal analysis, praised Mayo's article and verified "the absurdity of [the vampire] superstition" (1: 81). Mayo dispensed with the absurdities of the paranormal but he replaced them, effectively, with a "reality" that was even more startling because it had the weight of science behind it. Mayo's way of writing, using specialised, medical terminology, indicated that he was an authority to be trusted; he denied the existence of vampires but verified a horror that haunted many individuals with a greater tenacity.

The narrator of Poe's "Premature Burial", for example, is convinced that *his* body is able to enter the state of trance, identified by Mayo as "catalepsy", and that, during this condition, it is impossible for others to tell whether or not he is still alive:

For several years I had been subject to attacks of the singular disorder which physicians have agreed to term catalepsy. . . . [Describing the condition] sometimes the patient lies, for a day only, or even for a shorter period, in a species of extreme lethargy. . . .[Sometimes] the duration of the trance is for weeks – even for months; while the closest scrutiny, and the most rigorous medical tests, fail to establish any material distinction between the state of the sufferer and what we conceive of absolute death. (263)

According to Mayo in 1846 this "extreme lethargy" could, and often *did*, occur. Further evidence may be found in a rather curious case reported to *The Lancet* in 1837. It concerned the story of an Indian man who was buried alive for a month. He was able to enter *himself* into the cataleptic state and, when exhumed thirty days later, he was still alive. H. M. Twedell, the man who shared this implausible story with the readers of the journal, said that

this [case is] interesting to future philosophers, . . . showing, that air, food, and water, are not entirely necessary to sustain existence, and that a man may betake himself to the grave, and pass away a month, comfortably, if assured that a shovel will be exerted to release him at the appointed hour. (257)

The notion of a man betaking *himself* to the grave is a tableau worthy of the macabre and uncanny fictions of authors like Poe. Like legends of vengeful ghosts, it is an uncanny dissent from the view that the boundaries between life and death are rigid and insuperable; the idea of catalepsy introduced a troubling, yet scientifically

17

verified, grey area between the two worlds. In 1865, Alfred Taylor corroborated as much in his *Principles and Practice of Medical Jurisprudence*:

> There are some forms of disease affecting the nervous systems, as, for example   . . . catalepsy, the systems of which are occasionally such, as closely to simulate death. Respiration and circulation appear either to cease entirely, or to be carried on so feebly, that, to uninformed observers, the person affected may seem to be really dead. Catalepsy, or, as it is vulgarly called, *trance*, in which the person lies in an unconscious state, may thus assume the appearance of death. (1:43)

He admitted that live burials were possible, but he also stipulated that the extent to which they had been perpetrated had been grossly exaggerated.

Indeed, exaggeration and irrationality are elements quintessential to the fear of live burial and they signal one of the key ways in which Gothic literature played a role in the development of phobia theory. Grimaldi's father experienced *his* fear of live burial, remember, as haunting him continually and the plays he wrote "assumed a ghastly hue" as a result. In Poe's story on the same subject, the narrator admits:

> In all that I endured there was no physical suffering, but of moral distress an infinitude. My fancy grew charnel. I talked of 'worms, of tombs, of epitaphs.' I was lost in reveries of death, and the idea of premature burial held continual possession of my brain. The ghastly Danger . . . haunted me day and night. In the former, the torture of meditation was excessive; in the latter supreme. (Poe, "Burial" 264)

The prospect of being buried alive, to venture stating the obvious, is a hideous consideration; but fictional descriptions of the obsessive *fear* of live inhumation were disproportionate, in size and impact, to the frequency with which it occurred. What appears to have been most terrifying about live burial, in the nineteenth century, was not the frequency of the actual event, but the epidemic status it acquired as an anxiety.

Wilkie Collins's late novel *Jezebel's Daughter* (1880), explored this seeming lack of proportion between the fear and risk of live burial. Collins was himself reportedly terrified of live immurement; he would leave instructions at the side of his bed specifying how his remains should be disposed of if he should die in his sleep (Willis 161). Towards the end of his life, when ill health indicated that death would not be far off, he included an example of another such safeguard in *Jezebel's Daughter*.[3] Typically sensational in style, the novel depicts the wealthy Englishwoman Mrs Wagner being poisoned by the *femme fatale* Madame Fontaine. Consequently falling into a death-like trance, Mrs Wagner is carried off to the *leichenhäus* (or "dead house') where she is laid out with bells attached to her fingers. The trance eventually wears off:

> There was a sound – a faint, premonitory, rustling sound – over the door.
> The steel hammer moved – rose – struck the metal globe. The bell rang.
> . . . Not a cry, not a movement escaped Madame Fontaine [who has followed the body]. The life seemed to have been struck out of her by the stroke of the bell. It woke [the watchman]. Except that he looked up, he too never moved: he too was like a living creature turned to stone.

> A minute passed.
>   . . . The figure appeared, in its velvet pall. On the pale face the stillness of repose was barely ruffled yet. The eyes alone were conscious of returning life. (Collins 392-93)

Leichenhäuser and the practice of attaching bells to the digits of the newly-deceased were common in nineteenth-century Europe. As Collins explains, "the dread of premature interment – excited by traditions of persons accidentally buried alive – was a widely-spread feeling among the people of Germany" (354); hence it was felt that some insurance was necessary. The recently dead would be held in the *leichenhäuser* until putrefaction – that surest guarantor of death – set in. As the man whose job it is to watch over the "corpses" in Collins's novel suggests, however, such measures are, more often than not, surplus to requirements:

> The Dead who come our way, my little friend, have one great merit [they are quiet]. We are supposed to help them, if they're perverse enough to come to life again before they're buried. There they lie in our house, with one end of the line tied to their fingers, and the other end at the spring of the alarm-bell. And they have never rung the bell yet – never once, bless their hearts, since the Deadhouse was built! (348)

Thus, until Mrs Wagner rings her bell and validates the precaution, the widely-spread dread of live interment appears to be wholly exaggerated and irrational.

It is worth noting, briefly, how advances in the use of anaesthesia gave rise to the related fear of consciousness during a surgical procedure. Also based on medical failure, this terror became the basis of H. G. Wells's short story "Under the Knife" originally published in the *New Review* in 1896. The narrator says: "I know that I was killed, though my body still clung to me" – an extraordinary statement that may also be applied to victims of live burial (72). Wells makes the link between these two forms of unsolicited consciousness when he describes the narrator's morbid feelings prior to his operation:

> I had never before thought of Regent's Park as a cemetery, but now through the trees, stretching as far as the eye could see, I beheld a flat plain of writhing graves and heeling tombstones. There seemed to be some trouble: the rising dead appeared to stifle as they struggled upward, they bled in their struggles, the red flesh was tattered away from the white bones. (69)

There is no resting in peace for the dead in "Under the Knife" and resurrection offers nothing like the hallowed cleansing experienced by Jesus Christ. Instead, waking up consists of feelings that underscore its awful unnaturalness: powerlessness, struggle, and suffocation.

The theme's potential crippling sovereignty over the mind was a uniform part of its place in Gothic fiction throughout the nineteenth century, suggesting that later identifications of it as a phobia had much to learn from literature. In the Spring of 1891, Italian psychiatrist Enrico Morselli said that fears of premature burial were so problematic that it was necessary to offer a diagnosis. He came up with the term "taphephobia" ('taphos' and "phobos" are Greek, respectively, for "grave" and "fear') and specified that "the sick person's [is] plagued . . . by a fear of the possibility of being buried alive . . . this fear becoming the source of a terribly distressing anguish"

(Morselli 107). His description also emphasised that a fundamental characteristic of the phobia, like other phobic conditions, was its relative irrationality combined with heightened levels of obsessive thinking:

> The taphephobic . . . is an unhappy person, his every day, his every hour being tormented by the sudden occurrence of the idea of being buried alive, that is, in the state of not being truly dead. He has heard or read terrible stories of people being in a state of apparent death, and he fears that the same might happen to him. . . . He feels powerless to avoid or prevent [this], especially since at that moment he would be unconscious, or, even if he were conscious, he would be unable to move himself, or by any sign or action or word to inform the people that he was not yet dead, but still alive. (108-09)

There are echoes of Radcliffe, Galt, and Poe in this definition. Unlike Freud, Morselli never appears to have acknowledged the impact that Gothic writers had on his field, yet fiction certainly enlightened the sensitive understandings of terror that typified phobia-based psychiatry.[4] Literary descriptions of terror, often finessed into stories of live burial, gave Morselli the tools and vocabulary he needed to define taphephobia in 1891. More specifically, the awakening of the condition, as a medical diagnosis, could never have occurred without the complex, phenomenological understandings of fear and obsession that emerged from the Gothic. Morselli perceived himself to be responding to a new and distinctly-modern phenomenon, yet he actually contributed to a fashion for naming and describing phobic conditions in the 1890s. The fact that he created the label "taphephobia" at that time indicated, not an increase in people suffering from the fear, but two other, interlinking developments: psychiatry's growing penchant for diagnostic labels and Gothic literature's popularization of focalized horror. It is more commonplace to assert that nineteenth-century literature responds to, or reflects, scientific discourses and practices, yet the example of taphephobia shows how the model might be reversed: perhaps in discussions of the human mind the investigative praxis of literature has something to teach science.

Notes

1. Michelle A. Massé is one of many modern critics to link psychoanalysis with the Gothic. She argues that there are "affinities between [their] central concerns'; particularly in their shared interest in "beliefs and perceptions [that] are sometimes at odds with empirical evidence" (230). See also Wright,97-124.

2. Radcliffe reveals her indebtedness to Burke's association of terror with the sublime in her essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (1826).

3. In Sensation Fiction, the term "buried alive" was often used as a metaphor for imprisonment and, more generally, women's limited social freedom. See Furneaux.

4. Much of Freud's work was inspired by works of fiction; his thoughts on the uncanny, in particular, were inspired by the Gothic fictions of E. T. A. Hoffman. See Freud 227-33.

Works Cited

Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Ed. Adam Phillips.1757. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990.

Carey, John. *The Violent Effigy: A Study of Dickens's Imagination*. London: Faber and Faber, 1973.

Collins, Wilkie. *Jezebel's Daughter*. New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1880.

Davies, Owen. *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Dickens, Charles, ed. *Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi*. London: Pushkin Press, 2008.

---, *Great Expectations*. Ed. Robert Gilmour. London: Everyman, 1994.

Freud, Sigmund. 'The Uncanny". *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. James Strachey, et. al. Vol. 17. London: Hogarth Press, 1955. 219-52.

Furneaux, Holly. "Gendered Cover-ups: Live Burial, Social Death and Coverture in Mary Braddon's Fiction". *Philological Quarterly* 84.4 (2005): 425-50.

Galt, John. "The Buried Alive". *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 10 (1821): 262-64.

Massé, Michelle A. "Psychoanalysis and the Gothic". *Companion to the Gothic*. Ed. David Punter. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. 229-41.

Mayo, Herbert ['MacDavus']. "Letters on the Truths contained in Popular Superstitions: Vampirism'. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 61 (1847): 432-40.

Morselli, Enrico. "Dysmorphophobia and Taphephobia: Two Hitherto Undescribed forms of Insanity with Fixed Ideas". Ed. and Trans. Laurence Jerome. *History of Psychiatry* 12 (2001): 103-14.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Fall of the House of Usher'. *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*. London: Penguin, 1982. 231-45.

---.'The Premature Burial". *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*. London: Penguin, 1982. 258-68.

Radcliffe, Ann. "On the Supernatural in Poetry". *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840*. Ed. Rictor Norton. London: Leicester UP, 2000. 311-16.

---. *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* Ed. Bonamy Dobrée. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

Sanders, Andrew. *Charles Dickens, Resurrectionist*. London: Macmillan, 1982.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; 1818 Text*. Ed. Marilyn Butler. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

Stone, Harry. *The Night Side of Dickens: Cannibalism, Passion, Necessity*. Ohio: Ohio State UP, 1994.

Taylor, Alfred Swaine. *The Principles and Practice of Medical Jurisprudence*. 2 vols. 1865. London: J & A Churchill, 1894.

Twedell, H. M. "Account of a Man Buried Alive for a Month, and then Exhumed Alive". *The Lancet* 28 (1837): 257-59.

Wells, H. G. "Under the Knife'. *The Country of the Blind and Other Selected Stories*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder. London: Penguin, 2007. 67-80.

Willis, Chris. "A House for the Dead: Victorian Mausolea and Graveyard Gothic". *Victorian Gothic: Leeds Centre Working Papers in Victorian Studies* 6 (2003): 155-65.

Wright, Angela. *Gothic Fiction: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

"Cribb'd, Cabined, and Confined": Fear, Claustrophobia and Modernity in Richard Marsh's Urban Gothic Fiction

Minna Vuohelainen

'Neurotics' and 'Ghosts': Discursive Overlap in Medicine and the Gothic

In an article on "Nervous Diseases and Modern Life", published in the *Contemporary Review* in 1895, T. Clifford Allbutt explores the contemporary notion that "affections of the nervous system are on the increase". Allbutt lists a number of "nervous maladies" that contemporaries connected with modernity, including "nervous debility", "hysteria", "neurasthenia", "fretfulness", "melancholy" and "unrest" – all of which were supposedly resulting from "living at a high pressure, the whirl of the railway, the pelting of telegrams, the strife of business, the hunger for riches, the lust of vulgar minds for coarse and instant pleasures, the decay of those controlling ethics handed down from statelier and more steadfast generations". Allbutt concludes his bitterly sarcastic commentary on the "outcry of the modern neurotic" by rejecting such concerns over the mental, moral and physical health of the nation. "Rich and idle people", he states, "run, as they always did, after the fashionable fad of the day; what was 'liver' fifty years ago has become 'nerves' to-day." Nervous ailments, he contends, are characterised by the sufferer's "restlessness, quackishness and craving for sympathy", and "the intellectual acuteness of many of these sufferers, the swift transmission of news by the press, and the facilities of modern locomotion all favour the neurotic traffic." Nervous illness, thus, has become a fashionable diagnosis with the "inquisitive and peremptory generation" of the fin de siècle: "our neurotics have begun like ghosts to walk, and we exclaim that the earth is full of them!" (Allbutt 210, 214, 217, 218).

While Allbutt is concerned with criticising contemporary medical and social discourses on the degenerative and enervating impact of modernity, the comparison of neurotics to ghosts is intriguing. As David Trotter notes, medical men often used Gothic terminology to discuss psychological, particularly phobic, experiences in the nineteenth century. Moreover, in his analysis of phobic discourse in canonical Victorian and Modernist fiction, Trotter also argues that agoraphobia is commonly described in nineteenth-century fiction *before* Carl Otto Westphal named the condition in 1871: that, in effect, a fiction writer's "diagnosis" of spatial phobia is not dependent on the existence of a preceding medical diagnosis (Trotter 464-70). To a certain extent literary texts thus provoked nosological classification. This essay will extend Trotter's suggestive claim that fin-de-siècle medical debates and urban Gothic fiction share a common cultural context. It traces the ways in which phobic discourses are present within Richard Marsh's urban Gothic novels *The Beetle: A Mystery* (1897) and *The Goddess: A Demon* (1900). Both novels are located within the contexts of modernity, the urban experience, and chronic fear, and their plotlines detail the plight of British protagonists – all somehow weak or wanting – who fall prey to foreign influences in a fin-de-siècle London that plays its own monstrous part in the novels. In *The Beetle*, a grotesque shape-shifting presence, part man, part woman, part gigantic beetle, invades London to avenge British desecration of the cult of Isis in Egypt. The monster proceeds to hypnotise, terrorise and sexually assault men and women from its base in suburban West London, but its ability to achieve this level of psychic

23

control is dependent on the mental weakness of the novel's protagonists. In *The Goddess*, an Indian sacrificial idol exerts an uncanny mental influence over the man who brought her to London, seemingly inspiring him to fratricide and alcoholism before his eventual and gruesome suicide in a bizarre torture ritual. The following analysis will focus on the phobic, specifically claustrophobic, experience of two male characters in decaying physical, moral and financial conditions: the unemployed and starving clerk Robert Holt, who falls prey to the Beetle after seeking shelter from inclement weather inside a seemingly empty house, and the middle-class Edwin Lawrence, the owner of the Indian idol, whose gambling, collapsing finances, criminal connections and alcohol consumption lead him to the Goddess. However, phobic experiences are not exclusively a male affliction in Marsh's fiction: some attention will also be paid to the two female protagonists, Marjorie Lindon, a strong-willed, outspoken New Woman who confidently navigates the public sphere of London in *The Beetle* until her encounter with the monster destroys her self-assurance, and the independent actress Bessie Moore, who suffers a mental collapse after witnessing the Goddess's gruesome embrace, in order to illustrate how thoroughly Marsh positions his literary engagement with contemporary medical discourses in a late-nineteenth-century context.

What will emerge in the subsequent literary analysis is that Marsh's fiction becomes a site which successfully negotiates the interaction between two seemingly different prose genres that prospered at the turn of the century: on the one hand, the medico-scientific accounts of nervous debility, chronic fear and spatial phobia and, on the other, the Gothic mode, which experienced a remarkable vogue in the 1880s and 1890s, "the moment when a distinctively urban Gothic was crystallised" (Luckhurst, *Contemporary* 530). Gothic, Fred Botting points out, constantly "transforms its own shape and focus" (Botting 20) in its articulation of contemporary social and cultural anxieties. As Teresa A. Goddu similarly argues, the Gothic is "a traveling form, both geographically and generically", that "cannibalises other genres and transgresses their domain" (Goddu 127). "If the gothic is the repository for cultural anxieties," Goddu concludes, "then the specific form and site of its conventions have much to say about its cultural effects. . . . Local contingency governs possible readings of the gothic and its cultural resonances" (Goddu 126). The reading of Marsh's fiction aims to establish to what extent the medical debate on states of fear and the Gothic revival of the late nineteenth century emerged from a shared cultural backdrop. Indeed, that both types of discourse shared the same register is immediately apparent in their focus on the detrimental consequences of modern urban living: where medical accounts insist on the chronic, morbid character of states of fear, produced by the experience of modernity and, particularly, modern city life, late-Victorian Gothic writing characteristically focuses on the contemporary, decaying city as a site of corruption and ruination of the independent human subject. This 'urban Gothic' writing uses an imagery of darkness, fog and crime to convey a sense of the modern city as a place of danger and corruption (Botting 1-13; Hurley 124-41; Mighall 30-33). The key tropes of the Gothic mode – darkness, horror, sensations of suffocation and loss of control, irrationality, madness – bear an uncanny resemblance to medical definitions of fear and phobia, which emphasise the irrationality, the loss of control and the potential insanity of the sufferer. The discursive overlap between the medico-scientific and the Gothic-fictional register thus spotlights the associative connection between urban space and nervous illness in late nineteenth-century attempts to develop accurate pathological directories for chronic fear and anxiety.

In this attempt Marsh's fiction emerges as an especially promising site for a critical analysis of phobias – and claustrophobia in particular – because of the author's personal experience of spatial confinement during an eighteen-month jail sentence of hard labour in 1884-85, and because of his evident interest in mental illness.[1] As Roger Luckhurst has convincingly argued, *The Beetle* is situated in the context of medical and psychic debates on telepathy and mind control (Luckhurst, *Invention* 208-10). For Victoria Margree, the novel similarly "opens on a note of anxiety that . . . belongs to the modern metropolis itself" and deals "with the changing nature of the social fabric of Britain" (Margree 64). Correspondingly, *The Goddess*, a novel which is not widely known, can be read as a text obsessed with nervous maladies connected with modernity. The novel references instances of hysteria, hallucination, irrationality, paranoia, persecution complex, delirium tremens, and dementia, and abounds with medical terminology connected to mental health: "imbecile[s]", "idiots", "raving lunatic[s]" and "maniac[s]" feature prominently in this novel populated by characters who are "stark mad", "off [their] mental balance" and "mentally incapable" (Marsh *Goddess* 12, 63, 73, 86, 96, 129, 257). Although Marsh uses these terms predominantly in a non-medical sense, the frequency with which they occur clearly marks the novel's paranoia over mental health issues. Moreover, the discussion of mental pathologies is firmly situated within contemporary medical debates by the introduction of the character of Dr Hume, "an authority on madness" who "is a student of what he calls obscure diseases of the brain; insisting that we have all of us a screw loose somewhere, and that out of every countenance insanity peeps" (Marsh, *Goddess* 262, 35). The prevalence of these tropes, then, can be seen as evidence of the wide-spread appeal and presence of phobic terminology in popular culture at the fin de siècle.

"Oh to be out of that room!": Fear, Spatial Phobia, and the Gothic

The last three decades of the nineteenth century witnessed extensive medical discussion on states of fear. Mathias Roth, in his *Notes on Fear and Fright* (1872), divides such sensations into feelings of fear, or "a depressing mental impression, caused by real or imaginary danger by which we are, or believe ourselves to be, threatened . . . combined with an involuntary endeavour to escape the threatening danger"; fright or terror, "a mental shock based on fear caused by a sudden irruption of a real or imaginary danger for which we are perfectly unprepared", and dread, "a minor species of fright or terror, but of a more enduring nature" (Roth 1-2). According to Roth, "Darkness, solitude, silence, sleeplessness, contribute as external causes to the development of fear" (Roth 8), and he describes terror, the most powerful of these states, as producing "a succession of recurring periods of unconsciousness, alternating very rapidly with intervals of consciousness" and causing "total deprivation of consciousness, and even death". Terror is associated with "a perfect cessation of the function of the will" and "the sensation of paralysis". Its physical symptoms include "coldness and the pallor of the face, the throbbing of the head . . . a tearing and pressing frontal headache, and profuse cold perspiration on the face and head, eructation and vomiting of acrid and acid mucus, palpitation of the heart, oppression of the chest, and shaking of the body and limbs, difficulty of breathing, with sensation of heaviness and cold in the abdomen" – a list of intense physical symptoms that have the potential to incapacitate, even kill, the sufferer (Roth 3-5). It is perhaps not surprising that people already in a 'weakened' physical or mental condition were seen as particularly prone to suffer from sensations of fear and

terror. According to Roth, those pre-disposed to suffer from states of fear included "[w]eakly constituted, sickly, ailing, highly imaginative persons, those who have been shaken by a railway or other accident, convalescents after severe illness", people suffering from a range of illnesses, women at the "critical periods" of life, "children, adolescents, and adults whose education has been neglected [or] whose mental education has been conducted on false principles", "persons addicted to drink", those indulging in "sexual excesses", people suffering from depression, "professional" or "commercial men" engaged in stressful situations, and "in general students and others who overtax their mental powers" (Roth 7-8). Fear, in other words, appeared as the index of a wide range of pathologies.

Indeed, contemporary debates interpreted states of fear alternatively as a medical condition, a manifestation of degeneration or of flawed development, as a type of insanity, or as a symptom of modernity. Contemporary mental specialists commented widely on "the fearful progress of this moral avalanche", stating that "morbid mental disorder" was "unhappily on the increase" (Winslow 174). As Andrew Wynter bleakly concluded in 1875, "That there is an immense amount of latent brain disease in the community, only awaiting a sufficient exciting cause to make itself patent to the world, there can be no manner of doubt" (Wynter 1). Vigorous medical discussion of the issue at the end of the nineteenth century, which coincided with contemporary interest in questions of degeneration and the impact of modernity on the mind, led to an interest in phobias, or "morbid fears which are due to insanity or a diseased brain" (Morse 37). As Trotter notes, "The last three decades of the nineteenth century were phobia's *belle époque*" (Trotter 463), and the period, in keeping with a range of discourses focused on the city and the experience of living in the city, witnessed a special interest in spatial phobias. Consequently, when presenting a paper to the Psychology section of the British Medical Association, meeting in Cork in August 1879 for its forty-seventh annual conference, Benjamin Ball identified the condition "claustrophobia" as "a state of mind in which there was a morbid fear of closed spaces . . . apparently different from, but in reality similar to, agoraphobia or the dread of open spaces". In his paper, Ball argued that claustrophobia and agoraphobia were both "closely allied to the causeless depression of melancholy or the furious excitement of mania" and were to "be viewed as the result of a distinct and peculiar form of insanity" (Ball 371). In the following years, a number of medical doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists investigated the condition. In 1893, for example, Harry Campbell noted the claustrophobe's "panic" at the thought of physical constraint, his "frantic efforts to secure perfect freedom of limbs and breathing", and his "morbid fear of suffocation and of captivity" (Campbell 463). By the mid-1920s, Frederick William Alexander, the Medical Officer of Health of the Metropolitan Borough of Poplar, was able to offer a range of definitions of claustrophobia. These included a "morbid dread of confined spaces", a "morbid apprehension of being in a house or any enclosure or confined space", and, interestingly, "a condition of introspection, i.e., looking inward, contemplating one's own mental processes" (Alexander 1): claustrophobic space could now be located inside the patient's *mind* as well as within the physical space of the modern city. Alexander further describes claustrophobes as "unable to bear the feeling of enclosure. . . . [A] suffocating sensation overcomes them often combined with palpitation of the heart, and they break into a cold sweat. In fact, they become panic-stricken, uncertain, and unable to reason" (Alexander 1).

Fear, of course, is a key element in all Gothic fiction. The inclusion of feelings of terror or horror is a given in this genre that seeks to provoke sensations of unease in the reader. A fluid genre, the Gothic seeks to provoke unease in its readers by making them confront fears and anxieties that are relevant to their cultural context. In their focus on late-Victorian London as a site of a "keenly felt sense of disorientation" (Thacker 7) and derelict buildings as places of corruption, Marsh's novels feature the darkness, fog and lack of clarity typical of fin-de-siècle urban Gothic, but they also reference contemporary fears over hostile urban space (Vuohelainen, "'Oh to Get Out of that Room!'" 115-24). Correspondingly, claustrophobic scenes in both novels are located within Gothic interiors towards which characters are precipitated by a hostile urban world. The Gothic is famously preoccupied with binaries, including the distinction between inside and outside (Schmitt 13). Marsh's novels deliberately call attention to this dichotomy by emphasising spatial relations and spatial transgression. Thus, *The Beetle* begins with chapters which are respectively entitled "Outside" and "Inside", while key episodes in *The Goddess* take place in chapters entitled "The Woman Who Came through the Window" and "In the Room". Both novels abound with examples of spatiality, boundaries and spatial transgression, as characters are spatially entrapped or cross spatial boundaries, as in the entrances from an exterior to an interior space that occur at the beginning of both texts. These spatial transgressions are typically characterised by Holt and Bessie's hesitation at the boundary between the "inside" and the "outside". It is notable that the Beetle is herself associated with claustrophobic interiors throughout the novel, whether in her violation of young men in Egyptian caves, her torture of Marjorie Lindon in her bedroom, in a hotel room, and in cabs and on trains, or in her initial assault on Holt at the beginning of the novel. The Goddess, similarly, inspires sensations of claustrophobia in her victims, seemingly turning even exterior urban spaces into foggy enclosures characterised by lack of freedom and of visibility.

Transgressive acts of entering forbidden spaces directly set off the claustrophobic narratives of the two texts. To the starving Holt, a clerical figure representative of modern urban conditions (Margree 64-66), even the shelter offered by the Beetle's lair, a "dismal-looking habitation" "threatening to tumble down" (Marsh, *Beetle* 222), is inviting: "I saw the open window", Holt explains, "How it rained out there! . . . And, inside that open window, it was, it must be, so warm, so dry" (Marsh, *Beetle* 10). Refused entry to the casual ward, the homeless Holt is initially glad of any shelter from the rain, regardless of its architectural or hygienic failings. This domestic space is not only pitch-black, dirty and infiltrated by an "uncomfortable odour . . . suggestive of some evil-smelling animal" (Marsh, *Beetle* 228-29), but Holt's entry into the house soon leads to a violation of *his* personal space which reverses his initial burglarious entry through the open window. In a primal scene that sees Holt effectively enveloped by an unknown evil presence described in overwhelmingly physical terms, the resident monster in the form of a giant, malodorous beetle proceeds to climb up Holt's body:[2]

> With a sense of shrinking, horror, nausea, rendering me momentarily more helpless, I realised that the creature was beginning to ascend my legs, to climb my body. . . . [I]t mounted me, apparently, with as much ease as if I had been horizontal instead of perpendicular. . . . Higher and higher! It had gained my loins. It was moving towards the pit of my stomach. . . . It reached my chin, it touched my lips, – and I stood still and bore it all, while it enveloped my face

with its huge, slimy, evil-smelling body, and embraced me with its myriad legs. (Marsh *Beetle* 14-16)

Holt describes his reaction to this encounter as one of "panic fear", but it is in fact very similar to the claustrophobe's "panic", "frantic efforts to secure perfect freedom of limbs and breathing" and "morbid fear of suffocation and of captivity", as described by Campbell (Campbell 463). Though initially glad of any shelter, Holt, once inside the Beetle's den, begins "to wish [he] had not seen the house; that [he] had passed it by; that [he] had not come through the window; that [he] were safely out of it again". "[O]verwrought, played out; physically speaking, at [his] last counter", Holt feels that his "mental organisation ha[s] been stricken by a sudden paralysis" (Marsh, *Beetle* 12). This rapid utterance reflects his descent to irrationality: "The horror of it made me mad", Holt explains, "I dashed towards the window. . . . [O]h to get out of that room! . . . [D]espite my hunger, my fatigues, let anyone have stopped me if they could!" (Marsh, *Beetle* 16). Holt's chaotic thoughts, focused wholly on escaping "the horrible glamour . . . of [the] near neighbourhood" (Marsh, *Beetle* 30) of the Beetle, direct the reader's attention to his spatial fear. Evidently, though, Holt here conflates the claustrophobic, dark space inhabited by the monster with the physical presence of "something strange, something evil" that he must escape (Marsh, *Beetle* 13). His spatial fear is intimately related to his perception of the presence within the room but also to his sensations of paralysis, suffocation, and physical and mental constraint as the Beetle promptly proceeds to enslave her victim, "to warp [Holt's] limbs; . . . to confine [him], tighter and tighter, within, as it were, swaddling clothes; to make [him] more and more helpless" (Marsh, *Beetle* 34). The creature, invertebrate by definition, turns the tables on Holt who "in that room, in that presence" describes himself as "invertebrate" (Marsh, *Beetle* 17) in his "backboneless state" (Marsh, *Beetle* 8).

In an apparent contrast to Holt's experience in *The Beetle*, Edwin Lawrence in *The Goddess*, hiding from the officers of the law and from his creditors, takes up his residence in a "large, bare, barn-like room" (Marsh, *Goddess* 266) in "a building which, outwardly, was more like a warehouse than a private residence" (Marsh, *Goddess* 253). Inside, the room is characterised by its emptiness and spaciousness: "The floor was bare. . . . The furniture was scanty. In one corner was a camp bedstead, the bedclothes in disorder" (Marsh, *Goddess* 266). Rather than suggesting spatial confinement, the dwelling's uncomfortable characteristics are its bareness, lack of furniture and, in particular, the suggestion of alcoholism: "Bottles and glasses . . . were everywhere. . . . On the floor, in the corner, opposite the bedstead, were at least seven or eight dozen unopened bottles, of all sizes, sorts, and shapes" (Marsh, *Goddess* 266). Lawrence has gone from extreme comfort in a snug, modern mansion block to extreme squalor in this bare studio. This social transgression and Lawrence's need for space are equated in the novel with a mental breakdown resulting from too close a contact with the Goddess, Lawrence's "demon" (Marsh, *Goddess* 245). As in the case of Holt, it is this contact with the evil presence that has led to Lawrence's fear of spatial entrapment. Interestingly, though, Lawrence, an urbanite and appreciator of comfort, has previously been "one of the most finical men . . . on the subject of draughts": a "properly ventilated apartment set him shivering, even in the middle of summer. The faintest suspicion of a healthy current of air made him turn up the collar of his coat. No room could be too stuffy for him" (Marsh, *Goddess* 111).

28

Such sensitivity sets Lawrence up as suspect, since healthy Anglo-Saxon manhood should surely not shiver at the thought of fresh air. Like Holt, Lawrence is a creature of the city and, in contemporary medical parlance such as Roth's account quoted above, predisposed to nervous ailments. However, Lawrence exacerbates these tendencies by "the life of dissipation" (Marsh, *Goddess* 282) he leads and, in particular, his alcohol consumption, which produces delirium tremens and accentuates his inherent tendencies towards paranoia and persecution complex. After his encounter with the Goddess, Lawrence comes to associate spatial enclosures, represented in curiously personalised terms as physical oppression, with death: "There's a hand upon my heart, a grip upon my throat, a weight upon my head; they make it hard to breathe. I'll be in close quarters soon enough; I'll keep out of them as long as I can" (Marsh, *Goddess* 245). Closed spaces, in the company of the Goddess, become oppressive and insupportable, just as they did for Holt in seeking to escape the vicinity of the Beetle.

While Marsh never terms these experiences 'claustrophobic', they are nonetheless very close to contemporary medical descriptions of the condition which describe the fear of being suffocated or crushed or of losing consciousness or control of one's thoughts or actions as a result of feelings of entrapment. Indeed, the two discourses – the medical discourse on phobia and the Gothic discourse on the sensation of horror – have striking parallels: the encounter with monstrosity provokes the inability "to bear the feeling of enclosure", the resulting "suffocating sensation" and the "palpitation of the heart" described by Alexander (Alexander 1). Like claustrophobes, the victims of the Beetle and the Goddess are also "panic-stricken, uncertain, and unable to reason" (Alexander 1), and experience a "cessation of the function of the will" and a "sensation of paralysis" which in the case of Holt does indeed resemble death. These unpleasant sensations are exacerbated by the "[d]arkness, solitude, silence, sleeplessness" which Holt and Lawrence experience (Roth 4, 8). In an interesting conflation of the Gothic register with medical terminology, Lawrence believes himself to be haunted by the Goddess, his "demon", but the novel's narrator John Ferguson describes Lawrence's increasing *insanity* as his "demon": "He was not mad, as yet, but on the border line, where men fight with demons. He had been drinking, to drive them back; but they had come the more, threatening, on every hand, to shut him in for ever" (Marsh, *Goddess* 245, 243). Although such language may seem Gothic excess, similar expressions were, in fact, commonly used in contemporary medical discourse on nervous debilities. Wynter, for example, references the neurotic's "struggles with the inward fiend" as he inhabits the "Borderlands of Insanity" (Wynter 5). Marsh here offers us a particularly striking example of such discursive overlap between the vocabularies of the Gothic and of science.

"Cribb'd, cabined and confined": Spatial Phobia, Modernity and the Gothic
In his 1879 address, Benjamin Ball had linked claustrophobia with its apparent opposite, agoraphobia, or the fear of open spaces. Contemporaries agreed with this seeming nosological polarity. In his response to Ball's paper, G.M. Beard offered the general designation of "Topophobia, or fear of places", including "agoraphobia, or fear of open squares or places, and claustrophobia, or fear of closed places", which he viewed as "morbid fears" (qtd. in Ball 371). For a number of commentators, phobias were in fact symptomatic of life in the modern city. The fragmented experience of modernity was supposedly conducive to mental instability, hysteria and even

madness: phobias, connected with nervous impairment, were seen as symptomatic of the bustle and the social isolation of modern urban existence. Thus, Josiah Morse explained phobias as emanating from "neuropathic brains which do not offer normal resistance to nervous currents and therefore find themselves in a state of constant excitation and irritation" (Morse 44). Campbell noted the claustrophobe's objections "to travelling in trains" and his "abject dread of tunnels" and argued that this condition on "the borderland of insanity" was linked to city life since the sufferer typically "disliked a crowd or narrow passages, and might even be fearful of walking down a street with high houses on either side" (Campbell 463). For Alexander, writing in 1925, the link to modern city life was even more explicit in "the chronic condition" of people "suffering from nerve exhaustion" and "obsessed by fear" (Alexander 2). Claustrophobia in Alexander's work is linked to the conditions which characterise modernity and city life – office work, crowds, public transport, lack of open spaces and fresh air:

> Dislike and dread of travelling in Tubes or Underground Railways is often expressed by people suffering from nervous strain, overwork, etc. . . . The overcrowded state of trains add their quota [sic] to the already strained nerves; perhaps a morning journey in a congested railway carriage, close work in an office – possibly underground – rom 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., and then a journey home under the same overcrowded conditions. . . . In these strenuous days when individuals expend nervous energy to a large extent during the hours they are confined in offices, it is not surprising that nervous diseases are on the increase. – [T]he panic-stricken condition daily recurs in travelling backwards and forwards to business in tubes and trains. Through constant self-annoyance the sufferer becomes almost melancholic. A sufferer from Claustrophobia is inclined to relieve his condition by imbibing alcohol with the result that the more he drinks the more he wants, until such imbibing becomes habitual. (Alexander 1-2)

The similarities between the two discourses of medicine and fiction are further developed in characters' urban experience in Marsh's novels. The darkness and bad weather of Marsh's perpetually nocturnal fin-de-siècle London ensure that visibility is lacking, and characters feel lost and vulnerable. Streets are invariably narrow and dark, and appear to close in on the characters. In *The Goddess*, the London fog contributes to this disorienting and confining effect, turning day into night and preventing characters from seeing clearly: "It was between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. Already the lamps were lighted. The fog still hung over the city. From the appearance of things it might have been night" (Marsh, *Goddess* 215). Even when he is outdoors, Edwin Lawrence can hear the monster calling him back, laughing all the time: "Through the mist, out there in the Fulham Road, there came the sound of a woman's laughter . . . – soft, low, musical; yet within it, indefinable, yet not to be mistaken, a quality which was pregnant with horrible suggestion" (Marsh, *Goddess* 229). The Goddess is capable of making the city shrink around the characters, enveloping each of them in a fog symbolic of their mental perturbation.

In *The Beetle*, rain plays a similar role. Accordingly, on the "miserable night" Holt falls prey to the monster, "The rain was like a mist, and was not only drenching [him] to the skin, but it was rendering it difficult to see more than a little distance in any direction. The neighbourhood was badly lighted" (Marsh, *Beetle* 6). London

30

weather – the "delightful fog", the "filthy rain" (Marsh, *Beetle* 198) making the pavements "wet and slimy", and an "easterly wind" "howling wildly" and "shrieking" (Marsh, *Beetle* 41) along the streets – serve to heighten the reader's sense of unease. However, although the characters are in an open space, this urban setting is rendered claustrophobic because of the lack of visibility, the darkness, the narrowness of the streets and the implied presence of monstrosity. The city itself thus becomes a monstrous, suffocating presence, so hostile that the choice Holt has to make between 'inside' and 'outside' is a difficult one. For not only is the nocturnal London of *The Beetle* dark and dirty, but it is also strangely devoid of people as Holt finds out on his "remote-controlled" (Luckhurst, *Trance-Gothic* 164) expedition from Walham Green to Lowndes Square: "All the way I never met a soul. . . . [T]here are streets in London, long lines of streets which, at a certain period of the night, in a certain sort of weather . . . are clean deserted; . . . not a creature did I see, nor, I imagine, was there a creature who saw me" (Marsh, *Beetle* 39-40). Such desolation is not natural and inspires a dread of the city and its desolate spaces in the novels. The city is here depicted as *both* consisting of a network of dark streets and thus claustrophobic, *and* uncannily empty and spacious, and therefore agoraphobic. While Holt has achieved his primary target of escaping the Beetle's den, albeit briefly and under psychic control, his sensations continue to be those of unease, but now they are provoked by the great open and unpopulated expanse of the nocturnal city. Fearful sensations are thus produced by *both* agoraphobia and claustrophobia.

Moreover, in firmly linking claustrophobia with its conceptual opposite, agoraphobia, in the description of the modern metropolis, Marsh's Gothic fiction draws heavily on scientific terminology. The two novels echo contemporary medical analyses that identified the sensation of phobia, and particularly of topophobia, as symptomatic of modernity itself. It is not by accident that the chief characters suffering from spatial phobias in the two novels are Holt, an unemployed clerk; Lawrence, an urban gambler and rogue; Marjorie, a New Woman figure; and Bessie, an actress. All of these characters are products of the modern city. Marsh's protagonists are, thus, subject to the "constant excitation and irritation" (Morse, 44) which Morse saw as conducive to abnormal states of morbid fear: the city itself provokes a phobic experience, whether by its emptiness as in *The Beetle* or by its crowdedness as in *The Goddess*, a novel that contains some notable crowd scenes in which the "hustling throng" gathers as out of nowhere to "h[a]ng round" the protagonists "like a fringe", "growing, both in numbers and in impudence" in preparation for "an ugly rush" (Marsh, *Goddess* 240, 252-53). The protagonists are both isolated *and* threatened by the crowd in this foggy city.

In keeping with the medical opinions of the period that city dwellers "expend nervous energy" in traversing the city "in Tubes or Underground Railways", the "overcrowded state of [which] add[s] their quota to the already strained nerves" (Alexander 1-2), Marsh also provides us with various examples of hired and public transport, all of them evoked negatively in the two novels. *The Beetle* dwells excessively, even titillatingly, on the unseen horrors that take place inside the train compartment and the public cab that the Beetle uses to flee with her captives, Marjorie and Holt. Other passengers and the cab driver hear "wailing", "shrieks and yells" (Marsh, *Beetle* 312) from within, which lead to speculation over the "unimaginable agony", "speechless torture" and "nameless terrors" suffered within the "rattling, jolting box on wheels" carrying Marjorie and Holt "through the heart of civilised London" (Marsh, *Beetle* 316). The text thus invites the reader to speculate on

31

the experiences of Marjorie and Holt, and the fate reserved for them, but we are never allowed to witness what happens inside the closed space of the cab; this experience is so horrific that both characters remain mute about it. This narrative coyness is echoed in *The Goddess*, where the exact nature of the spectacle that Bessie has witnessed remains unknown until the very end of the novel. The action itself has taken place behind closed doors: we only know that the horror of it has sent Bessie mad, just as Marjorie's torturous experience unhinges her mind in *The Beetle*.

What is more, *The Beetle* concludes on a note of warning regarding the dangers of modern modes of transport. The monster attempts to escape her pursuers by an express train with the captive Marjorie, the starving Holt having expired in the meantime. The pursuers follow on a special train, "expecting at every moment . . . to be derailed" as the carriage "rocked and swung, and jogged and jolted". The passengers are "jerked backwards and forwards up and down, this way and that", and "the noise was deafening": "It was as though we were being pursued by a legion of shrieking, bellowing, raging demons" (Marsh, *Beetle* 341). This form of travelling, which, as Thacker argues, "intensifie[s]" the "psychic unease at being situated in the 'giddy space' of the metropolis" (Thacker 91), foreshadows the train crash that involves the express carrying the Beetle and Marjorie, presented to us as an apocalyptic scene in which the mangled engine "vomit[s] forth smoke, and steam, and flames" and "what had once been the interiors" of the front coaches are now "match-boxed" (Marsh, *Beetle* 346-47). Marjorie is pulled out of this wreckage in a state of imbecility, while the monster vanishes and is presumed dead. In *The Goddess*, Lawrence refuses to enter a cab, preferring walking to other modes of transport: "I'll have none of your cabs," he explains, "I'll walk. I'm cribb'd, cabined, and confined out in the open; in a cab I'd stifle" (Marsh, *Goddess* 245). The fear of being forced to enter a cab provokes "a fit of maniacal fury" and a "crescendo" threat of bodily violence towards anyone trying to compel him to enter a closed space, confirming both the morbidity of Lawrence's spatial phobia and its very real grip upon him (Marsh, *Goddess* 246). Lawrence's vehemence is in keeping with the "nerve exhaustion" and the "panic-stricken condition" identified in commuters by Alexander, but his alcoholism also tallies with the sufferer's supposed inclination "to relieve his condition by imbibing alcohol with the result that the more he drinks the more he wants, until such imbibing becomes habitual" (Alexander 1-2). For contemporary medical men, modern urban existence was conducive to nervous ailments, and Marsh's novels, both of which abound with instances of hysteria, hallucination, irrationality, and accusations of insanity, tally with such anxieties over the state of contemporary society and, particularly, urban life.

A representative Gothic writer of the period, Marsh was not a medical man. Nevertheless, his fiction provides us with phobic readings of monstrosity which are closely linked to the spatial experience of fin-de-siècle London. Like many of his contemporaries, Marsh articulates a sense of spatial fear in his urban Gothic fiction that is intimately connected to late-Victorian medicine's diagnosis of the mental dangers inherent in the experience of urban modernity. While the urban Gothic is a different discourse from contemporary medical and scientific debates on spatial phobia, the two share a conceptual register and emerge from a shared cultural context. Both discourses address the problems brought about by the growth of cities, by the lack of space resulting from building activity and overcrowding in urban areas, and by a perceived increase in mental illness. Even where there is little direct evidence that establishes causal links between medicine and fiction, both were undoubtedly

influenced by the conditions of modernity and the attendant anxieties over mental health that characterised the fin de siècle.

Notes

1. This is not to suggest that Marsh was methodically or even deliberately trying to translate medical concerns into fiction. His work is here sampled because it can be seen as representative of the gothic revival, in particular the generic movement towards urban gothic, in this period. However, the concerns articulated by Marsh, a professional author working on topics of interest to the mainstream public, can also be located in the urban gothic fiction of his better-known contemporaries Bram Stoker, Arthur Conan Doyle and Robert Louis Stevenson. By the end of the century, improved access to printed matter had resulted in considerable overlap between different discourses: the popular fiction papers of the period such as *Strand Magazine* and *Pearson's Magazine*, both of which published Marsh's fiction, regularly carried articles on popular science, including representations of nervous illness, which made their way to lower-middle- and middle-class family homes. Some of this topical discourse may have seeped into Marsh's fiction at a completely unconscious level. However, as a professional author, Marsh was also aware of the commercial potential of contemporary debates: as Allbutt notes, nervous illness was a "fashionable fad", and Marsh may have hoped to benefit from the prominence of such concerns at the time by provoking and manipulating images and rhetorical devices with which his readers were familiar from the contemporary press.

2. For Hurley's interpretation of the scene, see *The Gothic Body*, pp. 124-41.

Works Cited

Alexander, Frederick William. *'Claustrophobia': Cause and Cure*. n.p.: n.p., 1925.

Allbutt, T. Clifford. "Nervous Diseases and Modern Life." *Contemporary Review* 67 February 1895: 210-31.

Ball, B. "On Claustrophobia." *British Medical Journal* 2 (1879): 371.

Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. 1996. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Campbell, Harry. "Claustrophobia." *British Medical Journal* 2 (1893), 463.

Goddu, Teresa A. "Vampire Gothic." *American Literary History* 11.1 (Spring 1999). 125-41.

Halberstam, Judith. "Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*." *Victorian Studies* 36.3 (Spring 1993). 333-52.

Hurley, Kelly. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Luckhurst, Roger. "The Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the 'Spectral Turn.'" *Textual Practice* 16.3 (2002). 526-45.

---. *The Invention of Telepathy*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

---. "Trance-Gothic, 1882-1897." *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*. Ed. Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000. 148-67.

Margree, Victoria. "'Both in Men's Clothing:' Gender, Sovereignty and Insecurity in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*." *Critical Survey* 19.2 (2007). 63-81.

Marsh, Richard. *The Beetle: A Mystery*. London: Skeffington, 1897.

Marsh, Richard. *The Goddess: A Demon*. London: F.V. White, 1900.

Mighall, Robert. *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

Morse, Josiah. *The Psychology and Neurology of Fear*. Worcester, Massachusetts: Clark UP, 1907.

Roth, M. *A Few Notes on Fear and Fright, and the Diseases They Cause and Cure; also on the Means of Preventing and Curing the Effects of These Emotions*. London and Manchester: Henry Turner, [1872].

Schmitt, Cannon. *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

Thacker, Andrew. *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2003.

Trotter, David. "The Invention of Agoraphobia." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 32.2 (2004). 463-74.

Vuohelainen, Minna. Introduction. *The Goddess: A Demon*. By Richard Marsh. Ed. Minna Vuohelainen. Kansas City: Valancourt, 2010. vii-xxxiv.

---. Introduction. *The Beetle: A Mystery*. By Richard Marsh. Ed. Minna Vuohelainen. Kansas City: Valancourt, 2008. vii-xxx.

---. "'Oh to Get Out of that Room!': Outcast London and the Gothic Twist in the Popular Fiction of Richard Marsh." *Victorian Space(s)*: *Leeds Centre Working Papers in Victorian Studies* VIII. Ed. Karen Sayer. Leeds: Trinity and All Saints, University of Leeds, 2006. 115-26.

Winslow, Forbes. *On Obscure Diseases of the Brain, and Disorders of the Mind: Their Incipient Symptoms, Pathology, Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prophylaxis*. London: John Churchill, 1860.

Wynter, Andrew. "The Borderlands of Insanity," in *The Borderlands of Insanity and Other Allied Papers*. London: Robert Hardwicke, 1875. 1-73.

Ford Madox Ford: Autobiography, Urban Space, Agoraphobia

Matthew Beaumont

Some time in late 1898 or early 1899 Ford Madox Ford came across Émile Zola seated on a bench in Hyde Park. Ford, still in his mid-twenties, was already a published biographer, novelist and poet. Zola, who died in 1902, was in his late fifties. He had fled to London after being convicted of criminal libel for his role in the Dreyfus Affair and sentenced to prison. On Zola's previous visit to the city, in September 1893, he had been positively feted: "The Lord Mayor received him at the Guildhall; an elaborate firework display illuminated his portrait in the sky above the Crystal Palace; and editors and writers hosted soirées in his honour" (Cummins 130). At one point, he was conducted on a gruesome tour of the scenes of Jack the Ripper's crimes in Whitechapel. "As to London, which I visited for the first time," he told the *Guardian* on his return to Paris on that occasion, "the big city made an indelible impression on my mind. Its beauty is not in its monuments, but in its immensity; the colossal character of its quays and bridge, to which ours are as toys" ("Emile Zola Interviewed"). This time, exiled from his homeland, the city's immensity did not have the same exhilarating effect on him. He arrived at Victoria Station, with almost no possessions, in July 1898. Soon after he left London on a series of "suburban peregrinations" that his friends insisted would help him "achieve total obscurity" (Brown 752). He spent an anxious few months in England, sporadically afflicted by nervous seizures.

Ford recalls the occasion on which he happened upon Zola in Hyde Park in his autobiographical memoir, *Return to Yesterday* (1931). There he records that Zola "had been gazing gloomily at the ground and poking the sand with the end of his cane" (*Return* 214). "No gloom could have ever been greater than his," he adds in a drily melancholic tone (*Return* 214). According to Ford, Zola listlessly complained that on the ground beside the bench, in the course of the morning, he had found as many as eighteen hairpins carelessly dropped by negligent nursemaids: "A city so improvident must be doomed" (*Return* 214). Ford, who appears to relish the precision of the number eighteen, implies that this behaviour is positively compulsive. "He had, at any rate during that stay in London, many phobias," he continues (*Return* 214). Ford then proceeds to describe another occasion, presumably at about this time, when a mutual acquaintance asked him to convey Zola to some address in a hansom cab. Zola scarcely spoke during the journey, on the assumption that Ford could not speak French. "But eventually I found that he was counting the numbers of the registration plates of the cabs that were in front of us," Ford notes:

> If the added digits came to nine – or possibly to seven – he was momentarily elated; if they came to some inauspicious number – to thirteen I suppose – he would be prolongedly depressed. (*Return* 214)

Ford thus reads Zola reading the occult signs of the modern city. The scattered hairpins that Zola had counted beneath the park bench, oddly intimate domestic detritus that has spilt out from the private recesses of the metropolis into its public space, seem potentially meaningful. They are both a kind of statistic, the indices of

37

improvidence, and the residue of innumerable untold stories. In contrast, the number plates are merely random codes. The hairpins have narrative significance; the number plates do not. It is the difference, to put it schematically, between a naturalist and a modernist semiotics of the city.

The anecdote about the hansom cab is comic as well as tragic in its outline. It is amusing in particular to picture Ford silently attempting to infer Zola's numerological system – which in both the more and less strict senses of the term is idiotic – from his reactions to the number plates he sees in the traffic. Ford's eyes must have flickered incessantly between Zola's enigmatic face and the meaningless numbers on the hansom cabs themselves. In this respect, though, Ford's behaviour is almost as compulsive as Zola's. Paradoxically, one can detect Ford's slightly obsessive investment in Zola's mental processes in the apparent imprecision with which he pinpoints the number that makes his companion elated: "If the added digits came to nine – or possibly to seven –." The presence of that "possibly" signals that, for Ford, there is a difference. As the hesitant, ruminative syntax of this sentence indicates, it matters to him whether it is seven or nine. Indeed, it is as if more than three decades later he is still trying to crack the code. Ford too, in short, is secretly a numerologist. He is in this respect Zola's double. It might even be speculated, though, that Zola's numerological compulsion – one of numerous phobias that this anecdote is intended to exemplify – is actually a fantastical projection of Ford's. There is no positive evidence that the fleeting expressions of elation and depression inscribed on Zola's face have anything to do with the number plates. He might be gazing into space and making purely introspective calculations. The exiled intellectual might simply be sifting through memories, thinking of his family or his mistress, or contemplating his return to Paris.

So Ford is a distinctly unreliable narrator. Of course, Impressionism, the literary aesthetic with which he was so closely associated, is all about unreliable narration. It is premised on the assumption that, in the act of representation, it is the subject as opposed to the object that is important; or, more particularly, that it is the relationship between them, the process of representation, which imparts meaning to a narrative, so that finally, folded in on one another, subject and object cease to have independent significance. Impressionism hypostasizes the partial or unreliable narrator, as Ford's most celebrated novel, *The Good Soldier* (1915), makes creepingly apparent. "The Impressionist author is sedulous to avoid letting his personality appear in the course of his book," Ford once asserted; "On the other hand, his whole book, his whole poem is merely an expression of his personality" ("On Impressionism" 265). *Return to Yesterday*, for its part, is an overtly impressionistic retrospective. In its "Dedication", Ford explicitly describes it as "a novel" rather than an autobiography:

> Where it has seemed expedient to me I have altered episodes that I have witnessed but I have been careful never to distort the character of the episode. The accuracies I deal in are the accuracies of my impressions. (*Return* 4)

It should be no surprise, therefore, if these anecdotes about Zola in London tell us less about the French novelist than about Ford himself.

But in addition to these external reasons, there is another reason, one internal to the text, for thinking that Ford is consciously or unconsciously projecting onto Zola. If he identifies the numbers that cause Zola to feel elated with an exactitude that is only underlined by his refusal definitely to commit either to nine or seven, he is

unexpectedly casual when he comes to identify the numbers that cause him to feel depressed – "if they came to some inauspicious number – to thirteen I suppose – he would be prolongedly depressed." This is an oddly imprecise assessment. Did he or did he not succeed in ascertaining the number that upset Zola? It is of course possible that, in spite of his manifest ability to recollect the positive numbers, he has simply forgotten the negative one. The careless tone of the sentence – "thirteen I suppose" – is however suspicious. It seems disingenuous. But perhaps this author too, in reading Ford reading Zola reading the numbers, has been infected by the paranoiac hermeneutic that Umberto Eco has brilliantly analysed as "over-interpretation" (see Eco). After all, the number thirteen is a proverbial object of superstition. Ford did not however cite the number thirteen simply because it is conventionally assumed to be inauspicious. He himself suffered from a superstitious fear of the number thirteen; that is, from triskaidekaphobia.

　　　　Ford moved from Sussex back to London at the end of 1903, at the time he was writing *The Soul of London* (1905), his extraordinary impressionist account of the metropolis; and it is from that moment, it seems, that the psychological crisis whose effects he suffered throughout his life commenced. In both his professional and his domestic life he was afflicted by problems: he could not find a publisher for the book about London; his relations with Joseph Conrad, and the literary collaborations on which they were working, were severely affected by the older novelist's depression; his marriage to Elsie appeared to be on the point of implosion; he caught the influenza then raging through London; and, as if all this was insufficiently dramatic, on one spectacular occasion, as he arrived home, Ford opened his front door to discover his eldest daughter, Christina, who was six or seven years old, fleeing downstairs with her clothes and hair on fire. All of these contingent factors, in addition to other, perhaps congenital ones, no doubt contributed, in 1904, to what his most authoritative biographer has characterised as a "devastating mental breakdown" (Saunders 164). "The move to London was for me the beginning of a series of disasters," Ford writes in *Return to Yesterday*: "That was perhaps because the year was 1903. Those digits added up to thirteen. No one should have done anything in that year" (*Return* 174).

　　　　This camp overstatement is undoubtedly comic, but Ford is deadly serious. The abrupt tone of these sentences, in an autobiography that, at some deep, disturbing level, probes the parallels between his personal crisis of 1904 and the public crisis of 1914, is apocalyptic rather than mock-heroic: "These were the early days of that mania that has since beset the entire habitable globe" (*Return* 204). Later in the memoir, Ford comments, "I have always been superstitious myself and so remain – impenitently":

> Each month at the turn of the moon I go to great trouble not to see the new moon through glass and I prefer to be in a house that does not face towards the West. Nothing will make me go under a ladder, I cannot bear to sit in a room with three candles or to bring snowdrops, may or marigolds indoors. (*Return* 226)

He defends these superstitions on the grounds that everyone lives their daily lives under the influence of a sense of good or bad luck: "The most rationalist of human beings does not pass his life without saying: 'I am in luck today!'" (*Return* 226). It is thus a normal rather than deviant characteristic of human nature. He goes on to argue, convincingly enough, that this superstitious perception, of whether one happens to be

lucky or unlucky at a particular time, immaterial as it might appear, has a definite, a measurable effect on one's psychology. When you feel lucky, "you will be resolute, keen, active, awake to proper courses to pursue," and you thereby "ensure luck" (*Return* 226). There is a similarly circular logic to bad luck: "When you are depressed by ill omens you are less resolute, you are despondent in the degree however small of the weight you attach to the beliefs of your fellow man" (*Return* 226).

Ford then gives two examples of runs of poor luck, and of psychological depression, that succeeded some inauspicious incident. He describes the first of these, an incident involving the attempt to rid himself of an opal, which must have taken place in the opening months of 1904, in some detail; and this episode will be examined closely later. He alludes to the second one, which must have happened some time in the late 1920s, more cursorily. He recalls that he was driving in "a closed automobile" in "an open space" in Harlem when one of the car's female passengers suddenly exclaimed, "Look at that immense crescent!" (*Return* 226). "She was indicating the new moon," he explains, "which in consequence I saw through the front glass." He concludes: "From that day for a long time – indeed until about a year ago – I experienced nothing but disaster: in finances, in health, in peace of mind, in ability to work" (*Return* 226). Furthermore, the memory of that moon subsequently makes him incapable of working for several months. This phobia is the cause of agraphia, an inability to write.

What is interesting about the description is the emphasis on space: Ford was in a closed automobile in an open space in the city. A concern with the disposition of space, and with movement in it, is characteristic throughout his autobiographical memoir (as indeed it is characteristic of all of his writing).[1] This spatial fixation is evident even from the Dedication to *Return to Yesterday*, which addresses his friends Dr Michael and Mrs Eileen Hall Lake. Michael Hall Lake, 'Micky', had bandaged up Ford's foot, and he was convalescing with them when he conceived his memoir. "My Dears," it begins, "It was whilst looking up at the criss-cross beams in the roof of your tall studio that the form of this book was thought out" (*Return* 3). Here is a poetics of space comparable to the one that Gaston Bachelard famously devised, in which the individual's house is a "universe, a real cosmos" (Bachelard 4). Ford goes on to explain the formal analogy between the roof of the studio and the autobiography: "So, as I go through these pages I seem to see that criss-cross in your gracious old house[,] and the literary form of the work is inextricably mingled with those Cubist intricacies" (*Return* 3). This space, multi-faceted, intimate, is cosily familiar. If Ford attempted to reproduce in the form of the memoir a comforting architectural space, then, less consciously perhaps, his writing from the early 1900s reproduced, or negotiated, an alien, alienating, or unfamiliar form of space. It might be said that, in recasting his life until 1914 in the form of this comforting cubistic autobiography, Ford was redeeming the rather different poetics of space that shapes the earlier period.

That poetics of space can be glimpsed in the image of the house on Campden Hill, in Holland Park, that Ford and his wife Elise rented from friends at the end of 1903 and moved into in early January 1904. Initially Ford ascribed the series of disasters that succeeded this move to the fact that the digits that constitute the year 1903 add up to 13. He does however propose an alternative interpretation:

> Or it was perhaps because the house I then took was accursed. It was a monstrous sepulchre – and not even whitened. It was grey with the greyness of withered bones. It was triangular in ground plan: the face formed the nose of a

> blunted redan, the body tapered to a wedge in which there was a staircase like the corkscrew staircases of the Middle Ages. The façade was thus monstrous, the tail ignoble. It was seven stories in height in those days and in those days elevators in private houses were unknown. It was what housemaids call: 'A Murderer'. (*Return* 174)

In contrast to the canny involutions of space in the Hall Lakes' house, the spatial disposition of this house is distinctly uncanny. Ford deliberately draws on a Gothic register in order to represent it, as in the image of the mediaeval staircase, which seems to have been transposed from the Castle of Udolpho. It is a haunted house. Even the housemaids' phrase for it, "A Murderer", which refers colloquially to the murderous demands of the staircases that they constantly had to escalate in order to attend to their duties, assumes more sinister overtones – it is as if the house itself, with its violently angular features, assumes the anthropomorphic qualities of a psychopath. Ford blames the house for "the chain of disasters, suicides, bankruptcies and despairs that visited its successive tenants and owners" (*Return* 174). The house is cursed. This is perhaps an instance, then, of what Anthony Vidler has called "the architectural uncanny" (Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny* 17-44). And Ford manifestly suffers what might be characterised as a spatial phobia, or topophobic anxiety, in relation to it. The metropolis itself at this time he described as "that London mausoleum of 1903" (*Return* 208).

The third and last anecdote that Ford relates about Zola in *Return to Yesterday* restages this anxiety about space, both exterior and interior, in the form of a French farce. "He had a singular misadventure in a house a few yards from the one I then inhabited on Campden Hill," he reports in a humorous tone that belies his identification with "the unfortunate Frenchman" (*Return* 215). The editor of a right-wing literary journal has invited Zola to dinner at his house in order to convince him of the delights of "English home life"; it takes Zola more than three hours to arrive, however, because he mistakenly travels to Camden Town, "a poor quarter, nine miles or so from the lordly Hill" (*Return* 215).

> The house to which he was invited was in darkness and he spent more time in the shrubbery in the front garden. When he reached the front door he found it open and myopically entered the dark hall. He was normally very short-sighted and at the time was suffering from something like conjunctivitis so that he had to wear black spectacles. (*Return* 215)

Zola is then abruptly confronted by a woman in "curl-papers" and a yellow "bed-wrap", who calls from the landing above him: "William! When are you coming to bed?" (*Return* 215). Zola, lost in the darkness of the hall, tries to escape this "apparition", as Ford calls her. In so doing, ridiculously, he falls over the prostrate body of the editor, who has coincidentally ascended from the cellar, where he had been retrieving a bottle of wine intended to console him for the absence of the celebrated French novelist, and has tripped on a step. "Zola therefore pitched down the steps" of the house, Ford adds, and fled (*Return* 215). If Ford's house on Campden Hill is the stuff of horror, then this one, a few doors away, is the stuff of slapstick humour. In the figure of Zola, Ford replays his tragic relationship to the house in which he lived at the time of his breakdown in terms of farce.

Like Zola, it seems, only far more so, in London Ford suffered from a number of phobias. Of these phobias, agoraphobia was by far the most prominent. "From 1903 to 1906 illness removed me from most activities," as he himself summarises it in *Return to Yesterday*: "I suffered from what was diagnosed as agoraphobia and intense depression" (*Return* 202). "I had nothing specific to be depressed about," he insists, but he admits nonetheless that these years, his "lost years", represented "uninterrupted mental agony" (*Return* 202). Ford's complaint, which in the autobiography he unconvincingly ascribes to intense fatigue, manifested itself in "a slight fluttering of the heart" and a sudden faintness (*Return* 204). "This will naturally sometimes happen in the street," he adds, and "the result therefore a little resembles agoraphobia" (*Return* 204). It happened in empty spaces other than the street, too, so his condition does more than simply resemble agoraphobia. It is a profoundly disabling "movement inhibition", to use Paul Carter's deliberately unspecific definition of agoraphobia (Carter 9). In July 1904, for example, Ford's friend Olive Garnett set off with him on a walk across Salisbury Plain, which was close to a house that he and Elsie had rented, and found him suddenly incapable of proceeding. She later offered a revealing description of this incident in a memorandum:

> Ford had an attack of agoraphobia, & said if I didn't take his arm he would fall down. I held on in all the blaze for miles, it seemed to me, but the town reached, he walked off briskly to get tobacco and a shave; and when I pointed this out to Elsie she said 'nerves'. He can't cross wide open spaces. (qtd. in Saunders 171)

Ford spent five months in Germany that same year in an attempt to cure his condition, drifting unhappily from one medical institution to another like some melancholic exile from Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain.* "Everyone diagnosed my trouble as agoraphobia," he comments with comic bitterness in the autobiography; "sixteen or seventeen of them attributed it to sexual abnormalities and treated me for them" (*Return* 204). In the last institution he attended, the Rhineland Kaltwasser-Heilanstalt, he was put on a diet of pork and ice cream and forced to take iced footbaths. "There's such a lot of nervous breakdown in the land," he declared in a letter to Elsie, half in triumph, half in defeat; "They've a regular name for lack of walking power up here: Platz Angst" (qtd. in Saunders 176).

The German psychologist Carl Otto Westphal first ascribed the name 'agoraphobia' to a fear of open or urban spaces (it applied to both) in 1871. It had however been identified as a distinct neuropathic phenomenon from at least the late 1860s, at the outset of what David Trotter has called "phobia's *belle époque*" (Trotter 463). In his *Die Agoraphobie* (1872), Westphal observed that "for some years patients have repeatedly approached me with the peculiar complaint that it is not possible for them to walk across open spaces and through certain streets and that, due to the fear of such paths, they are troubled in their freedom of movement" (Westphal 59). One example he offered was that of a salesman suffering from this complaint:

> For two years now a feeling of fear walking through the streets alone has been accompanying him; in the beginning such walks were almost impossible for him, now he at least tries, but a nibbling feeling in the stomach area, a feeling of paralysis in his arms and legs, as if he could not move, as if he would fall to the ground[,] overcomes him. (Westphal 86)

In France, where it had also been documented since the late 1860s, the psychiatrist Legrand du Saulle referred to agoraphobia as *peur d'espaces*. E. Gélineau, refining the prevailing definition in 1890, insisted for his part on employing the term *kénophobie*, because the condition "strikes only the inhabitant of cities [. . .], developing under the influence of that debilitating atmosphere of the big towns that has been called *malaria urbana*" (qtd. in Vidler, *Psychopathologies* 15). The empty spaces of the metropolis, especially large squares, appear to have been a particular problem for agoraphobics. "Nineteenth-century agoraphobics experienced the gigantic squares and boulevards introduced into their cities as hostile environments," Kathryn Milun has recently stated; "They perceived these monumental spaces as 'empty' and experienced intense anxiety that caused them to retreat to the curb, to their homes, and even to bed" (Milun 2). (This is reminiscent of Ford's image of Zola marooned on that park bench in London, oppressed perhaps by the "immensity" of a city whose "colossal character" he had once admired.)

Agoraphobia is not exclusively an urban psychopathology, as the example of Ford's collapse on Salisbury Plain implies, but its emergence is indeed arguably inseparable from a certain experience of the city in the nineteenth century. Ford seems to have been conscious of this. In *Return to Yesterday* he writes that "at the beginning of the century it would have taken you 247 years walking at four miles an hour to cover all the streets of London on foot"; "What it would take now goodness knows," he adds, "A thousand likely" (*Return* 171). From this terrifying agoraphobic image, which evokes an inexhaustibly labyrinthine city, Ford infers an existential lesson he claims should be the first that artists learn, namely "that you are merely an atom among vastnesses and shouldn't take yourself very seriously" (*Return* 171). This vision of an atom among vastnesses shapes a number of his poems from the early 1900s, several of which have rural rather than urban settings. "On a Marsh Road", for example, from *The Face of the Night* (1904), evokes "infinite, glimpsing distances" and "eternal silences"; "infinite plains [which] know no wanderer's foot" and "infinite distances where alone is rest" (Ford, *Poems* 35). Ford's sense of isolation and insignificance does however seem to stem in particular from an alienated, psychopathological relationship to the streets of the metropolis. "When you get out of the Paris train at Charing Cross," he comments, it feels as if you sink down like a plummet into dim depths and were at once lost to sight" (*Return* 230).

Certainly, the distinctly odd incident that seems in 1904 to have triggered Ford's agoraphobia, an incident in which superstitious and phobic behaviour are almost indissociable, is irreducibly urban. This is the first and most significant of the examples of poor luck that Ford offers in *Return to Yesterday*. He explains that he had given Elsie an opal ring, and that for some reason they both became convinced that this opal was the cause of the series of disasters that befell them, including the most recent, his daughter's distinctly Gothic domestic accident. He then explains that, having tried and failed to dispose of it in several improvised rites, he finally decided to neutralise its supernatural force by disposing of it in running water, through which, so he claims, witchcraft "cannot operate" (*Return* 227). He therefore sets out for the Thames at Hammersmith Bridge with the stone in his pocket: "At once an indescribable lassitude fell on me. I was almost unable to drag my legs along and quite incapable of getting to the Thames" (*Return* 227). He thinks of dropping the opal through a grating in the pavement, but meets a policeman every time he encounters one, and consequently fears being accused of disposing of stolen property.

The next day he decides to send the opal to a convent as a donation, having first explained to the Mother Superior about its malignant properties; but in taking it to the post office he finds himself "almost completely unable to walk". "I could hardly drag my feet along," he writes (*Return* 227-8).

Ford derives a rather curious moral from this incident; one that, suspiciously perhaps, occludes its specifically spatial aspects. He claims that, if a novelist is superstitious, he will be at one with the ordinary people he represents in his fiction: "A novelist had better share the superstitions of, than high-hat, humanity" (*Return* 228). "Superstitions, belief in luck, premonitions," he emphasises, "play such a great part in human motives that a novelist who does not to some extent enter into those feelings can hardly understand and will certainly be unable to render to perfection most human affairs" (*Return* 229). Ford's covertly elitist claim, then, is that a superstitious state of mind, to the precise extent that it is a common, if not collective mentality, provides an effective means of identifying with the masses. He repeats an odd anecdote in support of this asseveration:

> I remember once dreadfully shocking Mr Edward Garnett. It was at the time when Limpsfield was disturbed by my wearing a cloth cap. I said it was my ambition to pass unobserved in a crowd. Mr Garnett never forgot that. Years after he advanced it against me as proof of my bourgeois nature.
>
> And indeed it is so. Yet the novelist must pass unobserved in the crowd if he himself is to observe. And the crowd is his clay, of his observations of it he will build his monuments to humanity. The social reformer may – and usually does – render himself conspicuous by singular garments that express his singular personality. It does not matter how humanity reacts towards him. He will make capital out of persecution.
>
> But the first thing the novelist has to learn is self-effacement – the first and that always. (*Return* 228)

This ambition to pass unobserved in a crowd in order to observe it, is a characteristic of the Baudelairean *flâneur*, perhaps the most celebrated modernist archetype of the artist. In his description of his friend Constantin Guys in *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863), Charles Baudelaire had insisted that the "passion" and "profession" of the *flâneur* is "to become one flesh with the crowd, among "the fleeting and the infinite" (Baudelaire 9). He continues: "To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world – such are a few of the slightest pleasures of those independent, passionate, impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define" (Baudelaire 9). Ford dreams, then, of being a *flâneur* of the kind described by Baudelaire; but, as an agoraphobic, he is congenitally, and almost comically, ill-equipped to perform the role. For the agoraphobic is in effect the antitype of the *flâneur*. In his famous commentary on the poetics of urban space in Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin states that "the street becomes a dwelling for the *flâneur*; he is as much at home among the facades of houses as a citizen is in his four walls" (Benjamin 37). An agoraphobic could not be less at home on the street. The spaces of the metropolis are profoundly alien to an individual, like Ford, whose movement is pathologically inhibited.

"You are to remember," Ford had reminded his reader in a previous chapter of the autobiography, "that my chief trouble was that I imagined that I could not walk"

(*Return* 206). The paragraphs cited above suppress the implications of this admission for the urban aesthetic that he is ostensibly outlining. He implies there that being at one with the common people whom the contemporary novelist must represent is simply a matter of putting on a proletarian cap. He assumes that it is impossible to 'high-hat' humanity if one is inconspicuous. A cloth cap, like Perseus's cap, he hopes, makes its wearer magically disappear in the metropolis. Ford is in fact concealing the extent to which his spatial phobia shaped his impressionist aesthetic. For in representing the modern metropolis and its 'human affairs' Ford is forced into a compromise. He must attempt to grasp the dialectic of the fleeting and the infinite characteristic of modernity, as Baudelaire's example demands, but he is in practice capable of doing so only from outside the urban crowd that embodies it. This is a painful paradox for the ambitious modernist artist to find himself trapped in. He cannot be at the very centre of the world and at the same time unseen of the world. And it is in part because he cannot inhabit "the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life", as Baudelaire put it, that Ford's perception, his peculiar consciousness, is of paramount importance to his aesthetic (Baudelaire 10). His impressionism, then, is among other things the product of his inability to participate in the life he is committed to representing. It is a half-vicarious means of experiencing the modernity that he is forced to observe from the margins of the city. According to Adam Phillips, a phobia acts as an "unconscious estrangement technique" because it constitutes the phobic object as an alien phenomenon (Phillips 16). Ford's agoraphobia estranges him from the life of the city, it might be concluded, because he cannot spontaneously or un-self-consciously participate in it.

Max Saunders has suggested that Granger, the narrator of *The Inheritors* (1901), a political romance co-authored by Conrad and Ford, is the latter's "first fictional agoraphobic" (Saunders 132). Saunders is presumably thinking of descriptions like this one from Chapter 5, in which Granger steps out into the city at night:

> All around me stretched an immense town – an immense blackness. People – thousands of   people hurried past me [–] had errands, had aims, had others to talk to, to trifle with. But I had nobody. This immense city, this immense blackness, had no interiors for me. There were house fronts, staring windows, closed doors, but nothing within: no rooms, no hollow places. (Conrad and Ford 35)

Saunders's insight is persuasive. So is Trotter's characteristically sophisticated reading of Chapter 6 of *Some Do Not…*(1924), the first volume of Ford's tetralogy *Parade's End*, specifically the incident in which Tietjens, Ford's protagonist, suffers a sudden agoraphobic attack on a road in the countryside (Trotter 471-2). But if Granger is Ford's first agoraphobic character, and Tietjens his last, then *The Soul of London*, his most direct attempt to represent metropolitan modernity, is probably the first of his books to be shaped throughout by an agoraphobic aesthetic. It was after all composed at the time of his most acute phobic attack. Indeed, it is tempting to propose that, in its calculated refusal to be "encyclopaedic, topographical, or archaeological" in its approach to the capital, it is his first agoraphobic fiction (Ford, *Soul* 3). The first chapter of *The Soul of London*, "From a Distance", captures the book's agoraphobic aesthetic from the opening. "Thought of from sufficiently far," Ford begins, "London offers to the mind's eye singularly little of a picture" (*Soul* 7). London is not a unified

45

phenomenon; it is instead comprised of the infinitely different perspectives with which individuals apprehend it: "It remains in the end always a matter of approaches" (*Soul* 7). It depends, he argues, on one's preconceptions, and on the point at which one enters the city, and innumerable other contingencies. It is impossible to gain a general impression of London, and for the provincial visiting it for the first time, for example, "the dominant note of his first impression will be that of his own alone-ness" (*Soul* 9).

London is, according to Ford, "essentially a background, a matter so much more of masses than of individuals" (*Soul* 11). The individual that he subsequently idealised in *Return to Yesterday*, the suave novelist who actively dissolves his identity in the masses, is notably absent from this account of the metropolis. Instead, the urban subject that is implicitly constructed in *The Soul of London* is far more fearful of what Ford identifies as the "assimilative powers" of the city, its vast, indiscriminate appetite for effacing social and racial difference (*Soul* 13). London is a sublime phenomenon, and Ford's urban subject is almost completely overwhelmed by the fact that, "if in its tolerance it finds a place for all eccentricities of physiognomy, of costume, of cult, it does so because it crushes out and floods over the significance of those eccentricities" (*Soul* 12). "It is one gigantic pantheon of the dead level of democracy," he concludes (*Soul* 12). In the context of this account, in which to pass unobserved in the city is by implication to capitulate to its death-like levelling of individuality, it seems positively defensive to ascribe London the identity of "an incomparable background" (*Soul* 22).

In representing the metropolis as a background Ford is engaged in a deliberate act of repression. He is stepping back from it, and pushing it to the edges of his consciousness, like an agoraphobic cautiously retreating from a curb as he stands beside a chaotic road. Symptomatically, the vision of the city evoked by Ford in this book is often tangential or marginal to the life of its streets. For example, in the first chapter he describes an archetypal man looking down "out of dim windows upon the slaty, black, wet misery of a squalid street" (*Soul* 22). And in the second chapter, he recalls the experience of arriving in London by train, which presents the capital as a series of unconnected glimpses, as "so many bits of uncompleted life": "I looked down upon black and tiny yards that were like the cells in an electric battery" (*Soul* 42). Far from being immersed in the mass of people, Ford's melancholic narrator is typically detached from it. This is the aesthetic of someone who loves the city but must preserve a safe distance from the life of its streets in order to protect his sense of identity. It is an impressionist aesthetic, shaped by the contradictory imperative both to embrace the metropolis and to repudiate its oppressive advances. Ford's attempt to apprehend London in prose cannot in short be separated from the agoraphobic impulses that he was combating at the time of this book's composition.

Ford did half-overcome his agoraphobia. In *Return to Yesterday*, he recalls that, soon after his return from Germany in 1904, Conrad forced him to see a doctor called Tebb. Ford asked this man whether he thought it advisable, given his medical condition, to finish the biography of Holbein he had begun; and the doctor peremptorily informed him that, since he would undoubtedly be dead in a month, he might as well attempt it. According to Ford's triumphant account of this incident, the instant Tebb departed he dressed himself and leapt into a hansom cab that took him to Piccadilly Circus:

> You are to remember that my chief trouble was that I imagined that I could not walk. Well, I walked backwards and forwards across the Circus for an hour and a half. I kept saying: 'Damn the brute. I will not be dead in a month.' And walking across the Circus through the traffic was no joke. Motors are comparatively controllable but the traffic then was mostly horse-drawn and horses in motion are much more difficult to check than automobiles. (*Return* 206-7)

Ford makes no further comment, but the reader is obviously intended to infer that, thanks to this cathartic treatment, he successfully cured himself. His condition unquestionably improved. From roughly 1906 to 1914, as he proudly reports in the final part of *Return to Yesterday*, "The Last of London", he even became something of a *flâneur* – as if he continued to feel the need to demonstrate, in the most performative terms possible, that he was not an agoraphobic. "You are to think of me then as rather a dandy," he tells the reader (*Return* 270). He describes himself at this time issuing from the door of his London apartment wearing "a very long morning-coat, a perfectly immaculate high hat, lavender trousers, a near-Gladstone collar and a black satin frock", and carrying "a malacca cane with a gold knob" (*Return* 270). Note that the cloth cap has been silently replaced by the high hat. "As often as not," he adds, "I should be followed by a Great Dane" (*Return* 270). This dog – like the tortoises that, according to the legend that Benjamin loved, accompanied the most fashionable Parisian *flâneurs* in the 1840s – was obviously intended to be a dandiacal accessory. One suspects that it also acted as one of those props that agoraphobics habitually employ to help them to negotiate the terrifying open spaces of the metropolis. Freud, for example, among other psychologists, observed that agoraphobics "feel protected if they are accompanied by an acquaintance or followed by a vehicle, and so on" (Freud 310). Ford had finally found a performance that, as Trotter puts it in his discussion of Tietjens' agoraphobic incident, "enable[d] him to out-manoeuvre his anxiety" (Trotter 471).

Ford nonetheless remained haunted by his agoraphobic experiences. The "Coda" to *Return to Yesterday*, in which Ford describes Britain in 1914, revisits Piccadilly Circus, the scene of his therapeutic triumph a decade before. In this setting, Ford consciously or unconsciously uses an autobiographical image that is manifestly agoraphobic in order to explore a sense of imminent social cataclysm. Standing "on the edge of the kerb" on June 28th, the date on which Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, he confronts a Circus that is "blocked and blocked and blocked again with vehicles" (*Return* 311). "I did not know it but I was taking my last look at the city – as a Londoner", he writes; "And yet perhaps I did know it" (*Return* 311). The kerb on which he stands symbolises clearly enough the brink of war. "I was feeling free and as it were without weight," he states, as if experiencing the vertiginous euphoria of a sudden suicidal impulse (*Return* 317). Later in the coda, after discussing his association with the Vorticists, he modifies the image slightly: "So I stood on the kerb in the Circus and felt adrift" (*Return* 317). Ford's hesitation on the pavement thus stands in for a global paralysis. Piccadilly Circus implicitly opens up onto the terrifying expanses of the battlefields of France. He finally comes to terms with his phobia, then, by universalizing it as an historical condition. Ford's agoraphobia and the mania that besets the entire habitable globe are one.

Notes

      1. Ford seems to have found it difficult to comprehend emotional states in abstraction from space. In his Preface to *The Left Bank* (1927), a collection of short stories by Jean Rhys, he admiringly complains that she refused to take his advice and introduce a sense of topography to her fiction: 'With cold deliberation, once her attention was called to the matter, she eliminated even such two or three words of descriptive matter as had crept into her work. Her business was with passion, hardship, emotions: the locality in which these things are endured was immaterial' (cited in Thacker 209). In Ford, locality is always of material importance.

Works Cited

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon, 1992.

Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Trans. Jonathan Mayne. London: Phaidon, 1995.

Benjamin, Walter. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*. Trans. Harry Zohn. London: Verso, 1983.

Brown, Frederick. *Zola: A Life*. London: Macmillan, 1996.

Carter, Paul. *Repressed Spaces: The Poetics of Agoraphobia*. London: Reaktion, 2002.

Cummins, Anthony. "Émile Zola's Cheap English Dress: The Vizetelly Translations, Late-Victorian Print Culture, and the Crisis of Literary Value." *Review of English Studies* 60 (2009): 108-32.

Eco, Umberto. *The Limits of Interpretation*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.

"Emile Zola Interviewed after His Visit to London." *The Guardian* 3 October 1893. guardian.co.uk, 3 Jan. 2004. Web. 27 Aug. 2010.

Ford, Ford Madox. *Return to Yesterday*. Ed. Bill Hutchings. Manchester: Carcanet, 1991.

---. *The Soul of London: A Survey of a Modern City*. Ed. Alan G. Hill. London: Everyman, 1995.

---. "On Impressionism." In *The Good Soldier*. Ed. Martin Stannard. New York: Norton, 1995. 257-74.

---. *Selected Poems*. Ed. Max Saunders. Manchester: Carcanet, 1997.

Freud, Sigmund. *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Trans. James Strachey. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991.

Milun, Kathryn. *Pathologies of Modern Space: Empty Space, Urban Anxiety, and the Recovery of the Public Self*. London: Routledge, 2007.

Phillips, Adam. *On Kissing, Tickling and Being Bored: Psychoanalytic Essays on the Unexamined Life*. London: Faber & Faber, 1993.

Saunders, Max. *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996.

Thacker, Andrew. *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003.

Trotter, David. "The Invention of Agoraphobia." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 32 (2004): 463-74.

Vidler, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992.

---. "Psychopathologies of Modern Space: Metropolitan Fear from Agoraphobia to Estrangement." In *Rediscovering History: Culture, Politics, and the Psyche*. Ed. Michael S. Roth. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994. 11-29.

Westphal, Carl Otto. *Westphal's "Die Agoraphobie", with Commentary: The Beginnings of Agoraphobia*. Eds. Terry J. Krappi and Michael T. Schumacher. Langham: University Press of America, 1988.

More like Cooking than Science: Narrating the Inside of the British Medical Laboratory, 1880-1914

Keir Waddington

In Arthur Conan Doyle's second Sherlock Holmes novella, *The Sign of Four* (1890), we encounter a laboratory space within Bartholomew Sholto's bedchamber. Holmes and Watson have travelled to Pondicherry Lodge to reclaim the Agra treasure that lies at the heart of the story. On seeking Bartholomew Sholto, who appears to have locked himself in his bedchamber, Holmes and Watson break down the door to find a laboratory in which

> A double line of glass-stoppered bottles was drawn up upon the wall opposite the door, and the table was littered over with Bunsen burners, test-tubes, and retorts. In the corners stood carboys of acid in wicker baskets. (43)

This blending of the domestic and the laboratory sits uneasily with historians' representations of late-Victorian medical laboratories as modern and professional spaces. They might dismiss Conan Doyle's image as an example of the crime genre; suggest that it is somehow quaint or idiosyncratic, or show how it conforms more to the spaces occupied by the amateur scientist than with a style of modern scientific medicine associated with the laboratory. Certainly, Holmes' encounters with the laboratory and his own experimentation throughout the Holmes' canon do not match the professionalising account associated with the 'laboratory revolution' in medicine. According to this narrative, the development of new laboratory practices after 1850 through physiology, bacteriology and pathology not only represented the establishment of new medical specialisms, but also involved rapid and dramatic changes in medical education, research, and the understanding of disease. The result was a series of remarkable advances in medicine and a transfer in medical authority from the clinic to the laboratory that saw a paradigm shift that left little room for traditional practitioners or the amateur. But should Conan Doyle's image of a laboratory space be dismissed so easily? Was it just in the realms of the scientifically-minded detective or the gentleman scientist that the laboratory inhabited such domestic and apparently incidental spaces?

In the historical literature, the day-to-day work of the laboratory and the spaces in which medical science was performed has often been marginalised. In part this has been a consequence of the assumptions made about questions of professionalisation, institutionalisation, and the growing importance of a series of laboratory disciplines to medicine. Our conceptual image of the laboratory as a site for discoveries owes far more to the institutional structures developed in Germany and France around physiology and bacteriology than they do to British endeavours, which are often represented as dominated by empirical, bedside medicine (Lawrence, "Incommunicable Knowledge"). However, just as historians have come to question the boundaries of the "laboratory revolution" to reveal how the laboratory initially served a more subordinate role in medicine, the location and nature of laboratory practice also need to be re-examined (Brunton; Worboys, "Was there a Bacteriological Revolution?"). Encouraged by the anthropological work of Bruno

50

Latour, Steve Woolgar and Frederic Holmes, historians of science have increasingly pointed to the contingent nature of science and the material culture of experimentation. Although in doing so they have tended to celebrate the growth of specialised, extra-domestic spaces, one result is that they have demonstrated how scientific papers represent a retrospective experimental narrative of success that often downplayed both how ideas evolved in the course of experimentation and writing and the problems encountered in producing laboratory knowledge (Holmes 224-233). If the laboratory is no longer perceived as simply a reflexive site, histories of laboratory medicine have a tendency to marginalise this problematic category of "practice" and the nature of experimentation, unless that experimentation relates to the controversial practices associated with vivisection (Cunningham and Williams; Rupke). This situation is hardly surprising: what went on inside medical laboratories often evolved in an *ad hoc* manner and is difficult to quantify, especially when approached through the narratives contained in scientific texts. As John Warner has shown, this way of conceptualising the laboratory has resulted in a number of dichotomies in the literature between medical science as discourse and medical science as practice (Warner, "History of Science" 164-93).

To get round some of these difficulties, this essay examines the problematic categories of space and practice in laboratory medicine in Britain at a time when the laboratory was providing new configurations for research, for the understanding of disease, and for the formation of new disciplines. Rather than reading scientific articles as texts, it draws on literary representations and accounts of laboratory work to explore questions of space and practice and examine the boundaries between what might be broadly understood as the professional, the institutional, and the domestic. Much of the fast growing genre of magazine fiction of the *fin de siècle* employed science or science fiction as a theme to create scientific romances. In her work on Wilkie Collins, Laurence Talairach-Vielmas has suggested that novelists found ready inspiration in anxieties about laboratory medicine as they swapped the staples of eighteenth-century Gothic fiction for "ambitious scientists, helpless patients and newly painted asylums or laboratories" (7). As scientific culture extended into popular culture, numerous references to medical experimentation emerged in literary texts of the period. These references are often found in connection with fears of vivisection as mirrored in Wilkie Collins' *Heart and Science* (1883) or H. G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896). In these fictional accounts, the laboratory has often been regarded as signifying a place of unease or danger. However, by concentrating on Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four* and *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), Arthur Machen's "The Great God Pan" (1894), and Edith Nesbit's "The Three Drugs" (1908) and "The Five Senses" (1909) it is possible to present a different view of the laboratory as a more familiar space. This essay asks whether these fictions might present a more accurate picture of laboratory medicine than the retrospective experimental texts or public announcements of discoveries left behind by those who produced laboratory knowledge.

This is not to ignore the complex set of relationships these literary texts had with contemporary science or how they have been read as explorations of contemporary anxieties about gender, sexuality, immigration, degeneration, evolutionism, and empire (Hurley; Smith; Mighall; Reid). Rather, it is to see them as not only texts that drew on contemporary medical thinking, but also as texts that help construct contemporary notions of medical spaces and practices. As Graeme Gooday

51

reminds us, it is often outside the laboratory that "one finds debates about what a laboratory should be" (786). Although medical science and representations of science in Gothic and crime fiction are not the same thing, as Claire Jones in her work on the Cavendish Laboratory explains, "anecdotes of laboratory life" were "picked up by journalists and fiction." These in turn were "reflected back to the laboratory" and how they were represented in memoirs and in popular accounts as heroic, experimental and often dangerous places (178). Hence, rather than presenting an experimental narrative of success or an account of how knowledge was institutionalised, this essay explores the places in which laboratory knowledge was created and the often messy nature of experimentation. In doing so, it illustrates how, rather than being revolutionary sites or unproblematic spaces, in medicine, laboratories could inhabit unexpected places; how the production of laboratory knowledge was often more like cooking than science.

Spaces and Places

Ideas of what constitutes 'science' and the 'laboratory' and their role in medicine have changed over time. The term 'laboratory' was employed to describe scientific spaces (often domestic in nature) in the seventeenth century, but historians have suggested that it was only from the 1850s onwards that the laboratory became increasingly central to science and medicine (Bynum 92). After 1850, science became a form of cultural self-expression, part of a middle-class discourse, as science was constructed as the knowledge of "most worth" (Spencer 21-96). One result was that the laboratory was increasingly presented as the place where various forms of scientific and medical knowledge were fashioned to create a laboratory-centred representation of science. Doctors had never doubted that medicine was an art and a science and routinely employed a vocabulary that invoked science as essential to knowledge. However, in the mid-nineteenth century, first through physiology and chemistry, and then later through bacteriology and pathology, laboratories acquired a growing role in medicine as places where knowledge was produced and diagnosis undertaken. These changes were institutionalised in how doctors were trained as laboratory experience and findings were incorporated into medical education. In their writings, physicians and surgeons increasingly co-opted a discourse of scientific naturalism, which became characteristic of debates on a wide range of social issues (Lawrence, *Medicine* 70). Although historians have shown how the positioning of the laboratory was both a rhetorical and a practical resource, by the 1880s contemporaries were clear that without science and the laboratory medicine was, as the *British Medical Journal* explained, merely "empirical routine" ('Abstracts of Introductory Addresses' 583). In reviewing Conan Doyle's works in 1892, one of Doyle's former tutors, the surgeon Joseph Bell who provided one inspiration for Holmes, explained how prevention and diagnosis had come to consist of "the recognition and differentiation by bacteriological research of those minute organisms" responsible for disease, a process only possible in the laboratory (Bell 80). Clinicians spoke of the two worlds of "examination at the bedside and the investigation of pathological and bacteriological products in the laboratory" (House Committee, 9 May 1895). If the relationship between these two worlds was complex, by 1900 a series of laboratories – chemical, physiological, bacteriological, pathological – had become "obligatory passage points" through which medical students and researchers had to pass (Jardine 304).

It is clear that these changes happened in a material environment but where were these laboratories? What places did they occupy? Graeme Gooday has suggested

that there were "limits to the kinds of space that could be turned into a laboratory-like setting" (785), but does Gooday's claim mean that laboratories could only be found in certain locations? Work on Victorian popular sciences, notably phrenology, mesmerism and artisan botany, has already shown how science was produced in a variety of locations from coffee houses and meeting halls to museums, gardens and public houses (Secord). Before 1800, the home and often the kitchen provided both a key location for the laboratory and the basis for investigation. In the nineteenth century, professional scientists fashioned a series of institutionalised spaces, practices and methods that aimed to break with the amateur and domestic laboratory of the past, but the laboratory's association with the domestic continued beyond the early nineteenth century. The first 'public' laboratories at Oxford and Cambridge had a strongly domestic feel. Mark Weatherall has suggested that these laboratories resembled the country houses being built at the same time, combining as they did public and private spaces structured around a clear social hierarchy (306). Work on country-house laboratories by Simon Schaffer and Donald Opitz has demonstrated how these aristocratic private laboratories formed an important network that shaped scientific thought and practices in the physical sciences. Private medical laboratories were often not in the same league as those in country houses, but they and the laboratories established in medical schools and universities did share similar domestic features. Although a growing number of scientifically minded practitioners endeavoured to define the medical laboratory as a key location in which new forms of knowledge and an understanding of disease was generated, creating tensions within medicine, they equally could exist in a range of locations that had more in common with the domestic. It was these locations that found resonance in literary texts.

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), the laboratory and the domestic are separate but ultimately intersect with disastrous consequences. In the text we hear how the prototypical Gothic scientist Victor Frankenstein conducts his experiments "In a solitary chamber, or rather cell." Frankenstein's "laboratory" is positioned "at the top of the house" and is "separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase." In this isolated space, Frankenstein keeps his "workshop of filthy creation" (52). If Shelley prefigured later materialistic concerns about medical research, the positioning of the laboratory in *fin de siècle* Gothic and crime fictions locates the laboratory more intimately in the domestic. This repositioning of the laboratory reflects both the translation (or reworking) of the Gothic plot to new urban and domestic locations and a transition in medicine from the pre-eminence of 'dirty' and unsettling forms of knowledge associated with morbid anatomy and dissection to more laboratory-based disciplines like chemistry, physiology, bacteriology and pharmacology. Although one reading of Watson's first encounter with Holmes in "a lofty chamber" of a hospital laboratory at the start of *A Study in Scarlet* suggests that laboratories were at the centre of institutional medicine (3), the laboratory in *fin de siècle* fictions is more often found in household spaces.

As we have already seen, Conan Doyle places the laboratory in *The Sign of Four* in Bartholomew Sholto's bedchamber, while in *A Study in Scarlet* the same domestic associations are present. Rather than being a public space, the hospital laboratory is found in a "lofty chamber" at the end of a "long corridor with its vista of whitewashed walls and dun-coloured doors" beyond a "low-arched passage" (3). Here the connotations are of a private space that shares a similar location to the servants' quarters, pointing to the laboratory's liminal nature. Elsewhere in the Holmes canon, Holmes conducts experiments in his lodgings. For example, at the start of "The

53

Adventure of the Dancing Man" (1903), Watson notes how Holmes "had been seated for some hours in silence with his long, thin back curved over a chemical vessel in which he was brewing a particularly malodorous product" (583). In an earlier story, "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott", published in *The Strand* magazine in 1893, this idea of conducting experiments at home was reinforced. In the short story in which Holmes describes a blackmail case during his college days, he explains how after spending a month with his friend Victor Trevor at his father's Norfolk estate, "I went up to my London rooms, where I spent seven weeks working out a few experiments in organic chemistry" (345). In his experimentation, Holmes is more often to be found in the makeshift laboratory of the "chemical corner" of 221B Baker Street than he is working in an institutional or hospital setting (Doyle, "Adventure of the Empty House" 565).

Conan Doyle was not alone in the connections he forged between the laboratory, experimentation and the domestic. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), Oscar Wilde refers to Alan Campbell's laboratory at home on a number of occasions (246; 255). The laboratory is more visibly present in Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*. Although Lawrence Rothfield has suggested that the novella demonstrates contemporary antagonism to medicine (150), in *Jekyll and Hyde* Stevenson provides an insight into the laboratory. Robert Kiely and others have suggested that for Stevenson the more fantastic the story, the stronger the impulse to reflect reality (123). In presenting his "shilling shocker", Stevenson's descriptions of the laboratory therefore offers not Herdman's "crude scientism" but something more genuine in its evocation of the medical laboratory (132). As one anonymous reviewer noted in *The Times*, Stevenson "accounts for everything upon strictly scientific grounds" (13). If Stevenson was himself uncertain of where science was leading, in exploring through a series of narrators and discoveries the horrors behind the surface appearances of a comfortably professional, male London, he places Jekyll's laboratory at the centre of events. Early on in the narrative the reader is told how Hyde "mostly comes and goes by the laboratory" (19). While this reveals how the monstrous side of Jekyll is associated in the text with the laboratory, it is the lawyer Gabriel Utterson, Jekyll's loyal friend, who gives a brief description of "what is indifferently known as the laboratory." Housed "across a yard which had once been a garden" in "the block at the bottom of the garden", the laboratory is a place that inhabits the everyday. When Utterson is taken through this "dingy windowless structure", he finds "tables laden with chemical apparatus" (35). Although Conan Doyle in *A Study in Scarlet* locates the laboratory in a more institutional setting, he provides a similar description of the interior, which is "lined and littered with countless bottles. Broad, low tables were scattered about, which bristled with retorts, test-tubes, and little Bunsen lamps, with their blue flickering flames" (3). Such descriptions hint at the common paraphernalia of experimentation and the simple, almost austere nature of the laboratory.

In *Jekyll and Hyde*, the laboratory is not the only location for experimentation. Above this simple disorganised space, Jekyll experiments in his "cabinet". Much as the text itself is a collection of textual fragments and a pastiche of textual styles, the use of the word 'cabinet' is perhaps a reference to cabinets of curiosities where Jekyll is both the object of curiosity and the collector of curiosities. The description remains undeniable domestic and familiar, however. The cabinet in which Jekyll experiments occupies "a large room," which is "fitted round with glass presses, furnished, among other things, with a cheval-glass and a business table" (35-36). When Utterson and Poole, Jekyll's butler, hear Hyde's plea for mercy and screeches of "animal terror"

54

and respond by breaking down the door to Jekyll's cabinet, they find a room, which "but for the glazed presses full of chemicals," is the "most commonplace . . . " (64). Rather than being a disorganised or chaotic space, the association here is clearly with the everyday. By importing the monstrous into the familiar, many *fin de siècle* Gothic fictions worked the terror of the Gothic into domestic spaces whereas eighteenth-century Gothic tales had located them in foreign countries or antiquated spaces – castles, crypts, abbeys or palaces. In suggesting a close association between the cabinet and the laboratory, Stevenson's representation of laboratory spaces and the genre's aims come together.

Both Jekyll's laboratory and cabinet are attached to his house and are located in what was once a dissection theatre for training medical students (35). The inclusion of the dissection theatre probably reflects Stevenson's interest in the events surrounding bodysnatching in Edinburgh in the 1820s as evident in his short story "The Body Snatcher" (1884). However, we should recall that until mid-century private anatomy schools were key sites for gaining first-hand experience of anatomy. Although the heyday of the private anatomy school had passed by the 1830s, they continued to offer young doctors practical instruction in anatomy as well as opportunities for dissection. Established through entrepreneurial effort, many private anatomy schools were attached to their founder's homes and were not purpose built. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, this re-use of the dissection theatre is appropriate: by 1886, the laboratory had started to replace the dissection room as the place where knowledge about the body and disease was to be generated.

In other Gothic stories, such as Edith Nesbit's "The Three Drugs", Arthur Machen's "The Great God Pan" or H. G. Wells' "The Stolen Bacillus" (1895), the reader again encounters doctors researching or experimenting in their homes. In these short stories, the descriptions of the location of the laboratory and its materiality serve to highlight both their domestic nature and their physical characteristics, making them easily recognisable as experimental spaces. Although Nesbit is better known for her children's books, notably *Five Children and It* (1902) and *The Railway Children* (1906), she wrote a series of supernatural stories in which reanimated corpses figured prominently. Mostly composed in the late 1880s, the stories in exploring the internal emotional or psychological conflicts of the protagonists reflect Nesbit's unconventional and often difficult domestic circumstances (Davies 8-9). Published in *The Strand* magazine in 1908, "The Three Drugs" recounts the tale of Robert Wroxham who, apparently attacked by thieves or "Apaches" in Paris, seeks safety in the home of a surgeon. Wroxham comes to discover that the ostensibly friendly surgeon is experimenting with a series of drugs to fashion a superman. His home becomes a place of menace and danger. According to Davies, Nesbit was probably influenced by the popularity of *Jekyll and Hyde* as both narratives use the device of a transformative agent or drug (12). Like Stevenson, her representation of the laboratory is both domestic and conventional. In concentrating on the materiality of the laboratory, the depiction dwells on the easily recognisable tools of experimentation. In the house, Wroxham finds "a long laboratory bench" with "bottle-filled shelves above it, and on it crucibles and retorts, test tubes, beakers" (Nesbit, "The Three Drugs" 50-51). Machen puts a similar image forward in his classic horror "The Great God Pan." Initially denounced by contemporaries for its degenerate and sexual content, the first part of the novella describes an experiment on an innocent young Welsh woman in a laboratory in Dr Raymond's home. Located at the end of a long dark passage, the laboratory shelves are "all laden with bottles and phials of all shapes and colours"

(186). Just as Machen positions his laboratory in a former "billiard room", in Nesbit's "The Five Senses", published in the *London Magazine* in 1909, the laboratory appears in a similar location to stress its domestic nature. At the end of the tale there are "whispers of a laboratory which is being built on to the house, beyond the billiard room" (167). Both Machen's account and Nesbit's highlight the physical characteristics of these domestic laboratories, but unlike Holmes' "chemical corner", their locations reflect the aristocratic country-house laboratories that Opitz and others have described (143-53).

Although the laboratories in these texts can be both incidental and central to the narrative, it would be easy to dismiss them as havens of the amateur experimenter or as quaint or idiosyncratic, especially given the apparent focus on dangerous forms of pharmacology that seek to transform man into something "abhuman" (Hurley 3-20). It would equally be straightforward to see these fictions as reworking contemporary scientific premises whereby supernatural phenomena are the result of scientific practices to give voice to *fin de siècle* concerns about medicine. Critics have suggested that the juxtaposition of the laboratory with the domestic in *fin de siècle* Gothic fiction served to make the domestic a place of nightmare, heightening the sense of terror by de-familiarising family and domestic spaces. This use of home laboratories seems to fit with this importation of terror into the home to create a particular type of "dread and creeping horror", which Freud in his influential essay "The Uncanny" (1919) suggests is aroused when something familiar becomes strange (368, 394). Certainly, these fictions point to the dangers of irresponsible science and contemporary anxieties about medical research (see below). However, the representations of the laboratory found in these texts are not Jerrold Hogle's "antiquated spaces." Rather than "insistent artificiality", these laboratories are more familiar than we might imagine (2, 15). After all, Conan Doyle had been a medical student in Edinburgh. As a student and then as a general practitioner in Southsea, he would have been familiar with the laboratory spaces he describes. As Catherine Belsey has argued, "total verisimilitude" was central to the "plea for scientificity" Conan Doyle put forward in Holmes (114). Although the connections between medical laboratories and the other writers are more tenuous, Machen had attempted a career in medicine before failing the preliminary examinations of the Royal College of Surgeons. As Julia Reid has shown, Stevenson engaged with science in complex ways (5-14). He corresponded with numerous contemporary scientists and appeared to have been fascinated with medicine. Through his long-term health problems, Stevenson had numerous dealings with medical practitioners, which included the London surgeon Frederick Treves, and in one of his recorded dreams he imagined himself as a medical student (Maynard 367).

Whereas Wilde in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* represents institutional laboratories as "fetid" by drawing on popular fears of dissection and vivisection associated with medical schools (252), the blending of the incidental and the domestic was not just limited to fictional representations but was a feature of late-Victorian medical science. Antivivisectionists often stressed how physiological laboratories were gothic places of cruelty, but as the governors of St Bartholomew's Hospital admitted in 1901, much research was done by "private enterprise" at home (Medical Committee, 3 April 1901). The physician Thomas Horder remembered that at the beginning of the new century:

> The young consultant, trained in pathology, was able to add to the examination of the patient's body the examination of the patient's blood, his cerebrospinal fluid, his secretions . . . Then, on reaching home, the culture tubes were put into the incubator in the little basement laboratory before going to bed, and only fatigue could cancel out the excitement of anticipating tomorrow's findings. (Horder, *Fifty Years of Medicine* 12)

In addition to his "little basement laboratory", Horder had a "little glass-topped laboratory table with its row of test tubes" in his consulting room, although this was hidden from the patients' sight behind a screen (Horder, *Little Genius* 25). The necessity of converting domestic spaces and basements into "little" laboratories was in part because institutional facilities were initially limited. As the dean of St Mary's medical school explained in 1885, "we certainly ought to have [a] proper pathology laboratory . . . for there is no such place in any School" in London (St Mary's 318). Sophie Forgan has shown how in the first half of the nineteenth century laboratories were often relatively small and subordinate spaces, but the pattern persisted in medicine into the late nineteenth century (139-62). Although hospitals were increasingly perceived as "scientific workshops", as the pharmacologist Thomas Lauder Brunton commented in 1900, most scientific analysis was done in a makeshift fashion in the wards (Lauder Brunton to governors, 1900). At the Middlesex Hospital, for example, the physician Campbell Thomson remembered how at the end of the century "a table placed at one end of the ward on which stood the ordinary chemical reagents and a few test tubes, served for a laboratory" (Campbell Thomson 71). Wards were essentially domestic spaces modelled on the middle-class household and the presence of the laboratory in them should not be surprising given the value assigned to the bedside in medicine. Medical school laboratories existed in other domestic and at times unexpected settings. Lauder Brunton set-up his first laboratory in the scullery of the Middlesex Hospital, and when he moved to St. Bartholomew's he established his laboratory in a cupboard off the museum (*Clinical Journal*). Although museums in the mid nineteenth century provided one environment in which laboratories were developed, Lauder Brunton was not speaking metaphorically. Nor was he alone. The pathologist James Andrews, for example, conducted most of his early work in a makeshift laboratory in the attic of the Warden's House at St Bartholomew's (Girling Ball 204).

Even when medical schools established laboratories they were not the "lofty" spaces in which Watson first encounters Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet*. Many were liminal spaces; often cramped, dimly lit and poorly equipped, and were included, as one physician at St George's Hospital remembered, "only at the expense of continual alteration and some addition to the structure of the place" (Blomfield 83). When the physiologist Edward Schäfer arrived at Edinburgh in 1899, he found the rooms for research into experimental and chemical physiology of "no great size." He noted how they were "very imperfectly fitted", and how it "was difficult for work to be done in them" (qtd. in Kohler 46). At Cambridge, the Regius Professor of Physic complained in 1900 that "accommodation for research" in the pathology department "can scarcely be said to exist" (qtd. in Weatherall 158). Staff were crammed into what little laboratory space was available, while at Oxford iron sheds were used for medical laboratories until 1906 (Kohler 46). It was only gradually that greater investment was made in laboratory accommodation. When Almroth Wright took up the chair of bacteriology at St Mary's Hospital in 1902, for example, he was given £100 to make

structural alternations and to buy fittings for his laboratories; by 1908, he had secured further funding to furnish three wards as laboratories (Colebrook 176). However, investment in these laboratory spaces was more often driven by external demand, such as the need to provide income for analytical service for public health departments, or to supply facilities to teach medical students, than by research or patient care. Despite this increasing investment, laboratories often resembled the spaces represented in *The Sign of Four* and *Jekyll and Hyde*.

This institutional positioning of the laboratory and its domestic and often rudimentary nature should not be unexpected. As already noted, notwithstanding the rhetorical value doctors came to assign to the laboratory, laboratory knowledge was contested knowledge. As one pathology lecturer at St Mary's explained in 1899, "in some London hospitals scientific and experimental work is discredited and not allowed" (*St Marys Hospital Gazette*, 1899). Although St Bartholomew's opened a small laboratory in 1890 for the bacteriologist Edward Klein, ten years later Lauder Brunton was still arguing for a laboratory so that "the nature and physiological action of chemical substances could be investigated, and their poisonous or remedial action ascertained by experiment" (Lauder Brunton to governors, 1900). As Christopher Lawrence argues, elite doctors were sceptical of the value of the laboratory. Although they did not dismiss science, they were concerned that the new laboratory sciences would dilute their authority and jeopardise a system of bedside medicine that favoured individualised notions of disease (Lawrence, "Incommunicable Knowledge" 503-520). They consequently assigned the laboratory a subordinate role as a complement to clinical judgement, which they believed should dominate medicine and diagnosis. In teaching hospitals, as the historian Thomas Bonner explains:

> the high cost of laboratory education, the dependence of the teaching enterprise on student fees and private practice, and the orientation of the hospital toward patient service all contributed to a reluctance to make any but the most necessary changes. (275)

The laboratory hence often had a low priority in terms of institutional space and existed in incidental places that resembled the domestic. Just as the laboratory had an ambiguous position in how medical knowledge was constructed, they also had an ambiguous physicality. Like Stevenson's use of marginal spaces in his portrait of Jekyll/Hyde, or Holmes' mediation of "epistemological frameworks - the reason and science associated with the British masculinity on the one hand, and the intuitive, the irrational associated with the foreign and feminine on the other," hospital laboratories were liminal spaces where bench and bedside met and were mediated (Taylor-Ide 55). It may have been the very fact that they occupied liminal places in medical institutions that laboratories found resonance with late nineteenth-century Gothic and crime writers with their interest in the marginal and the uncanny sides of the physical world.

Messy Practices
If Gothic and crime fiction and evidence from memoirs and medical schools reveals how laboratory knowledge could be fashioned in a range of often *ad hoc* and domestic spaces, what about the material culture of the laboratory? Historians have frequently privileged ideas and texts over practice – after all texts "survive, are readily traceable, available and reproducible" (Cooter and Pumfrey 255). De Solla Price has criticised

what he labels this "papyrocentricity," but part of the problem stems from the silences in the scientific texts themselves (169). As the French physiologist Claude Bernard explained in 1865: "One must be brought up in laboratories and live in them, to appreciate the full importance of the details of procedure in investigation" (qtd. in Latour, "Costly Ghastly Kitchen" 295). Much earlier in the nineteenth century, Shelley describes Frankenstein's engagement in the "theory and practice of natural philosophy", his observations in morbid anatomy, and how he "collected the instruments of life around him," but glosses over the actual practice of creation (48-55). Although Frankenstein claims to spare the reader from "destruction and infallible misery" (51), similar silences exist in medical journals. Here we only read about the end versions of the experiments undertaken rather than what went on inside the laboratory. In these papers, failed experiments or the difficulties encountered are seldom mentioned. If some bacteriological findings were later confirmed as erroneous – for example, the bacteriologist Edward Klein's work on the typhoid 'microphyte' – the papers themselves had a triumphant tone of new discoveries (Worboys, *Spreading Germs* 135, 152). By shifting our gaze from these papers to different types of texts, insights can be gained by reading the signs of laboratory practice rather than those of the subsequent experimental results.

If laboratory knowledge represented only one version of scientific medicine, rather than a form of scientific medicine that all Victorian and Edwardian doctors were progressing to, how was that laboratory knowledge constructed? Whereas Holmes' scientific "cold-bloodedness" in *A Study in Scarlet* produces controlled and "rather bizarre" experiments in the dissection room and the chemical laboratory that reflect the detective's pursuit of exactness (3), experimentation was often a messy business. This is revealed in Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*. As Wilde explains in "The Decay of Lying" (1889), *Jekyll and Hyde* reads "dangerously like an experiment out of the *Lancet*" (295). Initially Jekyll discovers powerful "transformative agents" through a process of self-experimentation, but when he tries to recreate his experiment, the reader learns how Poole has "been sent flying to all the wholesale chemists in town." Poole explains to Utterson how "every time I brought the stuff back, there would be another paper telling me to return it, because it was not pure" (58). Later on in Jekyll's account, we hear how his "draft" contained some "unknown impurity" that lent it efficacy but could not be found again (106). When Jekyll's estranged friend, the doctor Hastie Lanyon enters Jekyll's cabinet, he finds notes revealing "a series of experiments that had led (like so many of Jekyll's investigations) to no end of practical usefulness." In his notes, Jekyll exclaims "total failure!!!" (75). Whereas the novella has been presented as an examination of addiction, Jekyll's "total failure" can equally be viewed as a commentary on contemporary anxieties about the dangers of adulteration, impurity, and the identity and hence safety of certain common foods and drugs (Wright; Hammack). Gothic writers were fascinated by questions of identity and the idea that outward appearances concealed something sinister within, as highlighted by the presence of the doppelgänger in *Jekyll and Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. If similar concerns about 'identity' occupied public analysts and doctors, Jekyll's failed experiments also demonstrate the crucial components of experimentation missing from retrospective scientific narratives. They draw attention to how experimentation often proceeded by trial and error, how contamination presented considerable problems for experimenters, and how experiments frequently failed.

A similar process of experimentation is evident in other Gothic fictions. Although in Nesbit's "The Three Drugs" the experimentation appears to be more controlled, at least until the doctor takes his own medicine, Wroxham is told of earlier experiments on animals and about "the others" – human subjects whom the doctor found "unsound" (52). The obvious reference here is to controversial physiological and other forms of animal experiments, concerns that had already been explored by authors such as Wells in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Although there is only fragmentary evidence to support contemporary accusations of human experimentation, between 1903 and 1910 questions surrounding the use of vivisection were a subject of intense debate following allegations that William Bayliss of the Department of Physiology at University College London had performed illegal vivisections on a brown terrier dog before an audience of medical students.[1] The resulting controversy saw pitched battles between medical students and the police, a libel trial, and the appointment of a royal commission on the use of animals in medical experiments (Lansbury). If fears about vivisection and the controversial use of animals in a wide range of medical experiments give the immediate context for Nesbit's narrative, "The Three Drugs" equally suggests an experimental process in which errors are common. Nesbit further writes in "The Five Senses" of how "these things [experiments] take years," and points to "that sort of frenzy of experiment" to which "no scientific investigator is wholly a stranger" (157). In the story, the well-know scientist Boyd Thompson gives up his antivivisectionist fiancé for his work. At the heart of the narrative are experiments that lead to the discovery of five elixirs that enhance the senses and a mistake that governs what unfolds as Boyd Thompson is rescued by his estranged fiancé from being mistaken for dead. In describing how Boyd Thompson "could not lay his hand on the thing he wanted," Nesbit alludes to the do-it-yourself nature of laboratory practice, which, as we shall see below, was a feature of contemporary laboratory medicine (157).

The practice of self-experimentation revealed in these fictions was not uncommon. As Conan Doyle explained in a letter to his mother in 1879, "I have been experimenting upon myself with Gelsemium . . . I increased the dose until I reached 200 minims, and had some curious physiological results" (Lellenberg et al 117).[2] However, the similarities do not stop there. In the medical laboratory, investigators were regularly confronted with similar problems in their experiments to those described in Gothic fictions as they worked in spaces that were both social settings and problematic places.

The period after the discovery of the tubercle bacillus in 1882 to end of the century saw a 'Bacteriomania', but it was also a time when a blood count or testing for sugar in urine was, as one physician remembered, "something of an event" (Campbell Thomson 71). If textbooks outlined apparently idiot-proof methods, in reality laboratory practices, especially those connected to the new sciences of bacteriology and pathology, were beset with problems. Notwithstanding the exhaustive detail provided in textbooks on questions of purchase, the installation and the operation of instruments or the conduct of experiments, which endeavoured to communicate new skills to doctors, the particulars were not always replicable.[3] It is important to remember that everyone in the 1880s, even the more experienced, were in a sense an amateur. Training in laboratory methods was rudimentary: as the pathologist Louis Cobbett remembered, in the London hospitals bacteriology was "scarcely mentioned" until the 1890s (Weatherall 182). Microscopes may have been familiar and the ability to grow bacteria may have seemed easy, but laboratory science

was a new science in the late-nineteenth century, one that had to be learnt. For example, in his work on typhoid cultures, Wright had to devise new techniques for estimating the bactericidal power of the serums he was investigating, including methods for aseptically collecting small samples of blood (Colebrook 34). Although early methods might have appeared simple in print, difficulties were encountered. Instruments, such as syringes, were crude: as one Edwardian student remembered, to make syringes watertight required winding thread round them (Colebrook 27). Even experienced researchers admitted that they were "awkward to handle at first" (Dowson to Cobbett, 11 May 1903). Work on culturing bacteria involved literally counting the bacilli under a microscope, a process that could last hours and result in "severe eye strain" (*Second Report* 7). Experiments, just as in Nesbit's "The Five Senses", could "take years" given the skills that had to be mastered (157).

Although techniques in microscopy, culturing bacteria, and inoculation were refined in the 1890s, problems persisted which determined the nature of laboratory practice. Admittedly, the "days of the dabbler" had ended as the first generation of full-time bacteriologists was appointed, but comparisons with *Jekyll and Hyde* still hold in the Edwardian period (Worboys, *Spreading Germs* 216). Writing about what went on in the laboratories of the Inoculation Department at St Mary's Hospital, one contributor to the hospital's *Gazette* referred to the workers as "Modern Mrs Beetons" (*St Marys Hospital Gazette*, 1906). *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* (1861), the popular guide to running a middle-class Victorian household, contained, among other things, advice on poisons, science and managing servants, as well as over 900 recipes. Comparisons of early physiological and bacteriological practices with recipes are appropriate: Bernard in 1865 described his work in a physiological laboratory as being akin to passing through a "long and ghastly kitchen" (Latour, "Costly Ghastly Kitchen" 295). Not only did bacteriological laboratories often occupy domestic spaces, but also work in them often had a decidedly domestic feel. Bacteriological samples were initially grown on potato skins and the manufacture of cultures resembled a recipe. For example, in explaining how to produce cultures of tuberculosis, Walter Dowson, director of the Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories in London, provided the following information for a suitable "broth" on which to grow the bacillus:

<u>Broth for T.B.</u>

Fresh lean Veal – 500 grams.
Cold tap water – 1 litre.

Peptone 2%
Salt -5%   } Reckoned on one litre
Glycerine 4%

Neutral to litmus

Mince veal. place in boiling pot. add the water. slowly raise to boiling point (about 1 ½ hours). boil for 20 minutes. strain and filter. Pour back into pot. add peptone, salt, and glycerine. boil 20 minutes. make up to one litre. neutralise. boil another 10 minutes. filter and sterilise.

61

As Dowson noted of his recipe – "shade of Mrs Beeton" (Dowson to Cobbett, 26 March 1903) – Bacteriologists' notes reveal how they swapped recipes in much the same ways as households did. This association with cookery and the kitchen might imply a feminisation of experimentation and, like Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*, a critique of science and the laboratory's claim to rationality. On the surface, such analogies appear to contradict representations of institutional laboratory facilities as masculine and heroic and places of moral and physical courage (Jones 178). However, laboratories, and especially medical school laboratories, were intensely homosocial spaces where experimental successes were often communicated through displays of national pride and virility. This is evident in Conan Doyle's use of the laboratory in *A Study in Scarlet*. Not only is the laboratory here entirely inhabited by men, but it is also a place of manly display: Holmes' scientific approach is described in masculine terms as cold-blood, accurate, exact and dispassionate (2). Rather than reflecting the laboratory as a feminine space, allusions to cookery reveal the ambiguities in how the medical laboratory was regarded as a place where knowledge was generated. The references to 'Mrs Beeton' served to trivialise the work undertaken in the laboratory and made it appear less threatening and complex. The associations of the laboratory with cookery reveal the ambiguous position of laboratory knowledge in medicine: laboratory workers were able to identify themselves as thoroughly masculine but could also be represented as 'Modern Mrs Beetons'. In mediating ideas of masculinity and femininity and pointing to the multiplicity of laboratory knowledge, a trope familiar to Gothic writers, this ambiguous portrayal of laboratory work and workers was reassuring for doctors grappling with new forms of knowledge. By mirroring and reinforcing the laboratories' domestic nature, these representations reflected how in late-Victorian and Edwardian medicine the laboratory was assigned a subordinate role to clinical judgement.

Further insights into the messy nature of experimentation can be found in the correspondence and minutes related to the state-funded bacteriological experiments conducted between 1890 and 1913 for the royal commissions on tuberculosis. These provide what Frederic Holmes has described as evidence of the "investigative pathways" that went into defending a British paradigm of tuberculosis (235). The royal commissions were established to ascertain the connection between tuberculosis in animals and the disease in man, and the extent of the risk to human health. As I have shown elsewhere, the commissioners defined tuberculosis as a "public health problem amenable to laboratory investigation" (Waddington 355). They placed their faith in bacteriology to provide authorative answers to the questions surrounding the nature of bovine tuberculosis and contagion, and consequently the commissions invested in a programme of research that was to last until 1913. The bacteriological investigations undertaken for the commissions demonstrate the difficulties encountered in producing laboratory knowledge. They reveal how germs – like Jekyll's transformative agent – were uncooperative objects for study.

From the outset, problems were encountered in the experiments organised for the royal commissions as the investigators went along in an environment where, as one commissioner explained, "we cannot be sure of our ground here" (Foster, Memorandum). For example, no effort was initially made to assess how many bacilli were present in the cultures used. It was only by the time of the third commission that this failure to determine how many bacilli were being injected into the experimental subjects was seen as problematic as questions were gradually asked about virulence (*Second Report* 7). Yet precise measurements were considered impossible as the

cultured bacilli were "tightly glued together." Instead of raising doubts about validity, the commissioners overlooked the issue (*Second Report* 8; Minutes, 28 March 1904). Just as Jekyll found, difficulties were equally encountered with contamination. The report of the first commission (1890-1895) highlighted the "egregious irregularities" arising from contamination of culture and sputum samples, which causes problems (*Royal Commission*, Inquiry II 10-31). For the third commission (1901-1913), contamination was a constant problem. Consequently, errors crept in and experiments had to be repeated or ignored (Memorandum, 1903; Griffith, "Notes").

Problems were not just practical in nature. Internal politics and jealousies shaped investigations. Just as Lanyon disagreed with Jekyll over the nature of science, infighting between the researchers for the royal commissions led to them spending time "making experiments with a view to upsetting theories held by the other" (Minutes, 26 January 1903). These disagreements created problems: much time and money was wasted. Although Edward Steegmann, secretary to the third royal commission, told the investigators in 1905 that "it would be an impertinence for me to try to influence your scientific opinions on purely scientific matters", the message was clear (Steegmann to Cobbett, 11 October 1905). The investigators were informed that "only such results as were of a positive nature and from which definite conclusions could be drawn" were to be reported (Minutes, 27 November 1905). Just as in Gothic fictions, laboratory knowledge was contingent on the problems encountered, but it was also shaped by the politics involved.

Conclusions
Work on the history of science suggests that authorised or elite science protects its authority by controlling both the physical and the social spaces in which it occurs, assuming that science is pursued in a specific place. The location of science was a crucial question for nineteenth-century practitioners, but this did not mean that these spaces were removed from the private or the domestic. As *fin de siècle* Gothic and crime fictions and other sources reveal, legitimate laboratory knowledge in medicine could be produced in a range of settings, which included the domestic and the informal. Medical sciences, such as pathology, bacteriology and pharmacology, could be central to new ways of constructing medicine but at the same time occupy marginal spaces. The spaces medical laboratories often inhabited and the messy nature of experimentation therefore had more in common with literary representations than our usual images of the laboratory associated with the "laboratory revolution." Although such sites were gradually marginalised in the Edwardian period as medical schools invested in purpose-built laboratories, the points of convergence suggest that although what went on inside the laboratory produced unease, both within and outside of medicine, laboratories were in some senses familiar places. Images of laboratory science therefore found a clear resonance in Gothic representations of the laboratory and their incorporation of the recognisable places and paraphernalia of experimentation. Much laboratory work was performed on a do-it-yourself basis and, just like Jekyll's and Boyd Thompson's experiments, was prone to errors. On the one hand the do-it-yourself nature of experimentation allowed laboratory knowledge to be constructed in a range of spaces, from the ward to cupboards and attic spaces, but on the other it also reflected the fact that many investigators were developing and mastering new ideas and techniques, often by trial and error. The do-it-yourself nature of laboratory practice was initially presented as a virtue: laboratory medicine was something that practitioners could undertake in the corners of domestic rooms, in

doctors' surgeries, or in teaching hospitals. If this do-it-yourself approach had been largely eroded by the 1910s, the laboratory revolution was very domestic in origin. Indeed, it was often more like cooking than science.

Notes

     1. Weale and Scapel [Berdoe] present the possibility of human experimentation in London's teaching hospitals as a common practice. This is echoed in fictional form in Moore and Tressell. Published cases were far less common, however: see Duckworth 216-27; Lansbury 59.

     2. Gelsemium was distilled from Jasmine and was used to treat neuralgia.

     3. For example, see Giggs; Klein; Woodhead and Hare; Cheyne; *Lancet* 1 (1901): 609-11.

Works Cited

"Abstracts of Introductory Addresses Delivered at the Metropolitan and Provincial Schools." *British Medical Journal* 2 (1880): 583-91.

Bell, Joseph. "Mr Sherlock Holmes." *The Bookman* December 1892: 80.

Beeton, Isabella. *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*. London: S. O. Beeton Publishing, 1861.

Belsey, Catherine. *Critical Practice*. London: Routledge, 1980.

Blomfield, J. *St George's 1733-1933*. London: Medici Society, 1933.

Bonner, Thomas N. *Becoming a Physician: Medical Education in Great Britain, France, Germany and the United States, 1750-1945*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.

Brunton, Deborah. "The Rise of Laboratory Medicine." *Medicine Transformed: Health, Disease and Society in Europe 1800-1930*. Ed. Deborah Brunton. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004. 92-117.

Bynum, W. F. *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

Campbell Thomson, H. *Story of the Middlesex Hospital Medical School*. London: John Murray, [1935].

Cheyne, W. W. *Recent Essays by Various Authors on Bacteria in Relation to Disease*. London: New Sydenham Society, 1886.

Clinical Journal 15 February 1905: 278-81.

Colebrook, Leonard. *Almroth Wright*: *Provocative Doctor and Thinker*. London: Heinemann, 1954.

"College Handbook 1890-91." MS MS/20. St Bartholomew's Hospital, St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Royal London Archive, London

"College Handbook 1906-1907." MS MS/20. St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Royal London Archive.

Collins, Wilkie. *Heart and Science*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1883.

Cooter, Roger, and Pumfrey, Stephen. "Separate Spheres and Public Places: Reflections on the History of Science Popularisation and Science in Popular Culture." *History of Science* 32 (1994): 237-67.

Cunningham, Andrew, and Williams, Perry. "Introduction." *The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine*. Ed. Andrew Cunningham and Perry Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 1-13.

Davies, David. S. "Introduction." *The Power of Darkness: Tales of Terror*. Ed. David. S. Davies. London: Wordsworth Editions, 2006. 7-12.

De Solla Price, Derek. "Parallel Structures of Science and Technology." *Science in Context: Readings in the Sociology of Science*. Ed. Barry Barnes and David Edge. Milton Keynes: Open University, 1992. 164-76.

Dowson, Walter. Letter to Cobbett. 26 March 1903. MS FD 22/7. Royal Commission of Tuberculosis Papers. National Archives. Kew.

---. Letter to Cobbett. 11 May 1903. MS FD 22/7. Tuberculosis Papers. National Archive.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. *A Study in Scarlet*. London: Beeton's Christmas Annual, 1887.

---. *The Sign of Four*. London, Spencer Blackett, 1890.

---. "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott." *The Original Illustrated 'STRAND' Sherlock Holmes*. London: Wordsworth Editions, 1989. 342-53.

---. "The Adventure of the Dancing Man." *The Original Illustrated 'STRAND'*

Sherlock Holmes. London: Wordsworth Editions, 1989. 583-98.

---. "The Adventure of the Empty House." *The Original Illustrated 'STRAND' Sherlock Holmes*. London: Wordsworth Editions, 1989. 554-68.

Duckworth, Dyce. "Observations on the Passage of Certain Substances into the Urine in Healthy and Disease States of Kidneys." *St. Bartholomew's Hospital Reports* 3 (1867): 216-27.

Forgan, Sophie. "The Architecture of Display: Museums, Universities, and Objects in Nineteenth Century Britain." *History of Science* 32 (1994): 139-62.

Foster, Michael. Memorandum on Post Mortem Records. 1903. MS FD 22/7. Tuberculosis Papers. National Archive.

---. Memorandum to the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis. 11 January 1905. MS FD 22/6. Tuberculosis Papers. National Archive.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." *Collected Papers.* Ed and Trans. Joan Riviere et al. Vol. 4. New York: Basic Books, 1959. 368-407.

Jardine, Nicholas. "The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine as Rhetorical and Aesthetic Accomplishment." *The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine*. Ed. Andrew Cunningham and Perry Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 304-323.

Jones, Claire. "The Laboratory. A Suitable Place for Women?" *Women and Work Culture: Britain c.1850-1950*. Ed. Krista Cowman and Louise A Jackson. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. 177-96.

Kiely, Robert. *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Fiction of Adventure*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1964.

Klein, Edward. *Micro-Organisms and Disease*. London: Macmillan, 1884.

Gibbs, Heneage. *Practical Histology and Pathology*. London: H. K. Lewis, 1883.

Girling Ball, William. *History of the Medical College of St. Bartholomew's Hospital*. MS. 1941. St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Royal London Archive.

Gooday, Graeme. "Placing or Replacing the Laboratory in the History of Science." *Isis* 99 (2008): 783-95.

Griffith, F. "Notes on Modification Report (Walpole)." MS FD 22/9. Tuberculosis Papers. National Archive.

Hammack, Brenda M. "Phantastica: The Chemically Inspired Intellectual in Occult Fiction." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 37 (March 2004): 83-100.

Herdman, John. *The Double in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990.

Hogle, Jerrold E. ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.

Holmes, Frederic L. "Scientific Writing and Discovery." *Isis* 78 (1987): 220-35.

Horder, Mervyn. *The Little Genius: A Memoir of the First Lord Horder*. London: Duckworth, 1966.

Horder, Thomas. *Fifty Years of Medicine*. London: Duckworth, 1953.

House Committee. 9 May 1895. MS HA/1/27. St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Royal London Archive.

Hurley, Kelly. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at the* Fin de Siècle. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Kohler, Robert E. *From Medical Chemistry to Biochemistry*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.

Lancet 1 (1901): 609-11.

Lansbury, Carol. *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers and Vivisection in Edwardian England*. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

Latour, Bruno, and Steve Woolgar. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986.

Latour, Bruno. "Costly Ghastly Kitchen." *The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine*. Ed. Andrew Cunningham and Perry Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. 295-02.

Lauder Brunton, Thomas. Letter to the governors of St. Bartholomew's, 1900. MS 5970. Lauder Brunton Papers, Wellcome Archive. London.

Lawrence, Christopher. "Incommunicable Knowledge: Science, Technology and the Clinical Art in Britain, 1850-1914." *Journal of Contemporary History* 20 (1985): 503-20.

---. *Medicine in the Making of Modern Britain 1700-1900*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Lellenberg, Jon, Daniel Stashower, and Charles Foley. eds. *Arthur Conan Doyle. Life in Letters.* London: Harper Perennial, 2008.

Machen, Arthur. "The Great God Pan." *Late Victorian Gothic Tales*. Ed. Roger Luckhurst. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. 183-233.

Martin, Sidney. "Note on method of procedure with the virus of tuberculosis lung cases." March 1904. MS FD 22/7. Tuberculosis Papers. National Archive.

Maynard, Katherine Kearney. "The Perils and Pleasures of Professionalism in Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* and other Fictions." *The European Legacy* 5 (2000): 365-84.

"Medical Committee. 3 April 1901." MS Mc/1/2. St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Royal London Archive.

"Minutes of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis, 1903-4." MS FD 22/1. Tuberculosis Papers. National Archive.

"Minutes of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis, 1904-5." MS FD 22/2. Tuberculosis Papers. National Archive.

Moore, George. *Esther Waters*. Edinburgh: Ballantyne, Hanson & Co, 1894.

Nesbit, Edith. "The Three Drugs." *The Power of Darkness: Tales of Terror*. Ed. David. S. Davies. London: Wordsworth Editions, 2006. 45-61.

---. "The Five Senses." *The Power of Darkness: Tales of Terror*. Ed. David S. Davies. London: Wordsworth Editions, 2006. 153-67.

---. *The Railway Children*. Redhill, Surrey: W. Garden [1951].

Opitz, Donald. "'This House is a Temple of Research': Country House Research for Late Victorian Science." *Repositioning Victorian Sciences: Shifting Centres in Nineteenth Century Scientific Thinking*. Ed. David Clifford et al. London: Anthem, 2006. 143-53.

Reid, Julia. *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the* Fin de Siècle. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Rothfield, Lawrence. *Vital Signs: Medical Realism in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992.

Royal Commission Appointed to Inquiry into the Effect of Food Derived from Tuberculous Animals on Human Health. London: HMSO, 1895.

Rupke, Nicolaas A. Ed. *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*. London: Croom Helm, 1987.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital Journal. October 1893: 3.

St Mary's Hospital Archive: MS AD 1/3

St Marys Hospital Gazette 5 (1899): 116-121.

St Marys Hospital Gazette 12 (1906): 73.

Scalpel, Æsculapius [Berdoe, E]. *Dying Scientifically: A Key to St. Bernard's*. London: S. Sonnenschein, 1888.

Schaffer, Simon. "Physics Laboratories and the Victorian Country House." *Making Space for Science: Territorial Themes in the Shaping of Knowledge*. Ed. Crosbie Smith and Jon Agar. London: Macmillan, 1998.149-80.

Secord, Anne. "Science in the Pub: Artisan botanists in early nineteenth-century Lancashire." *History of Science* 32 (1994): 269-315.

Second Report, Royal Commission into the Relations of Human and Animal Tuberculosis. Part ii. Appendix, vol. i. PP (1907) xxxviii.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

Shore, Thomas.Letter to Lawrence. October 1893. MS SBH/14/5. St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Royal London Archive.

Smith, Andrew. *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the Fin-de-Siècle*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004.

Spencer, Herbert. *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*. New York: Appleton and Company, 1898.

Steegmann, Edward. Letter to Cobbett. 11 October 1905. MS FD 22/6. Tuberculosis Papers. National Archive.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and other Tales of Terror*. Ed. Robert Mighall. London: Penguin, 2002.

---. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. London: Headline, 2007.

Talairach-Vielmas, Laurence. *Wilkie Collins, Medicine and the Gothic*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009.

Taylor-Ide, Jesse Oak. **"**Ritual and the Liminality of Sherlock Holmes in *The Sign of Four* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 48 (2005): 55-70.

The Times. 25 January 1886: 13.

Tressell, Robert. *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. n.p.: Richards, 1914.

Waddington, Keir. "Science of Cows: Tuberculosis, Research and the State in the United Kingdom, 1890-1914." *History of Science* 39 (2001): 355-81.

Warner, John H. "History of Science and the Sciences of Medicine." *Osiris* 10 (1995): 164-93.

---. "Introduction to Special Issue on Rethinking the Reception of Germ Theories of Disease." *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 52 (1997): 7-16.

Weale, J. *London Exhibited in 1851*. n.p.: n.p., 1851.

Weatherall, Mark. *Gentlemen, Scientists and Doctors: Medicine at Cambridge 1800-1940*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000.

Wells, H. G. *The Stolen Bacillus and Other Incidents*. London: Methuen & Co., 1895.

---. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. London: W. Heinemann, 1896.

Wilde, Oscar. "The Decay of Lying". *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writing of Oscar Wilde*. Ed. Richard Ellmann. New York: Vintage, 1969. 290-320.

---. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1891.

Woodhead, German S., and A. W. Hare. *Pathological Mycology: An Enquiry into the Aetiologty of Infective Disease*. Edinburgh: Young J. Pentland, 1885.

Worboys, Michael. *Spreading Germs: Disease Theories and Medical Practice in Britain, 1865-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

---. "Was there a Bacteriological Revolution in late Nineteenth-century Medicine?"

Studies in the History and Philosophy of Biology and Biomedical Sciences 38 (2007): 20-42.

Wright, Daniel L. "'The Prisonhouse of My Disposition': A Study of the Psychology of Addiction in Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde." *Studies in the Novel* 26 (1994): 254-67.

"Star-Defeated Sighs": Classical Cosmology and Astronomy in the Poetry of A. E. Housman

John Cartwright

> One the long nights through must lie
> Spent in star-defeated sighs
> But why should you as well as I
> Perish? gaze not in my eyes
>
> (A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* XV)

A. E. Housman is renowned as the scholar–poet who in his lifetime published two slim volumes of verse – *A Shropshire Lad* (1896)[1] and *Last Poems* (1922)[2] – a much larger volume of classical papers, and an edition of Manilius' *Astronomica* that remains the definitive Latin text to this day. Although Housman had little sympathy with Manilius's stoical beliefs about the operation of divine reason in the universe, both the poems and the *Astronomica* share the sense of human beings playing out their lives in a cosmos where stronger impersonal forces are at work. Since *Astronomica* is an extended astrological text, this is, of course, to be expected; in the poems, the cosmological and astronomical references are more subtly exploited and are derived from other classical authors, such as Lucretius, and Housman's own extensive knowledge of astronomy. Nevertheless, an awareness of such sources and references remains crucial for a fuller understanding of Housman's poetic achievement.

The purpose of this article then is twofold. Firstly, and by way of setting a context for the second part, I seek to show briefly how Housman's poetry can be read as part of a more general struggle (shared by writers such as Tennyson, Browning, Hardy, Swinburne and Meredith) that took place in Housman's lifetime to confront the implications of advances in evolutionary theory, cosmology, and astrophysics, and to formulate a wider synthesis that integrated the objective facts of science with the subjective reality of human experience. Secondly, and primarily, I aim to show how an understanding of specific traditions in classical philosophy, and Housman's own expertise in spherical astronomy (itself a necessary adjunct to his classical scholarship), considered in the context of Housman's own worldview and his personal life, illuminates the reading of Housman's verse.

The reconsideration of man's place in nature was a process that acquired a particular urgency in the second half of the nineteenth century. As Pamela Gossin observes in her similarly-intentioned treatment of the work of Thomas Hardy:

> Victorian Culture was uniquely situated to integrate its knowledge of astronomical and cosmological history – ancient to near modern – with its own emergent and every more urgent attempts to understand and explain humanity's place in the cosmos. (58)

This more general quest by Victorian writers has, of course, been the subject of numerous critical studies, but Housman has rarely been singled out as an exemplary figure in this regard.[3] This may be due to his perceived status as a minor poet

71

compared to say Browning, Tennyson or Hardy, or more simply because his confrontation with the implications of scientific materialism is less overt. Tennyson openly confessed in his poem "Parnassus" to the two "terrible Muses" of Astronomy and geology that influenced much of his work; and Hardy explicitly deals with the challenges of geology, astronomy and evolution is such novels as *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), *Two on a Tower* (1882) and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891). But the troubles of Housman's Shropshire lads and the more personal voices in *Last Poems* do not immediately lend themselves to an analysis in terms of scientifically induced existential angst. Nevertheless, I would like to maintain that a careful reading of Housman's poetic output in the context of his classical studies, his personal life and contemporary debates concerning the validity of scientific materialism, shows that he was similarly engaged in the task of making sense of life (and his own life in particular) in a universe increasingly succumbing to scientific as opposed to theological explanation.

Housman recruited two disciplines in particular to his central poetic purpose: cosmology (primarily the ideas advanced by the Roman poet Lucretius) and astronomy. In his scholarly work, Housman was not primarily concerned with Lucretius as a classical author (although he did publish a few papers on the subject) but was clearly familiar with his writings. Moreover, as we shall see, Lucretius was a classical authority frequently invoked in nineteenth century debates concerning atomism and evolution. In astronomy, however, Housman had a longstanding amateur interest and, moreover, developed a mastery of spherical astronomy (i.e. the apparent movements of the planets and stars on the celestial sphere irrespective of the theoretical system designed to explain them) and the history of astronomy in order to assist with his work on Manilius and other authors. Both cosmology and astronomy were used to explore the position of man in the natural world. But to this mix we must also add a defining ingredient of Housman's personal life: his unrequited love for Moses Jackson who he first met as an undergraduate at Oxford – an attraction which Tom Stoppard neatly summarised as an "unremitting, lopsided, lifelong, hopeless constancy to a decent chap who was in no need of it, temperamentally unfitted for it, and never for a moment inclined to call upon it" ("The Lad"). Housman sent a copy of *Last Poems* to Jackson remarking in a humorous vein that "you are largely responsible for my writing poetry and you ought to take the consequences" (qtd. in Graves 189).[4] It is this distinctive fusion of a materialist ontology and frustrated human desires played out under a sky where, as Tennyson put it "[t]he stars . . . blindly run" that provides one of the keys to understand Housman's poems and points to their essential philosophical and emotional coherence.

Housman and Classical Philosophy: the Stoics and Lucretius
Housman's most notable work of scholarship was his edition of the *Astronomica* of Marcus Manilius. It was a work that occupied him for over 25 years and one that finally appeared in five volumes (published at his own expense) between the years 1903 and 1930. Manilius was a roman poet living sometime during the 1st century AD under the emperor Augustus (and possibly Tiberius) and is known to posterity only through his authorship of *Astronomica*. Whilst the *Astronomica* is largely concerned with astrology, the author also tries to advance his own Stoic beliefs whilst simultaneously attempting to discredit the Epicureanism of Lucretius. Housman was under no illusion about the talents of Manilius, regarding him a third rate poet and someone who was also confused in his astronomy. Despite Housman's masterly

rendering of the text, the work has never held much interest for modern readers. When G. P. Goold (one of Housman's successors in Latin at UCL) published a version in English in 1977 this was the first complete English translation since 1697 and it remains the most recent.

According to the Stoicism of Manilius, the universe can be divided into two states: passive matter and active reason or fate. Fate represents the working out of the Universal mind (or logos) that shapes the behaviour and destiny of things on the earth. In such a world, the proper virtuous response is to use reason to control the passions, to follow where Nature leads, and so achieve an inner calm. Stoicism also provided a philosophical basis for the acceptance of the truths and efficacy of astrology. In this system, the universe is orderly and rational and held together by the operation of the logos. The logos is equated to a divine fire, to be found in the stars and also the human soul. This stoic divinity is favourably disposed towards humankind (an idea that Housman would have found hard to accept) and its intentions can be revealed through the study of astrology. Thus in Goold's translation we read Manilius arguing that by the recognition of our fate we free ourselves from worry and learn that "each one must bear his appointed lot" (225). Furthermore:

> God and all-controlling reason, then, derives earthy beings from the signs of heaven; though the stars are remote at a far distance, he compels recognition of their influences, in that they give to the peoples of the world their lives and destinies and to each man his own character. (Manilius, *Astronomica* 2: 80-86; Trans. Goold 89).

Early readers of *A Shropshire Lad* were struck by what they took to be its inherent stoicism. Charles Sorley called Housman "startlingly stoical" (201); Haber (an astute Housman scholar) summarised the tenor of his poems as "If the present hour offers no reward worth pursuing, Housman may counsel the refuge offered by stoicism" (*A.E. Housman* 138); and Nisbet, reviewing Ricks' *Collected Critical Essays* observed that "Housman's thought is Stoic" (321). The label is understandable if we inspect his verse. In *LP* IX, for example, we are told that

> The truths of our proud and angry dust
> Are from eternity, and shall not fail,
> Bear them we can, and if we can we must.

Similarly, in *ASL* XLVIII we read how "earth and high heaven are fixed of old and founded strong" and how "high heaven and earth ail from the prime foundation"; the solution being to "Let us endure an hour and see injustice done". In *ASL* LI – a poem inspired by visiting the Greco-Roman statues in the British Museum – the stoic response to misfortune acquires a more personal dimension and seems to be informed by his repressed homosexuality. In the poem, a male statue from distant antiquity confides that he too has different thoughts to the majority of men: "I too survey that endless line/ Of men whose thoughts are not mine"; concluding with the advice to Housman:

> Courage, lad, 'tis not for long
> Stand, quit you like stone, be strong

But as is often the case in Housman the argument is subverted from within, and the price of such stoic resolve is the negation of manhood:

> And light on me my trouble lay,
> And I stepped out in flesh and bone
> Manful like a man of stone

Whether Housman's characters *in A Shropshire Lad* are inherently stoic, however, is a debateable point; it is also questionable whether Housman himself is advocating a stoic response to life's travails. The crucial point is the identity of the voices in the poems and the realisation that the narrator in the poems is not necessarily Housman the man. Indeed, Housman had originally intended his first volume of verse to be called "The Poems of Terence Hearsay" and two poems in the collection (*ASL* VIII and LXII) refer to Terence by name. The title was possibly conceived to enable him to confound any identification of the poet with the Latin scholar A. E. Housman. It also gave Housman a poetic mask to wear to separate the voice in the poems from that of his academic writing. Even the surname "Hearsay" is a contrast to his scholarly work where nothing is accepted on hearsay but only on the basis of evidence and the exercise of sound judgement.[5] But Terrence is not the only character in the poems. The lad is variously conceived as the soldier, the innocent rustic, the adolescent coping with the onset of manhood, the sinner, and even the dead. Moreover the poems are often overlaid with an ironic countervoice or even, as Ricks observed, an inherent "tug of contraries" (*The Nature of Housman's Poetry* 169). Clarence Lindsay thought he could detect four voices in the poems: the "silly lad" with no ironic awareness; the speaker addressing the silly lad; the ironic commentator; and the "duplicitous voice where imagery and sense are at odds and perform an anti-romantic critique (345). Amid this multiplicity of voices we might ask 'Could the real Housman stand up?' But the strength of his poetry, of course, is that he doesn't, and the separation of poet and persona is crucial to his art. Leggett goes so far as to argue the private emotional life of Housman is not particularly relevant to understanding his poems, suggesting that: "The persona thus becomes a kind of Yeatsian mask or antiself, the opposite of all that the poet represents in his private life" (331).

It is this distinction between the poet and the personae of the poems that is crucial and undermines any attempts to read any coherent advocacy of Stoicism in the verse. Yet many did, forcing Housman to complain in a letter to J. B. Priestley that:

> I wish people would not call me a Stoic. I am a Cyrenaic, and for the Stoics, except as systematisers of knowledge in succession to the Peripatetics, I have a great dislike and contempt. (*Letters* 1: 571)

This was no off-the cuff remark for in another letter twelve years later he wrote to Houston Martin that: "In philosophy I am a Cyrenaic or egoistical hedonist" (*Letters* 1: 527-8).[6]

On the basis of this evidence I think it fair to say that despite Housman's preoccupation with Manilius (which does not begin until many years after writing *A Shropshire Lad* anyway) and the response of some readers, Housman's verse is not first and foremost an exploration of Stoic philosophy, a tradition, we must conclude, for which Housman had little respect.

It is ironic that Lucretius, the very thinker who Manilius tried to discredit, provides a more serious subtext to Housman's poetry than the stoicism of Manilius. Housman's familiarity with Lucretius has been well documented: Housman published four papers on Lucretius in his lifetime and a fifth was published after his death (Haber, 'Housman and Lucretius'); and in the latter part of his academic career (c.1927) he gave lectures on the subject (*Letters* 2: 48). Although the earliest paper, *Lucretiana,* was published in 1897, one year after the publication of *A Shropshire Lad,* it is clear that Housman was very familiar with Lucretius at the time of writing the poems (Naiditch, *Problems in the Life*). Although Housman could be mercilessly scathing about the scholarship of others, pouncing on any perceived lapse of judgement or technical error, he was fulsome in his praise for Munro's 1860 and 1864 edition and translation of Lucretius, writing about Munro that:

> In his Lucretius he produced a work more compact of excellence than any edition of any classic which has ever been produced in England. ("Cambridge Inaugural lecture" 299)

Titus Lucretius Carus (c.99BC-55BC) was a Roman poet and philosopher living during a period of turbulence and civil strife in Rome. His only surviving work is a long poem, *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things), addressed to his friend Gaius Memmius, a Roman statesman, tribune of the people, and, according to Ovid, an accomplished orator and the author of a number of erotic poems. *De Rerum Natura* was written, says Lucretius, to free humanity from fear and superstition, especially the fear of the gods and the fear of death. It attempts to do so by expounding the ideas of Epicurus and offering a purely naturalistic explanation of phenomena. The central tenets of Lucretius's Epicureanism (in terms of epistemology, ontology and ethics) are:

1. Empiricism: all knowledge is derived from the senses.
2. Materialism: the world is made up of only of atoms and the void. Even the soul is just an assemblage of atoms that disperse after death. The soul, therefore, is not immortal.
3. Hedonism: the 'good' is not an absolute ideal or a metaphysical abstraction but is to be equated with pleasurable sensations.

As soon as *A Shropshire Lad* appeared in 1896, Lucretian themes were noted by people who had no awareness that Housman was a Latin scholar (he was then a Professor of Latin at UCL). An anonymous reviewer (though one seemingly of a Christian faith) detected the influence of the Greek atomists with dismay, saying of Housman that: "he is a philosopher, a disciple of Democritus, and holds that we are not spirits as the best men have thought" (qtd. in Gardner 68). One remarkably prescient review of *A Shropshire Lad* came from the pen of William Archer. Writing for the *Fortnightly Review* in August 1898, Archer observed that:

> Mr Housman is no Shropshire Burns singing at his plough. He is a man of culture . . . and I think he has an Elzevir classic in the pocket of his smock frock. But it is not Theocritus, not the Georgics or the Eclogues; I rather take it to be Lucretius. (qtd. in Gardner 76)

There are indeed numerous parallels between the philosophy of Lucretius and the general thrust of Housman's poetry (Haber, *A. E. Housman*). One of these is that the world was not fashioned for human comfort. In Munro's translation Lucretius writes:

> I would venture to affirm, and led by many other facts to maintain, that the nature of things has by no means been made for us by divine power: so great are the defects with which it is encumbered. (Lucretius part V, lines 196-199; Trans. Munro 120; see also: Lucretius II. 180-1)

Housman espoused similar sentiments. In a letter to Gilbert Murray, for example, he observed:

> do you think you can outwit the resourceful malevolence on nature? . . . It looks to me as if the state of mankind always had been and always would be a state of just tolerable discomfort. (*Letters* 1: 120)

This theme is recurrent in Housman's poetry (although for reasons noted earlier in the discussion of Stoicism it would be wrong to see in all the poems the voice of Housman the philosopher). In *More Poems* VIII (published after the death of A E Housman) we read of "The toil of all that be / Helps not the primal fault, . . . ".[7] *LP* XII is more explicit that the "laws of God" and "the laws of man" were alien to him:

> And how am I to face the odds
> Of man's bedevilment and God's?
> I, a stranger and afraid
> In a world I never made.

Similarly in *ASL* XLVIII we read that ". . . high heaven and earth ail from the prime foundation".

The world may impede our happiness but Lucretius is concerned to allay our fear of death by arguing that we are as senseless in the state of death as we were in the state of non-being before we were born; and since we do not fear the latter we should not fear the former. Lucretius writes that:

> . . . death therefore to us is nothing, concerns us not a jot, since the nature of the mind is proved to be mortal . . . So now we give ourselves no concern about any self which we have been before, nor do we feel any distress on the score of that self. (Lucretius III. 830-860; Trans. Munro 177)

This is one of the consolations offered in *ASL* XLVIII: in the face of hardship we can "call to thought, if now you grieve a little/The days when we had rest, O soul, for they were long . . . Then it went when with me, in days ere I was born."

Lucretius praises Epicurus for removing from men's minds both the fear of death and enslavement to superstition (Lucretius I. 62-145); he also argues that it is fear of death that is responsible for evil (Lucretius III. 31-93). In *LP* III (a poem originally intended for *ASL*) the young man who kills Hectate (the "Queen of air and darkness") escapes his own fear of death. When Hectate curses that the slayer will die tomorrow the narrator of the poem replies:

> O Queen of air and darkness
> I think 'tis truth you say,
> And I will die to-morrow;
> But you will die to-day.

A similar set of ideas helps elucidate *LP* XXV ("The Oracles"). The first stanza declares that the oracles of Dodona and Delphi "where gods told lies of old" are now silent. The one source of truth however is the "heart within that tells the truth and tells it twice as plain". This "truth" is that the soul is mortal, and yet it is one that can be borne just as the Spartan's bore the news of Xerxes's army approaching from the east: "The Spartans on the sea-wet rock sat down and combed their hair."

   Housman was not the only thinker of this period, however, to take a keen interest in the ideas of Lucretius. Frank Turner has shown how from about 1870 to 1910 interpretations of Lucretius served as one of many conflict zones for debates between scientific naturalism and Christian apologetics (335). Turner's essential argument is that Christian thinkers, feeling marginalised by advances in science, were keen to suggest that the philosophical naturalism and materialism of such thinkers as T. H. Huxley, John Tyndall, Herbert Spencer and W.K. Clifford were really just re-hashed versions of the ideas set forth by Lucretius in the 1st century BCE. This depiction enabled theists to attack scientific materialism as outdated and flawed. Another secondary advantage, according to Turner, was that the use of Lucretius as a platform for this debate pointed to the continued relevance of the classics at a time when classical education felt under attack from the demand (especially by Huxley) for a more science-based curriculum in schools and colleges.[8] As Turner summarises: "Lucretius became a pawn in the struggle for cultural dominance between men of science and men of religion" (Turner 338).

   John Holmes also considers the revival of interest in Lucretius from the 1860s and attributes it to three factors: better editions and translations (e.g. Munro's 1864 edition); the growth of secularism; and the firmer establishment of modern atomic theory in physics and chemistry (Holmes, "Lucretius"). I think we can add to this list the fact that Lucretius could be portrayed as a forerunner of Darwin whose own reputation grew steadily from 1859 onwards. In an introduction to a volume of poems written by George Romanes, one of Darwin's followers, Herbert Warren, then Professor of Poetry at Oxford, chose, for example, to comment on the writings of Darwin in the following terms

> There is no passage in the verse of his grandfather Erasmus so poetical as the concluding page of *The Origin of Species*, a passage which reminds the classical scholar of nothing so much as of Lucretius, even as Lucretius more than any other ancient seems to anticipate in some of his observations and generalisations Darwin himself. (x)

 Like Darwin, Lucretius also speculated about the emergence of life on earth, even at one point coming close to an account of natural selection (Cartwright). But it is the sheer scope of Lucretius' ideas that is impressive. *De Rerum Natura* is presented in a series of six books dealing with the following topics: matter and space; movements and shapes of atoms; life and mind; sensation and sex; cosmology and sociology; meteorology and geology. This is why it appealed to the movement of

77

scientific naturalism in the late Victorian era: it gave historical precedence and classical kudos to the sense that scientific materialism could, given time and intellectual freedom, encompass and explain the working of the entire universe. In this respect Darwin added the final touches to the Lucretian project: the removal of teleology from the natural world and the location of life and the origin of humankind in material processes governed by natural law. Moreover, Lucretius had considered as a poet and a man what the implications of this world view were for human life. Like Darwin, he had looked into the abyss and not flinched.

For many Christians, however, the ideas of Lucretius were, understandably, anathema, and *De Rerum Natura* was frequently attacked. In 1868 Tennyson published his poem "Lucretius" in which he repeats the anecdote (probably apocryphal) first started by St Jerome that the cold-hearted Lucretius, for all his rationality, was driven mad by a love potion administered by his wife and ended his life by suicide. As John Holmes has recently observed, Tennyson also uses the figure of Lucretius in this poem to explore the implications of Darwinism. As Holmes notes:

> "Through *Lucretius*, Tennyson pathologises Darwinism, presenting the Darwinian world view as misguided even to the point of madness". (*Darwin's Bards* 246)

But by the end of his undergraduate days Housman had lost his Christian faith. In a revealing letter he claimed that he was "a deist at 13 and an atheist at 21" (*Letters* 1: 328). In his writings Housman is never explicit about his attitude to the debates of his day concerning the scope and adequacy of scientific naturalism, but he probably had in mind the religious and philosophical implications of the work of Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall, when he observed in his 1892 "Introductory Lecture" that:

> Man stands today in the position of one who has been reared from his cradle as the child of a noble race and the heir to great possessions, and who finds at his coming of age that he has been deceived alike as to his origin and expectations; that he neither springs of the high lineage he fancied, nor will inherit the vast estate he looked for". ("Introductory Lecture" 272)

As I have shown elsewhere, Housman also explicitly embraced Darwin as someone of a Lucretian frame of mind, referring to Darwin in his 1909 Latin address from UCL to Cambridge University (written for the centenary celebrations of Darwin's life) as someone who was fortunate "rerum potuit cognoscere causas" (to understand the causes of things) – the same epithet used by Virgil to describe Lucretius (Cartwright 21).

Both Darwin and Housman were enthralled by the natural world and both sensate to its aesthetic pleasures whilst fully aware of its indifference to human suffering. Lucretius seems to hold a similar position and, although the majority of *De Rerum Natura* is about how gods are not responsible for natural phenomena, at the start of the poem he appends a hymn to Venus as the creative force behind Nature: "thou then are sole mistress of the nature of things" (Trans. Munro 20). This sense of a Lucretian and Darwinian Nature stripped of ultimate meaning and concern for human affairs, and yet, like Venus, irresistibly seductive is conveyed in one of Housman's most popular poems: "Tell me not here, it needs not saying" (*LP* XL) in

which he combines a frustrated eroticism with a repudiation of the pathetic fallacy. In this single graceful poem, Housman fuses together his intellectual conviction that Nature is "heartless, witless" and blind to human desires, with powerful erotic feelings of devotion ("soft Septembers", "blanching Mays") and the bitterness of betrayal and unrequited love. This is one of several occasions where Housman overtly challenges the pathetic fallacy of a feeling nature (compare, for example, *LP* XXVII).

But it was the materialism of Lucretius that Housman seems to have found most compelling. For Lucretius the soul is a material thing that passes out of the body and disperses abroad at the end of life, and Housman's ontology is similarly materialistic (see: *ASL* XXXII; *LP* I). Haber notes the "unending cycle of atomic dissolution and recombination in the poet's work" (*A E Housman* 164). Housman's disbelief in an afterlife is sardonically conveyed in *ASL* XLIII ("The Immortal Part"). The poem reverses the normal expectations of Christian dualism: the inner voice that speaks to the narrator in the poem comes not from an immortal soul but from the enduring bones – the part of the body that will last the longest. The bones point out that the soul will eventually be "slain/ And the man of bone remain". The poem ends with a very Lucretian set of phrases

> Before this fire of sense decay,
> This smoke of thought blow clean away,
> And leave with ancient night alone
> The steadfast and enduring bone.

Burnett notes the similarity between this poem and Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* III. 436–7, (353) to which we can add *De Rerum Natura* III. 596-8, which in Munro's translation reads: "the power of the soul gathering itself up from the inmost depths of body has oozed out and dispersed like smoke" (71). Hence life, in *De Rerum Natura*, is merely a temporary manifestation of essential components (i.e. atoms). Lucretius speaks of

> . . . those seeds which constitute wind and heat, cause life to stay in the limbs. Therefore vital heat and wind are within the body and abandon our frame after death." (Lucretius III. 126-8; Trans. Munro 60)

This theme underlies one of Housman's most delightful, haunting and deservedly popular short poems, *ASL* XXXII "From far from eve and morning", where the poet considers the place of human contact in a material universe.

> From far, from eve and morning
>   And yon twelve-winded sky,
> The stuff of life to knit me
>   Blew hither: here am I.
>
> Now—for a breath I tarry
>   Nor yet disperse apart—
> Take my hand quick and tell me,
>   What have you in your heart.

> Speak now, and I will answer;
>   How shall I help you, say;
> Ere to the wind's twelve quarters
>   I take my endless way.

The opening line suggest that the constituents of life have been temporarily gathered from across vast distances of space and time, with "from eve and morning" recalling perhaps the fall of Hephaistos from heaven in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (itself a line evoking the immensity of the post Copernican universe): 'From Morn / To Noon he fell, from Noon to dewy Eve" (742-3). The chaotic arrangement of the matter of life before it assembles from all directions into a sentient being is further reinforced by the idea of the "twelve winded sky".[9] The repetitions of the letter 'f' in "stuff of life", followed by a parallel repetition of 'h' in "hither" and "here" and later "hand", "have" and "heart" give a breathless sensation to the arrival (and survival) of life. The fleeting nature of life is enforced by the urgency that adheres to the word 'Now' and the subordinate clause "for a breath I tarry . . . " set off between dashes. The narrator is metaphorically and literally pausing for breath in the brief interlude between the incoherent state of life's components and their ultimate dispersal to the winds. Housman seems to explicitly identify life with the physicality of breath reaffirming what so terrified Tennyson in *In Memorian* that "the spirit does but mean the breath" (part LVI, line 7). The brevity of life is further driven home by the injunction to "take my hand quick" with the word quick echoing the very process of a life temporary quickening. The last two lines foretell the dispersal of the stuff of life back into the chaos, a process that takes place in all directions ("the wind's twelve quarters") and one that is endless. The poem reflects the mutability of things as described by Lucretius but is also consistent with the Darwinian view of life as something impermanent and forever shifting.

Interestingly, Tennyson's poem *Lucretius* envisages a similar scene of the endless clashing of atoms when Lucretius (the narrator in the poem) remembers a dream:

> . . . Terrible: for it seem'd
> A void was made in Nature, all her bonds
> Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
> And torrents of her myriad universe,
> Ruining along the illimitable inane,
> Fly on to clash together again, and make
> Another and another frame of things
> For ever . . . (lines 36-43)

In his insightful Darwinian reading of this poem, John Holmes shows how the disgust towards sexuality expressed by Lucretius in the poem is Tennyson's positing of the "moral and psychological challenge" of Darwinism (*Darwin's Bards* 256). Tennyson's Lucretius realises that in a material worldview he is merely another type of animal subject to base and beastly sexual instincts that fill him with disgust, a conclusion that drives him to despair. Tennyson's own solution was to repudiate the notion that Darwinism could satisfactorily explain the origin and evolution of life.

In *ASL* XXXII, however, Housman reaches different conclusions, identifying redemptive qualities in moments of desire and affection. During the brief emergence

of life from the clashing of atoms, the essential and necessary thing is to make human contact and attend to the heart's affections - "take my hand quick and tell me / What have you in your heart"- and to proffer help and solace: "how can I help you, say". As a theist, Tennyson was obliged to refute Lucretius whereas Housman embraced him.

Housman rejected Christianity but he composed one poem, *MP* XLVII, that superficially seems to have a religious theme. The poem is sometimes erroneously given the title "For my Funeral" but this seems to have been an instruction added to the poem by Housman and not a title. The funeral service was held in Trinity College Chapel on May 4th 1936, during which the poem was sung. Haber, however, considers the poem to be "a deceptive trap for the righteous" and "his final sardonic jest with God and man" (*Housman and Lucretius* 177). The jest is that although the poem reads superficially like a supplication to God to embrace his departed soul, the fact that "thou" and "thee" are not capitalised indicates that Housman is really writing to Nature, asking that she reabsorbs his compound elements into the ceaseless Lucretian atomic flux:

> We now to peace and darkness
> And earth and thee restore
> Thy creature that thou madest
> And wilt cast forth no more.

Evidence that Housman's thoughts may have lain in this direction is provided by his poem "Parta Quies" (rest is won). Although not published until after Housman's death (as the last poem, XLVIII, in *More Poems*, assembled by his brother Laurence), Housman wrote this as early as 1881 for an Oxford magazine (Burnett 462). It is a poem that melds a biblical view of the Apocalypse with a Lucretian view of death as a final state of non-being:

> When earth's foundations flee,
> Nor sky nor land nor sea
> At all is found,
> Content you, let them burn:
> It is not your concern
> Sleep on, sleep sound.

Mackenzie suggests that Housman uses this device to "subordinate the Christian vision to the Lucretian" (162). The fleeing of "earth's foundations" suggests a final destructive act. Lucretius himself had no doubt that the earth was finite and one day would be destroyed:

> With good reason therefore all things perish, when they have been rarefied by the ebb of particles and succumb to blows from without . . . In this way the walls too of the great world around shall be stormed and fall to decay and crumbling ruin. (Lucretius II. 1141-1148; Trans. Munro 55; see also: Lucretius VI. 100-110)

This same sense of final destruction in found in *ASL* L ("Where doomsday may thunder and lighten / And little will matter to one") and in *MP* XLIII (" . . . on through night to morning/The world runs ruinward").

Housman and Astronomy

The other science that Housman drew upon in his poems was astronomy. Throughout the Victorian period astronomy was a branch of science that had a strong popular and amateur following. Housman's own interest began at an early age. In a letter to Maurice Pollet, written towards the end of his life in 1933, he noted how in his school days he eagerly he read a "little book" on astronomy he found in his parents' house, and how thereafter astronomy became a life-long interest (*Letters* 1: 328). In his recollections of Alfred Housman, his brother Laurence recalled how the three brothers played a game on the lawn in their garden at Bromsgrove, forming a sort of human orrery with Laurence the sun, Alfred the moon and Basil the Earth (see: Graves 8). When Housman was fourteen he wrote a poem for a school competition about Sir Walter Raleigh. In it he reflects on the idea that travelling brings other constellations into view (an idea he exploited in his later verse, especially *LP* XVII):

> He flies to other lands afar
> The lands beneath the evening star
> Where fairer constellations rise . . . (*Poems of A E Housman* 193)

Housman's impressive knowledge of astronomy at a professional level is demonstrated in his later classical scholarship where he applied his sound understanding of the history of astronomy and the movements of the heavenly bodies as they appear to earth-bound observers (sometimes called spherical astronomy) to the exegesis and emendation of classical texts. Housman could be merciless in correcting the errors of his peers. In a withering comment on an article by an American scholar Professor Harry (who had interpreted lines in Euripides' *Agamemnon* as a description of the stars and planets in the dawn sky) Housman gleefully pointed out that:

> His description of dawn is a description of what never happened even in Kentucky, and shows that his attention was chiefly fixed, as it naturally would be, on the squirrels. ("Aster Seirios in Eur. I A. 6-7." 267)

Having impaled his victim on a technical error, Housman proceeds to dismember him, showing that Professor Harry had made both astronomical and textual errors in attempting to identify the star referred to by Agamemnon in the play as Aldebaran, whereas it could only have been a planet.

An even more impressive display of erudition is to be found in his commentary on the editing of a poem (number 678) previously examined by various scholars and included in the *Latin Anthology* edited by Alexander Riese in 1869. Housman demonstrates that the attempts of Riese and others ("these well-intentioned but ill-informed editors") to understand the period of revolution of the planets in the poem is flawed by an improper understanding of how the revolutions would have appeared to an ancient observer using a geocentric system. According to Housman, Riese and others made the error of using heliocentric figures for the periods of the revolutions of the planets, which were obviously anachronistic ("Anth. Lat. Ries. 678.")

It would seem natural therefore that Housman should use astronomical imagery, with all its long history of resonance between the microcosm and macrocosm and its flexible metaphorical qualities, in his verse. The place of

82

astronomical concepts in Housman's verse has been touched on by earlier critics but never with the thoroughness the subject warranted. In examining the influence of astronomy on Housman's verse, Tom Burns Haber observed that many of Housman's poems unfold and conclude in a circular manner, reflecting, he maintained, the crucial importance of apparent circular motion in astronomy (*A E Housman: Astronomer-Poet* 154). Haber noticed that the last line or two in Housman's poems were typically echoes of the opening lines in terms of key words, thoughts or even whole phrases. Perhaps the most striking example is *ASL* XXXVI which even deals with the poetic conceit that on a spherical earth walking in a straight line will eventually bring the observer back to the starting point – although the poem itself is about love and separation. Given the central metaphor of the poem, one might object that in this case the circularity is hardly surprising, but Haber estimates that about one in three poems have this form. An obvious example is the well known *ASL* II which starts with "Loveliest of trees the cherry now" and ends with "To see the cherry hung with snow". Haber attributes this device of Housman to his preoccupation with astronomy, suggesting that he transposed the concepts of cycles, circles and revolution, so crucial to spherical astronomy and astrology, to the structure of his poems. I suspect here that Haber may have uncharacteristically overstated the case: some of the examples he gives do not so convincingly fall into this form and the very nature of poetry often invites circular closure.

Whether the poems have inherent circularity or not is a moot point, but one thing many of the poems do convey is a strong sense of the earth's diurnal motion. In poetry generally, of course, dawn, evening and dusk can all take on symbolic connotations, but this is especially evident in Housman. In *LP* XXXVI ("Revolution") the poem's most vivid image is the shadow cone ("The vast and moon-eclipsing cone of night") formed by the interruption of the sun's light by the bulk of the earth. The poem ends with the observation that at midday the shadow cone crosses the nadir and menacingly "begins to climb".[10] "Revolution" is placed near the end of *Last Poems*. Significantly, the very last poem (*LP* XLI or "Fancy's Knell") also concludes with the approach of night: "The lofty shade advances". "Fancy's Knell" is an appropriate poem to stand at the end of the last volume of verse Housman published in his lifetime. Although the village mentioned in the poem (Abdon under Clee) does exist, he did not wish to claim topographical accuracy for the verse (*Letters* 1: 340). The location, like most venues in *A Shropshire Lad*, is part of a mythic landscape onto which the drama of his poetry is projected. The final verse suggests that the song, the poet and 'Fancy' itself share a common fate in their absorption into the elemental forms of earth and air:

> The lofty shade advances,
> I fetch my flute and play:
> Come, lads, and learn the dances
> And praise the tune to-day.
> To-morrow, more's the pity,
> Away we both must hie,
> To air the ditty,
> And to earth I.

However, the circularity in Housman's verse has a deeper resonance than merely some echo of Astronomical circular motion, and the clue lies again with

Lucretius. Lucretius argued for the ceaseless recycling of matter: atoms cohere temporarily and then disperse into space to cohere again somewhere else. This theme of endless cycling is found in numerous poems (see: *ASL* XXXIV). But it is not just matter that is cycled: in *ASL* XXXI ("On Wenlock Edge"), for example, we have the recycling of both matter and troubled thoughts. Here the narrator of the poem, contemplating the ancient Romans who inhabited Uricon (Wroxeter in Shropshire), reflects that "The tree of man was never quiet / Then twas the roman, now 'tis I". So although "To-day the Roman and his trouble / Are ashes under Uricon" both matter and grief are recycled.[11] The processes go on endlessly: hence, we have the "endless way "of *ASL* XXXII and the "endless road" of *ASL* LX. People die and are replaced by other people fulfilling the same role, having the same experiences. In *ASL* LV ("Westward on the high-hilled plains") we read the narrator noting ruefully that "in newer veins / Frets the changeless blood of man", and later that new lads "Tread the mill I trod before" and have "thoughts that were once mine". In *ASL* XXVII ("Is my team ploughing?"), the main speaker of the poem is the ghost of a dead ploughman. The answers to his questions show that things are just as they were before: "No change though you lie under / The land you used to plough"; even the dead ploughman's sweetheart is now comforted and bedded by another man. This circularity and recycling is enforced in Housman's poetry by numerous references to night and day, dawn and dusk. In effect, Housman is providing his own poetic response to the problem set by the Greek pre-Socratic philosophers: how can we explain change by reference to that which is stable and unchanging? For philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes and Heraclitus there was one underlying substance that remained constant but appeared in different guises. For Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus and then the Roman Lucretius, these unchanging entities were the atoms. Housman takes Lucretian atomism one step further and identifies the underlying stability of enduring psychological entities such as love, friendship, joys and disappointments, beneath the chaos and mutability – the Heracletian flux – of human experience.

In Housman's poetry the dead disintegrate into their component elements and merge again with the circular flux of things. Circular motion is observed too in the fact that the spinning of the earth on its axis gives the appearance of the stars and the planets revolving around the celestial pole (the Pole Star in the northern hemisphere). Housman uses these ideas with powerful effect. In the poem "Astronomy" (*LP* XVII), for example, we are made acutely aware of how life and death are played out under a dome of revolving stars. The poem was written in memory of Housman's brother, George Herbert Housman, who was killed in action on 30th October 1901 fighting the Boers in South Africa, and is worth quoting in full:

> The Wain upon the northern steep
> Descends and lifts away.
> Oh I will sit me down and weep
> For bones in Africa.
>
> For pay and medals, name and rank,
> Things that he has not found,
> He hove the cross to heaven and sank
> The pole-star underground.

> And now he does not even see
> Signs of the nadir roll
> At night over the ground where he
> Is buried with the pole.

The "Wain" refers to the constellation of the Plough or Ursa Major. The Plough would descend in the sky as an observer moves south and this is just what George did in travelling to Africa. But since this is Housman responding to the news that his brother has been killed, the intended image is more likely one of the Plough, as a circumpolar constellation, sinking towards the horizon and rising again as the Earth turns. The sudden change in the first stanza from "Wain" to "Africa" suggests the revolving constellations calling Housman's brother to mind. The fact that "he hove the cross to heaven" has clear overtones of Christ's sacrifice but in this context also refers to the fact that travelling south of the equator brings the Southern Cross into view as the pole star sinks below the horizon. The metaphor works well: George Housman has laboured like Christ to raise his own cross and prepare for his own destruction, whilst his own native polar constellation (the Plough) sinks into the ground as he does into his grave. The pointlessness of it all is emphasised by the fact that those things he sought "he has not found". The "signs of the nadir" are the constellations of the southern hemisphere, alien stars to George Housman and ones to which he is now insensible. Burnett, in his edition of Housman's *Letters* dates the poem to after the death of George in 1901; it was published in an anthology in 1904 and in *Last Poems* in 1922 (Gasser).

There are obvious parallels with Hardy's poem "Drummer Hodge", first published in November 1899. Like George Housman, Drummer Hodge lies below a set of strange stars: "And foreign constellations west / Each night above his mound" (lines 5-6). To emphasise this point, in each stanza of Hardy's poem the stars are either "strange", "foreign" or "strange eyed". The last verse ends:

> Yet portion of that unknown plain
>   Will Hodge forever be;
> His homely Northern breast and brain
>   Grow to some Southern tree,
> And strange-eyed constellation reign
>   His stars eternally. (13-18)

Both poems stress the pathos of loss and the dislocation of death made more acute by the fact that the body rests separated from home and friends in unfamiliar ground. The separation of the dead from the grieving is thereby emphasised by a reference to the geographical and astronomical space that separates them. Housman's poem was almost certainly written after Hardy's, but it is not clear if there was any direct influence. Housman met Hardy for the first time in June 1899 (Naiditch, *Additional Problems*). Housman also accepted an invitation to visit Hardy at Max Gate in August 1900 (*Letters* 1: 122). There are letters between Hardy and Housman suggesting admiration for each other's verse, although neither "Astronomy" nor "Drummer Hodge" are mentioned. It is possible that they did not talk much about poetry. In a letter to Richard Purdy, for example, Housman recalls: "I do not remember talking with him on poetry, except that we were both very fond of William

Barnes's Dorset poems" (*Letters* 1: 84). He repeated this point in a later letter to Houston Martin: "Hardy and I never talked about my poems" (*Letters* 1: 495).

Housman's poem could also be a veiled comment on Britain's imperial ambitions: the stars are "strange" to George Housman raising the question about what he was doing in the southern hemisphere. The late nineteenth-century was a period of imperial expansion and consolidation for Britain: the first Boer war took place in 1880 and 1881 and the second (in which George was killed) over the years 1899-1902; Egypt was occupied in 1882; and Burma annexed to the Empire in 1885. The opening poem of *A Shropshire Lad* which purports to celebrate the golden jubilee of Victoria in 1887 is ambiguous at best and there are similar critical allusions to foreign wars and the soldiers who die to "save the Queen". The poem also relies for effect on a similar geographical incongruity, in this case Shropshire names read in Asia, and lads reared by the Severn lying dead by the Nile:

> It dawns in Asia, tombstone show
> And Shropshire names are read;
> And the Nile spills his overthrow
> Beside the Severn's dead.

Housman's dead are reunited with the earth and turn with it like the rest of matter. In *LP* XX the loss of a friend is placed in a cosmic framework of the diurnal motion of the earth:

> The night is freezing fast,
>   To-morrow comes December;
>   And winterfalls of old
> Are with me from the past;
>   And chiefly I remember
>   How Dick would hate the cold.
>
> Fall, winter, fall; for he,
>   Prompt hand and headpiece clever,
>   Has woven a winter robe,
> And made of earth and sea
>   His overcoat for ever,
>   And wears the turning globe.

"Dick" of the poem resembles his pastoral namesake in *Love's Labour's Lost*: "When icicles hang by the wall/ And Dick the shepherd blows his nail" (5.2.). Numerous scholars have noticed the similarity to Wordsworth's 'Lucy' poem: "A slumber did my spirit seal" (Wain; Marlow). Wain claims that *LP* XX compares unfavourably with the Lucy poem but his comments miss intended and crucial differences. In *LP* XX, Dick, seemingly, has escaped the privations of winter by cleverly turning death into a release. But whereas Wordsworth shows how his complacency in his love for Lucy makes the finality of death even more tragic and painful, Housman is reflecting on the process of memory bringing grief to mind and tries vainly to seek some consolation. The first verse suggests a linear progression of time – the night is freezing and tomorrow it is December – only to be thwarted by the reminder that there have been previous winters. But one thing that cannot return is Dick – a friend whose

86

value was such that he becomes the chief memory of this moment. "How Dick would hate the cold" adds a colloquial touch befitting the name "Dick", but the past tense of "would" immediately signals to the reader that Dick is no more. In the second verse Housman, in the spirit of Lucretius, asks us to consider death as a release where the grief of the death of a friend is mitigated by the idea that death is not to be feared since a state of nothingness no longer has any bearing on life. But, as often found in Housman, there is an added twist. What Dick hated was "the cold", now he is dead he has turned the earth and sea into an overcoat: the "winter robe". Note that it is not just a small patch of ground (his grave) that Dick wears but the whole expanse of earth and sea – an idea that emphasises the gulf between the narrator and his friend and elevates the scale to the global or cosmic. But this is also doubly ironic: firstly that death has been turned to Dick's advantage, secondly because in reality he can do no such thing since as a non-being he cannot feel the cold or the warmth of his new robe. Housman here is playing sardonically with what Korg has called the "problem of metaphor" in Victorian verse. For the metaphysical poets, despite the dislocation wrought by the Copernican Revolution, the natural world could still be seen as a repository of instructive analogues: few doubted that man and nature were strongly connected through the doctrine of correspondences. As Korg also observes, even as late as the Romantic period the power of metaphor was sustained by the "premise that man and nature share common moral and spiritual values" – a suspected affinity sustained by natural theology (141). But the images presented by mid nineteenth-century science: the vastness of space, the eternity of time, and the mutability of species, made it difficult to relate the physical world to a human scale and see in it any reflection of or correspondence to any sort of human striving. Applying this insight, we can see that in *LP* XX Housman effectively subverts the Wordsworthian view of nature (as he did in *LP* XL with the phrase "heartless witness nature"). The idea of the earth and sea as an overcoat is a deliberately preposterous metaphor: following the decline of natural theology it is empty and in a material universe meaningless. Despite what the naïve narrator tries to express, death has no such consolation and this realisation makes the grief seem more acute.

The identity of 'Dick' in the poem is not clear. It may just have been an exercise by Housman, or given that he seems to have written a draft of the poem in 1922, at a time when he knew his dear friend Moses Jackson was dying of stomach cancer, he may have had in mind a real friend. As noted earlier, in *A Shropshire Lad* there are several voices or narrators and these serve as masks functioning to distance the poetry from the poet. There were good reasons for Housman to disguise or transmute some of his feelings. Much of *A Shropshire Lad* was written in 1895 and it was on April 3rd of that year that Oscar Wilde's failed libel action against the Marquess of Queensbury opened in London, to be followed by Wilde's arrest and his own trial on April 26th culminating in his conviction on 25th May. Masks, however, are difficult to sustain indefinitely and Housman's love for Moses Jackson is one area where his use of astronomical and cosmological imagery bears the signs of the turmoil in his personal life. This is especially evident in *Last Poems* – a copy of which Housman sent to Moses Jackson as he lay dying in Canada in 1922. Housman's later poems – ones that were assembled by his brother Laurence into *More Poems* and *Additional Poems* – were deemed by Housman, either because of their literary merit or their personal tone, unfit to be published in his lifetime. So in these two later collections a more personal voice might also be expected.

Housman met Moses Jackson as an undergraduate at Oxford and his deep affection for him lasted for the rest of his life. It survived an apparent argument in the autumn of 1885 (when Housman disappeared for a week), Jackson's move to India, his marriage, and his subsequent emigration to Canada. As noted earlier, Housman's interest in astrology was purely academic and sustained to help him prepare his edition of Manilius and make other commentaries on classical literature. Indeed, the Stoic idea that the stars deal us our fate, metaphorically or otherwise is hardly present in *ASL*. But a fairly conventional use of the notion of astral influence appears in the "Epithalamium" that Housman wrote for the wedding of Moses Jackson in December 1889. As Sparrow (247) and Burnett (394) point out, the opening bears a strong similarity to a famous Epithalimium written by the Roman poet Catallus, whose work Housman greatly admired. Like Catallus, Housman introduces the god Hymen, son of Urania the muse of astronomy. But unlike Catallus, Housman calls for a beneficial celestial influence, most notably in lines 33-36:

> And the high heavens, that all control,
> Turn in silence round the pole.
> Catch the strong beams they shed
> Prospering the marriage bed. (*LP* XXIV)

Like any good poet, Housman was perfectly capable of extracting multiple metaphors from a single concept. His uses of 'wind' for example are manifold: signifying human passion (*ASL* XXXI); death and dissolution (*ASL* XLII, XXXII); healing (*ASL* XXX); geographical isolation (*ASL* XXXVIII); memory (*ASL* XL); and the hostility or indifference of nature (*LP* IX, XXVII) (see also: Page 195). Similarly, stars, constellations and planets can signify a variety of ideas: the seasons turning (*ASL* X); sacrifice, alienation and loss (*LP* XVII); astrological influence or blessing (*LP* XXIV, XVII); and foreboding (*LP* XXXVI). But, as is often the case in Housman, the sense of unfulfilled desire is never very far away and astronomical ideas are accordingly yoked into service. In the "Epithalimium" noted above (*LP* XXIV), although "starry beams" are invited to "prosper the marriage bed", the first stanza suggest that as the "groomsman quits your side" the bride's gain is his (i.e. Housman's) loss:

> Friend and comrade yield you o'er
> To her that hardly loves you more

The use of astral imagery to convey both intimacy and separation is also found in the Latin dedicatory epistle to Moses Jackson that Housman prefixed to the *Astonomica* of Manilius. In the poem, Housman refers to the constellations that shone above them when they enjoyed evening walks together (presumably in Oxford and London). The intimacy is suggested by the fact that they both saw the constellations rise together and they shone on both equally. However, since Jackson was in India when Housman composed the work, he refers to Jackson as someone who has followed "Eastern stars".[12] The stars can also suggest separation since, as we saw in an earlier analysis of "Astronomy" (*LP* XVII), different constellations will be visible in different parts of the world. The use of stars as objective correlates for unfulfilment and separation is also found in *MP* X and XI, two poems that are imitations and

developments of a fragment of verse attributed to Sapho. The original fragment of Sapho's verse (as translated by J. A. Symonds in 1883) reads:

> The moon has left the sky
> Lost is the Pleiads light
> It is midnight
> And time slips by
> But on my couch alone I lie

In *MP* XI Housman links the Pleiads with Orion: "The rainy Pleiads wester/Orion plunges prone".[13] Housman's two poems convey the same sense of desolation to be found in Sapho but he develops the theme in *MP* XI by invoking the never-to-be fulfilled desire of Orion pursuing the Pleiads as the heavens turn as well as the idea, found also in *LP* XVII "Astronomy", of the constellations visiting others on another part of the globe:

> The rainy Pleiads wester
> And seek beyond the sea,
> The head that I shall dream of,
> And 'twill not dream of me.[14]

According to Burnett's dating of the manuscripts, the first draft of this verse can be dated to about 1901, a year when Moses Jackson was in India (*Letters*). When he finished the final draft in 1922 Jackson was in Canada.

    Another use of the movement of the constellations is to be found in *ASL* X ("March"). The first two stanzas are:

> The Sun at noon to higher air,
> Unharnessing the silver Pair
> That late before his chariot swam,
> Rides on the gold wool of the Ram.
>
> So braver notes the storm-cock sings
> To start the rusted wheel of things,
> And brutes in field and brutes in pen
> Leap that the world goes round again.

Archie Burnett identifies a possible influence of Manilius here, noting that the "silver pair" refers to the pair of fishes in the last winter zodiacal constellation of Pisces, a reference also found in Manilius *Astronomica* (2: 192-3) and that the "gold wool of the Ram" is similar to a line in the same work (1: 263). He also suggests a possible influence of Dryden (*Poems of A E Housman* 327). Both are, of course, possible: Housman seems to have first read Manilius around 1894 (Page 168), the poem was written sometime in 1893 or 1894, and Housman is known to have admired certain passages of Dryden – including one about spring that he cites in his lecture subsequently published as *The Name and Nature of Poetry*. The sense of a new year beginning and nature stirring as the sun moves around the ecliptic, is, of course, something of a commonplace and is also found in the opening lines of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Housman may also have had these lines in mind:

> WHAN that Aprille with his shoures soote
> The droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote,
> … and the yonge sonne
> Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne . . . (lines 1-2; 7-8)[15]

Housman's poem like Chaucer's conveys the awakening of desire, but in Housman's poem the narrator ends on a note of thwarted desire: "Ah, let not only mine be vain, / For lovers should be loved again"

Housman's feelings of being an outsider are forcefully captured in *LP* XII. Manuscript drafts show this poem was conceived between Aug and Dec 1894 during the period of heightened emotion that produced *A Shropshire Lad* (Burnett 382). In the poem he rails against the laws of God and man: "And if my ways are not as theirs / let them mind their own affairs", but notes, strangely, that flying to another planet is not an escape option:

> . . . since, my soul, we cannot fly
> To Saturn nor to Mercury,
> Keep we must, if keep we can,
> These foreign laws of God and man.

The allusion to Saturn and Mercury is not entirely clear. Carol Efrati suggests that these are mythological types that hark back to a classical world where homosexuality was tolerated (61). She takes Saturn to represent Greece and Rome and Mercury the option of suicide (since Mercury was thought to be the guide of the dead to their resting place – see Housman's *ASL* XLII where mercury, as Hermes psychopompos, guides the souls of the dead to the underworld). But there are other readings: Mercury was also the trickster or turncoat, possibly Housman is indicating that he cannot change his nature. Housman may also have had in mind Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* which describes a fictional dream journey of the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus in which the planetary spheres are described.

In the science of astronomy and the cosmology of Lucretius, A. E. Housman found a fruitful set of ideas. Like many intellectuals of the late 19th century, Housman was forced to confront and re-imagine a universe increasingly revealed as indifferent to human affairs and stripped of any prospect of Christian redemption. Bertrand Russell expressed similar concerns, not in poetry but memorable prose, when he wrote in his essay A *Free Man's Worship* (1903):

> That Man is the product of causes that had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve individual life beyond the grave; . . . that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins – all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built. (48)

The painful reality of a world deserted by the gods, as advanced by Lucretius and confirmed to many by Darwin, must have seemed all to obvious to Housman – a man forced to suppress those very feelings whose expression may have brought some measure of personal happiness. In the bucolic but mythic landscape of Shropshire, Housman found a flawed Arcadia for the thoughts and passions of his characters. Within the wider framework of the sidereal motion of the heavens and the restless cycling of matter he found fitting concepts to craft his unique blend of poetry from his own unyielding despair.

Notes

I am grateful for the comments of Alan Wall on this article, and for the perceptive commentary of two anonymous reviewers.

    1. Subsequent references to poems in this volume are abbreviated *ASL* followed by the number of the poem

    2. Subsequent references to poems in this volume are abbreviated as *LP* followed by the number of the poem

    3. In addition to other works cited here, see, for example, Beer; Cosslett; Chapple; and Dove.

    4. The actual letter was recently sold at Sotheby's as Lot 41 of their Books and Manuscripts Sale, New York, 18th June 2010.

    5. It may be significant that the Roman playwright Terence was brought to Rome as a slave and hence an exile from his own land. Possibly, Housman saw parallels with his own sojourn in London as an exile from his native Worcestershire. Thankfully, Housman's accepted the advice of his friend Arthur Pollard and *A Shropshire Lad* was born.

    6. The philosopher Aristippus that Housman claimed to admire so much, was born around 435 BC and hence was a contemporary of Socrates. His Cyrenaic school of philosophy was named after his native town of Cyrene. For Aristippus the goal of life was immediate sensuous pleasure, a position that outraged such contemporaries as Plato and Xenophon. In Aristipuss' own life the pursuit of this goal seems to have taken the form of sleeping with courtesans, enjoying fine food and wine, and the avoidance of troublesome political responsibilities. Significantly, Aristippus followed these desires even at the expense of transgressing the conventional morality of his time. In epistemology (which may also account for Housman's admiration), the Cyrenaics bore some similarity to Protagoras and his followers; namely, they were sceptical empiricists who avoided making claims about the nature of what they regarded as an unknowable ultimate reality.

    7. Subsequent references to poems in this volume are abbreviated *MP* followed by the number of the poem.

    8. See Huxley, "Science and Culture (1880)".

    9. The idea of twelve winds has puzzled many readers (see Westhead). However, twelve winds are sometimes found on medieval maps (see "Where the Winds Blow") and Pliny refers to 12 winds in Book 2 Chapter 46 of his Natural History.

    10. Marlow attributes the "cone of night" image to one of the better emendations made by Bentley to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Bentley had changed Milton's "car of Night" to "cone of night". Although Housman generally disparaged Bentley for meddling with Milton, this is a possible source. Another previous usage is with Shelley where he used the phrase cone of night in his poem *The Triumph of Life* (line 23). There is also a suggestive passage in Manilius' *Astronomica* (1: 221-6) where there is a discussion of how the earth's shadow falls on the moon.

    11. See also Womack.

    12. For a translation and commentary see Harrison.

    13. The mythological and *Astronomica*l contexts are fairly straightforward. The Pleiads (also knows as the seven sisters or the Pleiades) were the attendants of Artemis pursued by Orion but then rescued by the goddess who turned them into a

flight of doves and then stars. Artemis later killed Orion and placed him in the sky as a constellation forever pursuing the Pleiads.

14. In a letter to his colleague A S F Gow concerning the meaning of a passage in one of Theocritus' Idylls (VII verse 54) Housman refers to the "matitudunal" (i.e morning) setting of Orion and the Pleiads as a sign to the Greeks of forthcoming storms when the sea would be unfit for navigation (*Letters* 1: 599).

15. The Roman year began in March, and in the middle ages the Catholic Church recognised a year as beginning around March 25th with the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary)

Works Cited

Beer, Gillian. *Open Fields*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996.

Burnett, Archie. "Commentary." *The Poems of A. E. Housman*. By A. E. Housman. Ed. Archie Burnett. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. 316-569.

Cartwright, John H. "A. E. Housman and the 1909 Darwin Celebration." *The Housman Society Journal* 35 (2009): 19-32.

Chapple, J. A. V. *Science and Literature in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Macmillan, 1986.

Cosslett, Tess. *The Scientific Movement and Victorian Literature*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1982.

Dove, John Roland. "Thomas Hardy and the Dilemma of Naturalism." *Die Neuren Sprachen* 16 (1967): 253-68.

Efrati, Carol. "The Horses and the Reins." *Victorian Poetry* 34 (1996): 53-71. Gardner, Philip. *A. E. Housman the Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Gasser, B. "A Soldier Cheap to the King and Dear to Me'." *The Housman Society Journal* 4 (1978): 31-38.

Gossin, P. *Thomas Hardy's Novel Universe: Astronomy, Cosmology, and Gender in the Post-Darwinian World.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

Graves, Richard P. *A. E. Housman. The Scholar Poet*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.

Haber, Tom Burns. "A.E. Housman: Astronomer-Poet." *English Studies* 35 (1954): 154-58.

---. "Housman and Lucretius." *The Classical Journal* 58.4 (1963): 173-82.

---. *A. E. Housman*. Ohio: Twayne, 1967.

Harrison, Stephen. "A. E. Housman's Latin Elegy to Moses Jackson." *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 132 (2002): 209-13.

Holmes, John. "Lucretius at the Fin De Siecle: Science, Religion and Poetry." *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920* 51.3 (2008): 266-80.

---. *Darwin's Bards*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009.

Housman, A. E. *A Shropshire Lad*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd. 1896.

---. "Lucretiana." *Journal of Philology* 25 (1897): 226-49.

---. "Introductory lecture." *Collected Poems and Selected Prose*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. London: Allen Lane, 1911. 259-95.

---. "Cambridge Inaugural Lecture." *Collected Poems and Selected Prose*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. London: Allen Lane, 1911. 296-314.

---. "Aster Seirios in Eur. I A. 6-7." *The Classical Review* 28.8 (1914): 267.

---. (1914).

---. "Anth. Lat. Ries. 678." *The Classical Quarterly* 12.1 (1918): 29-37.

---. *Last Poems*. London: Grant Richards, 1922.

---. *More Poems*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1936.

---. *The Poems of A. E. Housman*. Ed. Archie Burnett. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

---. *The Letters of A. E. Housman*. Ed. Archie Burnett. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.

Huxley, T. H. "Science and Culture." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature.* Ed. M.H. Abrams and S.J. Greenblatt. Vol. 2. New York: Norton, 1993.

Kopff, Christian. "Conservatism and Creativity in Housman." *Modern Age* 47.3

(2005): 229-39.

Korg, J. "Astronomical imagery in Victorian Poetry." *Victorian Science and Victorian Values: Literary Perspectives.* Ed. James Paradis and Thomas Postlewait. Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1985.

Leggett, B. "The Poetry of Insight: Persona and Point of View in Housman." *Victorian Poetry* 14.4 (1976): 331.

Lindsay, C. "A. E. Housman's Silly Lad: The Loss of Romantic Consolation." *Victorian Poetry* 37 (1999): 333-50.

Lucretius, [Titus Lucretius Carus]. *De Rerum Natura.* Ed. H. A. J. T. Munro. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1860.

Lucretius, [Titus Lucretius Carus]. *De Rerum Natura.* Ed. and Trans. H. A. J. T. Munro. 4th ed. London: George Bell and Sons, 1900.

Mackenzie, Donald. "Two Versions of Lucretius: Arnold and Housman." *Translation and Literature* 16 (2007): 160-77.

Manilius, M. *Astronomica.* 5. vols. London: Grant Richards, 1903; 1912; 1916; 1920; 1930.

Manilius, M. *Manilius: Astronomica.* Ed. and Trans. G. P. Goold. London: William Heinemann, 1977.

Marlow, Norman. *A. E. Housman: Scholar and Poet.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1958.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost.* Boston: Langdon Coffin, 1831.

Naiditch, Paul. *A. E. Housman at University College London*: *The Election of 1892.* Boston, Mass: Brill, 1988.

---. *Problems in the Life and Writings of A. E. Housman.* Beverly Hills: Krown and Spellman, 1995.

---. *Additional Problems in the Life and Writings of A. E. Housman.* Los Angeles: Sam Johnson, 2005.

Nisbet, R. G. M. "Housman and Housmaniana." *Essays in Criticism* 19 (1969): 232-39

Page, Norman. *A. E. Housman a Critical Biography.* London: Macmillan, 1983.

Pendergraft, M. *Manilius: Poetry and Science after Virgil.* Classics Technology Centre. n.d. Web. 13 March 2009.

Pliny, [Pliny The Elder]. *The Natural History.* Trans. Bostock, J. and H. T. Riley. London: Taylor and Francis, 1855.

Richards, Grant. *A. E. Housman.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1942.

Ricks, Christopher. "The Nature of Housman's Poetry." *A. E. Housman: A Collection of Critical Essays.* Ed. Christopher Ricks. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Spectrum, 1968.

---, ed. *A. E. Housman Collected Poems and Selected Prose.* London: Allen Lane, 1988.

Russell, Bertrand, "A Free Man's Worship (1903)." *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays.* London: Longmans Green, 1918.

Sappho, "48: The Moon Has Set . . . " *Poems of Sappho.* Trans. J. A. Symonds. *The Internet Sacred Text Archive.* n.d. Web. 20 Aug. 2010.

Sorley, Charles. *Letters of Charles Sorley.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1919.

Sparrow, J. "Echoes in the Poetry of A. E. Housman." *Nineteenth Century and After* 115 (1934): 243-56.

Stoppard, Tom. *The Invention of Love.* New York: Grove Press, 1997.

Stoppard, Tom. "The Lad that Loves you True." *The Guardian* 3 June 2006.
    Guardian.co.uk. 3 June 2006. Web. 1 Sept. 2010.

Turner, Frank M. "Lucretius among the Victorians." *Victorian Studies* 16 (1972/73):
    329-48.

---. *Contesting Cultural Authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

Wain, John. "Housman." *A. E. Housman a Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed.
    Christopher. Ricks. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968.

Warren, Herbert. Introduction. *A Selection from the Poems of George John Romanes*.
    By George John Romanes. London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1896.

Westhead, E. J. "Yon twelve-winded sky." *Housman Society Newsletter* 31 Feb 2010.

"Where the Winds Blow." *Osher Map Library: Smith Center for Cartographic
    Education*. University of Southern Maine, n.d. Web. 20 Aug 2010.

Womack, Kenneth. "'Ashes under Uricon': Historicizing A. E. Housman, Reifying T. `
    H. Huxley, Embracing Lucretius." *A. E. Housman. A Reassessment*. Ed. Alan
    Holden and Joy Birch. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.

Sarah Winter, "Darwin's Saussure: Biosemiotics and Race in *Expression.*" *Representations* 107.1 (2009): 128-161

In "Darwin's Saussure", Sarah Winter admirably confronts a range of seemingly disparate debates currently raging among Darwinian historians, medical sociologists and scholars of modern linguistics, ultimately producing a series of controversial arguments which demand the attention of academics currently working in each of these fields.

With varying degrees of success, Charles Darwin has been upheld as a central figure in the histories of a vast spread of intellectual disciplines. Here, Winter's central aim is to establish Darwin as a pivotal player in the foundation of modern linguistics, posturing that the naturalist bore a key influence on the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. An impressive range of evidence is marshalled in support of this cause. Winter firmly establishes that Darwin was not only well-versed in language theories developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but that this 'linguistic' background actively informed much of the naturalist's research, manifesting itself in both his notebooks, his correspondence and the seminal *On the Origin of Species* (1859).

Impressively, Winter draws out a host of connections between Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) and Saussure's landmark *Cours de Linguistique Générale,* (1913), positioning Darwin within the narrative of the history of modern linguistics. Winter ambitiously proposes that Darwin, in elaborating his theory of expression as a universal yet evolutionarily arbitrary sign, undermined nineteenth century comparative philology, paving the way for Saussurian linguistics. A number of acute observations are deployed in support of this view, exposing marked similarities between what Winter terms "the conceptual and methodological priorities" (146) of the two thinkers. Importantly, the basis of argument is far from limited to *Expression* alone. Winter incorporates into her narrative both *Origin* as well as *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), lucidly proposing that the layout of Darwin's well-known tree diagram corresponds with Saussure's distinction between synchronic and diachronic linguistics.

Winter bolsters her argument with consideration of developments in the period between Darwin's late Victorian publications and Saussure's early twentieth-century activities. Here we are offered a balanced perspective. While Darwin's central ideas are shown to have been carried through Victorian philology in the 1880s and 1890s, Winter acknowledges that language scholars made alterations to the opportunistic element implied by Darwin's natural selection; a change which indeed would later inform Saussure's theories. Thus, instead of simply championing Darwin as an out-and-out forerunner of Saussaure, Winter wisely sheds some light on the process of transition between the two. More consideration of the inter-period would only serve to strengthen this argument. Additionally, more discussion of Darwin's linguistically-interested contemporaries would establish whether Darwin was unique in articulating ideas which created the 1870s watershed in pre-linguistics. Winter does dedicate space, it must be noted, to relevant figures such as Max Müller and Sir Charles Bell. Nevertheless, further discussion would ensure that Darwin's role in the case of modern linguistics is not being over-emphasised.

97

In tandem with this central argument, Winter skillfully inter-weaves a further thread suggesting that Darwin's stance on the issue of race should be reconsidered based on a new reading of *Expression.* Here Winter offers an original take on a backlog of debate and discussion as to whether Darwin held race to be a biologically hierarchical category. *Expression* is convincingly pitched as representing a major revision to *The Descent of Man*, the text frequently argued to contain Darwin's core views on race. Supporting her narrative with persuasive material from *Expression,* Winter argues that Darwin ultimately rejected the polygenetic view of race through establishing expression as a universal 'biosemiotic' sign.

Such a reading has far-reaching implications. Methodologically, through highlighting these significant developments in Darwin's thought, Winter reminds us of the need to take a holistic approach to Darwin's publications when assessing any aspect of his views. This line also has a significant bearing on the controversial claims recently made by Adrian Desmond and James Moore; namely, that Darwin was prompted to publish *Origin of Species* in order to oppose notions of African racial inferiority. Leaving these considerations in the sub-text, Winter chooses to broach an altogether more politicised and, from the standpoint of modern genetics, topical issue: the abandonment of race as a category used to distinguish human kind.

Though there is less time to convincingly re-position Darwin as a figure who represented a missed opportunity to dismantle the notion of race, Winter's concluding assertions encapsulate what today's researching academic should strive towards: bold, provocative scholarship which simultaneously addresses debates raging in both 'cultures' of the humanities and the sciences.

Colin Baker
Durham University

Carolyn Burdett, "Sexual Selection, Automata and Ethics in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Olive Schreiner's *Undine* and *From Man to Man*." *Journal of Victorian Culture* 14.1 (2009): 26-52

Studies of science and literature continually return to George Eliot's works as primary examples of the intersection between Darwin's view of evolution and Victorian literature. Analysis of Eliot's work appear in some of the most important texts in literature and science studies, most notably Gillian Beer's seminal work *Darwin's Plots* (1983) and Sally Shuttleworth's *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science* (1984). It is difficult to find new ways to approach a text like *The Mill on the Floss* through the lens of Darwinian theory, yet Carolyn Burdett manages to do just that by moving away from just a Darwinian reading of the novel, and instead incorporating contemporary theories of automata (most notably T.H. Huxley's work) as a bridge between Eliot and Olive Schreiner.

Burdett anchors her article around the notion that Eliot and Schreiner's "capacity for working and reworking, for creating resisting spaces with the new biological and psychological languages" (46) reflects a more complex view of how women writers reconciled science with ethics. Burdett covers some familiar ground with her discussion of Eliot's anticipation of Darwin's theory of sexual selection in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), particularly with regard to Maggie Tulliver's assertive approach to mate selection. While Stephen Guest follows the traditional path of finding "quite the right sort of wife" (32) in Lucy Deane, Maggie defies this form of sexual selection by denying her attraction to Stephen, her obvious biological mate, reflecting Eliot's favoring of free will and social conditioning over biological determinism. The social imperative, as argued by Darwin in *The Descent of Man* (1871) (notably after the publication of Eliot's novel), is both moral and a product of natural selection. Burdett argues this social imperative leads to the conflict between Maggie's "automatic" attraction to Stephen and her "automatic" rejection of him, which again suggests how Eliot anticipated scientific theory, in this case Huxley's 1874 "On the Hypothesis that Animals are Automata, and its History" (37).

The remainder of Burdett's article focuses on Schreiner's two unfinished works, *Undine* (1928) and *From Man to Man* (1926). The connection to *The Mill on the Floss* is difficult to ascertain at times, and Burdett requires the reader to make some inductive leaps. For instance, she focuses on the overt religiosity in *Undine* in relation to her rejection of biological determinism, but does not make the connection to Eliot's work. This is not to suggest that Burdett's analysis of Schreiner's novels is without merit – discussion of these underappreciated texts is praiseworthy enough, however it is her consideration of Schreiner's feminist response to automata sexual selection that offers the greatest insight. Burdett argues beyond a eugenic reading of the texts and instead considers "what Undine cannot do, at any point, is to integrate her intellectual response with her emotional-sexual life" (44). Undine acts as an automaton with her approach to religion and love, both of which fail her because, as Burdett argues, Schreiner's view of sexual selection goes beyond the physical. In *From Man to Man*, Rebekah views human evolution as "love and the expansion of ego to others," (46) which is more complex than both Darwin's sexual selection and Huxley's automata.

Burdett concludes by suggesting that in these novels automatic sexuality (the traditional view of sexual selection) fails because "sociality is [human beings'] condition, it is the fabric of the environment in which they exist and evolve – there must be an expansive affective life for there to be human and social flourishing" (46). Burdett hints that women writers presented this altered view of sexual selection because of the "peculiarly heavy burden for women of biological determinism" (47) which still persists today. This statement encourages more discussion and evaluation than closure, and begs for more evidence from these texts and others. Indeed, it could be argued that Burdett's aims are too ambitious: sexual selection, automata, social and ethical evolution, and the role of woman and woman writer – anchored by three texts – are almost overwhelming for one article. This is not to suggest that her evidence is incomplete or unconvincing – her argument regarding both authors' consideration of sexual selection in courtship and romance plots is sound and well-considered. Burdett offers us much to consider in terms of sexual selection and sociality, and despite some of its flaws, the article encourages further discussion of science and literature in the works of women writers.

Amanda Mordavsky Caleb
University of Tennessee

Alex Wetmore, "Sympathy Machines: Men of Feeling and the Automaton." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* **43.1 (2009): 37-54**

While it has long been established that in the eighteenth century models of femininity were often grounded in mechanical analogies, Wetmore's wide-ranging article of several – but fluidly connected – parts crosses traditional disciplinary divisions between eighteenth-century literature, moral philosophy and popular culture to argue that the "connection between sensitive men and machines" (39) highlights a significant movement from the earlier association of technological developments with self-interest.

Reading Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), the article convincingly shows that civic humanists often saw the relationship between public and private as following the classical division of liberal and mechanic, and that this social difference mediated various interpretations of the "moral value and social impact of technology" (39). Such divergent attitudes are apparent in early eighteenth-century satires of print culture, including Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), which self-consciously draws attention to its status as an object of mechanical and commercial origin in order to support liberal conceptions of production. In later sentimental fictions, however, Wetmore rightly notes that the satirical tone towards their own mechanical and commercial nature is significantly softer than in the Augustan satires.

Wetmore then sets out to "illustrate the subversive potential inherent in eighteenth-century automata, and . . . illuminate important parallels between automata and men of feeling" (44) by examining the anonymous *The Divine Predictions of Daniel and St. John Demonstrated in a Symbolical Theological Dissertation on Cox's Museum* (1774). As its title suggests, through parallel columns of text this pamphlet connects verses from the books of Daniel and Revelation to the amusing mechanisms encountered during the 1770s at Cox's Museum in the Spring Gardens. While *Divine Predictions* apparently "points to an important underlying truth about the social and ideological significance of Cox's exhibition", Wetmore acknowledges that the pamphlet is "Grounded in under-analyzed, largely superficial similarities" and so presents an argument which is 2on the whole, poorly articulated, confusing, and less than convincing" (45). This is an understatement: Wetmore seems to overlook that the pamphlet is an ironic spoof satirizing its 'dedicatee' William Warburton's *Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* (1737-41). This misreading is perhaps not as catastrophic as it at first sounds (because it is redeemed by significant insights elsewhere in the article), but does hint that one should be a little concerned about the veracity of the "radical upheaval" (45) in culture Wetmore suggests this museum represents.

The article next moves on to its apparent focus: the identification of a shift in the relationship between the liberal and the mechanical within the mid-century novels of "men of feeling2 by Sterne, Smollett and Mackenzie. Here, Wetmore's claim that in discourse prior to the mid-eighteenth century the "realms of sensibility and technology were typically represented as distinct and bound up with separate spheres of public and private" (39) can only go so far, especially if one takes into account the late seventeenth-century Latitudinarian and opponent of Hobbes, Samuel Parker, who argued that "the generality of Men . . . cannot but pity and commiserate the afflicted with a kind of fatal and mechanical Sympathy; their groans force tears and sighs from

101

the unafflicted" (qtd. in Crane, "Suggestions toward a Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling.'" *ELH* 1 (1934): 205-30). R.S. Crane's essay on the 'man of feeling' from which this quotation is drawn is notably absent from Wetmore's references. It is also regrettable that the article does not acknowledge G. S. Rousseau's groundbreaking 1975 essay "Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres: Towards Defining the Origins of Sensibility", especially its discussion of mechanistic mind-body analogies. However, Wetmore's analysis does establish an important connection between social division and mechanism, adding a different perspective to the number of recent articles which have focused on class in each of these three important novels of sympathy.

In the concluding section, the article makes the case that the sentimental philosophies of the Scottish Enlightenment not only "helped give birth to the man of feeling as a masculine ideal", but also reinterpreted the categories of public and private, and liberal and mechanic. This re-appraisal challenged the "absolute categorical divisions upon which civic humanism is founded" (50), through the association of the pleasure of observing ingenious mechanisms at work with the satisfaction generated by responses to witnessing virtuous acts. Wetmore acutely suggests that these ideas laid "the ideological groundwork for the emergence of the man of feeling, who is defined by both his mechanistic reactions and his virtuous sensibility" (51): an important point that could have perhaps been made more emphatic earlier in the argument.

Notwithstanding the caveats noted above, the article has much to offer scholars of sensibility, technology, and gender in the eighteenth century, and can be commended for its interdisciplinary endeavours.

Greg Lynall
University of Liverpool

Nicholas M. Williams, "'The Sciences of Life': Living Form in William Blake and Aldous Huxley." *Romanticism* 15.1 (2009): 41-53

An approach which, by its own confession, "risks (and dares) anachronism" (46) is at the heart of this intriguing attempt to understand the philosophical relationship between Aldous Huxley and William Blake. Nicholas M. Williams begins his investigation from a conviction that Blake's influence on Huxley is generally understood in terms which are not only far too limited (confining themselves strictly to a discussion of mysticism) but occasionally outright misleading (the perceived attachment of both to individualism, which, Williams points out, was gainsaid by Huxley himself on numerous occasions). "[M]ore attention needs to be paid", says Williams, "to how Huxley sees Blake complicating the entire notion of selfhood, supplementing a rational model of subjectivity by continual sensitivity to 'the life of the body'" (42). To this end, he begins with an examination of Huxley's contribution to the Two Cultures debate, assuming a correspondence between the binaries of science/literature and body/mind and concluding that Blake provides Huxley with a unique method of synthesising both sides via the life sciences. Biology is the common ground, suggests Huxley, for it asks the same questions about lived experience as poetry. For Huxley, "Blake's monism, his refusal to separate the soul from the life of the body, is the keynote of a new conception of literature" (44).

Williams's argument takes us from Biology in general to the specific concept of emergence – the idea of naturally occurring complex systems unpredictable at the level of their individual components – and to the notion that Blake is in some sense the philosophical forefather of this idea. In the eighteenth century, science was ill-equipped to articulate the ideas which would eventually manifest themselves as, say, Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, but Blake's legacy provides the twentieth-century poet with a place to start. As Williams claims, "[T]he parallels between Maturana and Varela's account of the interactions of dynamic metabolism and its boundaries, and Blake's account of Energy as the 'only life' and Reason as its 'bound or outward circumference', are startling" (46).

This is the point in the argument where the anachronism takes centre stage. Williams draws analogies between Blake's writing and scientific ideas which would not arrive until the twentieth century, at one point even deploying a concept which would not come along until after Huxley's work. Williams is reassuringly up-front about this, and delivers a convincing argument that Blake's texts are in themselves examples of emergence, through an examination of their form (which he regards as Living rather than Mathematical). However, Blake's mysticism or, put another way, the malleability in critical hands of works such as the "Proverbs of Hell" (an examination of which is central in the closing pages of Williams's argument) makes certain parts of this relation appear a little thin.

Williams does not mention Serres - to whose works such as *Conversations on Science, Culture and Time* (1995), the promulgation of this kind of approach to time can perhaps be traced - but his anachronism is not without critical precedent, neither is it indefensible. Whilst it may make some scholars uneasy, Williams's final argument for Blake as a "germinal" figure is a fascinating one – incorporating the scientific concept of emergence (which demands "temporally non-linear relations") into critical

vocabulary, and arguing that "rather than killing their predecessors, one function of later writers is precisely to bring to life for 'future literature' what only existed in germ in the literature of the past" (52). Whatever view one takes in the significant discussion opened by this line of inquiry, it would surely be hard to maintain, having read it, that the relationship between Blake and Huxley is as simple as is generally imagined.

Will Tattersdill
King's College, London

Catherine Wynne, "Sherlock Holmes and the Problems of War: Traumatic Detections." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 53.1 (2010): 29-53

The relationship between medicine, war and criminal detection are under investigation in Catherine Wynne's article on Arthur Conan Doyle. In particular, Wynne is interested in what she names Doyle's varied "traumatic detections", (31) his responses to war in medical journalism, and the Sherlock Holmes canon. By the end of the article, Wynne hopes to have shown us "that Doyle's own traumatic experience of war was more profound than is commonly recognised or perhaps more than he ever knew himself" (49).

The article's opening arguments consider Doyle's medical journalism emerging from his period as a doctor during the Boer War (1888-1902). During his time in South Africa Doyle wrote extensively of disease and war medicine, especially on the infections prevalent in conflict. His writings on, and discussion of disease management in *The British Medical Journal*, for example, are invaluable contributions to the study of war and disease. Analysing these medical narratives along with Doyle's other war writing, Wynne shows us how important were Doyle's interrogations of disease control, but also how propagandist some of his writing could be. However, Wynne also reveals how much of Doyle's medical journalism reflects an uneasiness about the war that might readily be characterised as trauma. Certainly Doyle's work "engages with developments in the exploration and identification of traumatic disorders" (36) which Wynne shows with felicity in her detailed examination of both contemporary and modern scholarship on war and trauma (36-8).

The second half of the article shifts focus on to Doyle's detective fiction in order to follow the traces of trauma into imaginative writing. Wynne selects two Sherlock Holmes fictions for particular analysis, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901-2) and "The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier" (1926). The first of these, as Wynne reads it, is a narrative of nervous disorder, in which the traumatic events of the Baskerville family history come together to create a powerful anxiety in the contemporary Baskerville, Sir Henry. Wynne sees the novel not only as a story of trauma but of imperial conflict, too, ending in a "fragile future" (42) where solace is sought abroad. The hound itself acts in the novel as "a metaphor for medical disorders" (42). In the latter story, "The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier" it is the soldier himself "who requires treatment for his physio-psychological problems" (42). As it turns out, in this story Doyle combines infectious disease (leprosy) with the trauma of conflict (medicalised as neurasthenia) which require the case to be solved not by Holmes alone but in concert with a leading medical specialist. As Wynne implicitly asserts, clinical diagnosis and criminal detection are often methodologically similar.

Indeed in reflecting on the paralleling of crime investigation with medical diagnosis, Wynne uncovers their connection in the literature on neurasthenia in the years following the end of the Great War (1914-18). In one work, for example, Wynne reveals the authors' dependence on both Freud and Sherlock Holmes in their exploration of "the patient's state of mind" (47). Having highlighted these various congruences (which give Wynne her concept of traumatic detection) the conclusion to the article stresses once again the varied responses to war in Doyle's different generic

writings; the gallantry of soldiers is evident in his was histories, the trauma of mutilated bodies in his medical journalism, and the recovery from illness (and trauma) in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and "The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier".

Wynne's article offers several important new contributions to our knowledge of Doyle, and is for that reason, a significant new study. First, it places Doyle's fiction and non-fiction within the context of war trauma in the Great War, and recognises his reflections as important historical documents in the ongoing scholarly debates about trauma in that period. Second, it regards as important – indeed central – Doyle's experiences as a doctor, especially as these might have gained a foothold in his detective fiction. It is all too common in Doyle scholarship to relegate his medical knowledge to a footnote about observational techniques and the inspirational teaching of Joseph Bell at the Edinburgh Medical School. Here, Wynne places Doyle the doctor on centre stage and shows us how valuable it is to recover specific medico-scientific contexts. Third, and most importantly for the present context, Wynne's article is a fine example of the detailed historical work that marks the best literature and science criticism. By exploring Doyle's medical writing and its various counterpoints in the medical work of the period, Wynne is able to explore with great effect how Doyle's fiction might be an extended investigation of the same themes refracted by generic difference. This linking of fiction to other scientific writing in order to think about their shared themes and explorations is proving a rich seam of scholarship at present. Wynne's article is a further excellent example of its importance.

Martin Willis
University of Glamorgan

Contributor Details

Matthew Beaumont is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English at UCL. He is the author of *Utopia Ltd.: Ideologies of Social Dreaming in England, 1870-1900* (2005), and the co-author, with Terry Eagleton, of *The Task of the Critic: Terry Eagleton in Dialogue* (2009). He has recently co-edited a collection of essays, *Restless Cities* (2010); and edited a new edition of Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (2010) for Oxford World's Classics.
Email contact: m.beaumont@ucl.ac.uk

Colin Baker is a PhD student at the University of Warwick.
Email contact: c.j.baker@durham.ac.uk

Amanda Mordavsky Caleb is an Assistant Professor of English at Misericordia University. She is the editor of *(Re)Creating Science in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2007) and a new edition of *Teleny* (2010). Her research interests include the relationship between science and literature (especially eugenics), *fin de siècle* decadence, and sensation fiction. She is currently working on a book length study on the relationship between science and decadence in the late nineteenth century.
Email contact: acaleb@misericordia.edu

John Cartwright is a Senior University Teaching Fellow at the University of Chester where he teaches courses on evolution, genetics and statistics. His research interests lie in the broad areas of Darwinism and the relationships between science and literature. His publications include *Evolution and Human Behaviour* (2008) and (with Brian Baker) *Literature and Science* (2005). He has a special interest in A E Housman and is a member of the A E Housman Society.
Email contact: j.cartwright@chester.ac.uk

Greg Lynall is a lecturer in the School of English, University of Liverpool. He has published articles on literature, science and technology in the eighteenth century and has recently completed a book-length study of Swift in his scientific context.
Email contact: G.J.Lynall@liverpool.ac.uk

Andrew Mangham is lecturer in nineteenth-century literature at the University of Reading. He is the author of *Violent Women in Sensation Fiction* (2007) and editor of both *Wilkie Collins: Interdisciplinary Essays* (2007) and *The Female Body in Medicine in Literature* (2011). He is currently working on a study of early Dickens and medicine, and will edit *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*.
Email contact: a.s.mangham@reading.ac.uk

Vike Martina Plock is lecturer in Twentieth-Century English Literature at the University of Exeter. She has published widely on James Joyce and his lifelong interest in medicine and science. Her first monograph *Joyce, Medicine, and Modernity* was published by the University Press of Florida in 2010. She is currently working on a new research project that focuses on the centrality of fashion and clothes as cultural force in the work of early twentieth-century women novelists such as Edith Wharton, Jean Rhys, Elizabeth Bowen, and Rosamond Lehmann.
Email contact: v.plock@exeter.ac.uk

Will Tattersdill is a doctoral student at King's College, London, studying the relationship between science and fiction in late-Victorian and Edwardian periodicals. He is co-convenor of KCL's genre fiction seminar and communications editor of the Victorian Network (www.victoriannetwork.org).
Email contact: william.tattersdill@kcl.ac.uk

Minna Vuohelainen is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Edge Hill University. She studied International History at the London School of Economics and English Literature at King's College London before completing a PhD on "The Popular Fiction of Richard Marsh: Literary Production, Genre, Audience" at Birkbeck, University of London. Her current research focuses on fin-de-siècle print culture, literary representations of London, and the discursive overlap between gothic fiction and factual discourses at the fin de siècle. She has edited Marsh's gothic novels *The Beetle: A Mystery* (1897/ 2008) and *The Goddess: A Demon* (1900/2010) for Valancourt. She is currently editing Marsh's short-story series *The Adventures of Sam Briggs* and *The Adventures of Judith Lee*, and working on a gothic author study of Marsh for the University of Wales Press.
Email contact: Minna.Vuohelainen@edgehill.ac.uk

Keir Waddington is a Reader in History in the School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University and co-director of the Collaborative Interdisciplinary Study of Science, Medicine and the Imagination Research Group. He is co-author of *The History of Bethlem 1247-1995* (1997) and author of *Charity and the London Hospitals 1850-1898* (2000), *Medical Education at St Bartholomew's Hospital* (2003) and *The Bovine Scourge* (2006), along with numerous articles on the medical profession, diseased meat and public health, Victorian benevolence, and the use of bacteriology. He has recently completed *An Introduction to the History of Medicine, 1500 to the present* (Palgrave) and is currently undertaking studies on hospital narratives, Welsh domestic remedies, and public health in rural Wales.
Email contact: WaddingtonK@cardiff.ac.uk

Martin Willis is Reader in English at the University of Glamorgan. He has published several articles and collections of essays in the field of literature and science, as well as his 2006 book *Mesmerists, Monsters and Machines*. He is presently completing a book on science, literature and vision entitled *Hoodwinked: The Power of Vision in Science and Literature, 1870-1920* and will soon be writing the *Reader's Guide to Literature and Science* for Palgrave Macmillan. He is also Editor-in-Chief of the *JLS*.
Email contact: mwillis@glam.ac.uk